

Dear Client,

Welcome to our monthly newswire. We hope you enjoy reading this newsletter and find it useful.

Best wishes

John Harrison

PRODUCTIVITY PROBLEMS ARE OFTEN LINKED TO POOR COLLABORATION

Anybody that has worked on a project involving managers from different departments knows how quickly the project's momentum can come to a halt. When employees receive inconsistent requests and tasks from management, work can become complicated and counterproductive. This lack of collaboration can hinder the execution of your project and ultimately impact your profit. How can you tell if your business has a collaboration problem? Here are three key symptoms.

Too Many Chiefs

It's good when everyone feels pride and personal ownership of a project. However, when anyone with a voice is trying to direct work, confusion ensues. Clearly defining the decision-makers will keep your staff productive. Employees need to know where to direct questions, ideas and issues and from whom to receive direction. Management also needs to clarify who gives input and who will give ultimate approval on key matters.

Misaligned Goals

The people within your business may often find themselves at odds regarding what metrics they use to measure success. Each part of your business needs help from others, but they're going to give first priority to the things for which they are being held accountable. If different departments are pushing conflicting priorities, it's difficult for team members to understand where they should be devoting their time and energy. Focus on establishing clear, common goals and prioritise them for everyone so there's no confusion about how much attention each area deserves.

Poor Quality Decisions

Does your team find itself backtracking on a decision or worse, calling in the senior management team to fix a mess that could have been avoided if only they had been consulted in the first place? Poor decision-making, lack of buy-in from key stakeholders and general confusion can all indicate a larger underlying problem. If a key department or perspective is being left out of the decision-making process, a lack of buy-in is only the beginning.

WINNING IS ALL ABOUT ATTITUDE

Many small- and medium-sized businesses have the potential to be better and stronger than they are today. Success in business is often down to the management team and their mind-set. Here are some attitudes that very often set the leaders in business apart from the rest of the pack:

In business there are no mistakes, only learning opportunities

Things you try will not always work out as planned. Don't dwell on the failures, but use them to your benefit. Be willing to take calculated risks, learn from your actions and keep moving forward.

I know I can

You control your destiny - believe it and own it. Remember the words of Henry Ford "Whether you think you can or think you can't, you are right." Take ownership of your decisions, accountability for your actions and responsibility for your results.

I don't know what I don't know

Personal and professional growth requires an open mind and a willingness to try new things. When you think you know everything, you close your mind to learning. Don't shut out ideas or innovations with an "I know" attitude.

An attitude of gratitude

As a child, we are often taught, "be grateful for the little things and the big things will come". Take time to acknowledge and appreciate the little acts of kindness, successes and accomplishments that occur each day. When we focus on the good stuff, we build positive energy that reflects on our colleagues and business associates. Be grateful and stay positive.

It's not what I know, but what I do

Most people have an abundance of ideas or goals. But until you start to take action, nothing will change in your business or life. Make doing a priority – think of the Nike advert, "just do it."

Time is your most valuable asset

Instinctively we know that time is money. Invest it wisely in the tasks and activities that support your business, personal and relationship goals.

Business is fun!

You probably thought so when you started your business with a vision of more money, time and/or freedom. If the fun is gone, it's time to get it back. Take control. Revisit your vision. Get re-energised. Create a business that works for you - one that is simple, fun and profitable.

EXPERIENTIAL MARKETING

We often hear or read about experiential marketing in the business press. So, what is it and what is it all about? Experiential marketing essentially involves the promotion of your business and brand in a way that allows both customers and prospects to connect and interact with you and have memorable experiences. Based upon such brand-related encounters, your customers may or may not accept your product or service offering.

The success of an experiential marketing initiative depends upon the quality and impact of the techniques you incorporate into your campaigns in order to attract attention. Developments in the mobile world, social networking, and content marketing have ensured that the business environment today is set for experiential techniques.

Ensure that the marketing strategy is brand-related

There is no point in running a campaign if prospects are unable to identify your brand. The way in which you promote your brand should communicate that it impacts the lives of your target audience positively. They must be able to relate with your products or services in order for them to accept your brand.

Connect with customers digitally

You can reach out to your existing and potential customers via connected devices such as smartphones and tablets. In order to do this effectively, you will have to create content marketing and social media campaigns based upon the interests of your prospects. Focus on the things they are interested in, or that are important for them.

Build brand association

Do not forget emotional relevance. By using experiential marketing campaigns, you want buyers to gradually become connected emotionally to your brand and this is what will ultimately secure their loyalty. If they like your brand, what it represents and how it makes them feel, they will take proactive measures to gather purchase-related information. Ensure that your experiential campaign creates a customer experience that becomes synonymous with your brand in a positive way.

Be newsworthy

Make your business newsworthy in order to increase its reach and visibility among your target market. Experiential campaigns can do this very well, provided you implement the right strategies. When your existing customers cannot stop talking about the quality of your products or services, they will essentially be ambassadors for your brand.

RECRUITING VIA MOBILE CHANNELS

In today's mobile world, more and more people are using social media services like LinkedIn to search for jobs. In order to find the best potential candidates, businesses need to take advantage of this trend. Here are a few tips and ideas you can use to help you find your next new recruit:

Post Jobs on Social Media

In addition to listing vacancies on your company's website, post them to social media sites. LinkedIn is a favourite among recruiters, and many job seekers will use LinkedIn's search functionality to find their next role. Facebook is less business-focused, but people may still look at company pages for jobs. Many businesses also use Twitter to post messages such as, "We are hiring! We are looking for a talented [job title] to join our team. Click here for more information." The "click here" can then be a link to your company website with full details of the role and information on how to apply.

Use Mobile-Friendly Online Applications

Jobseekers should be able to fill out their online application using their phone or tablet. Potential applicants generally want to be able to apply for jobs directly from their mobile devices. If your firm doesn't already have a mobile-friendly application page or system, you should revise your page so that it is responsive (works on tablets, phones, laptops and desktops), doesn't require too much typing and lets the applicants easily upload their CV and cover letter. If you are using LinkedIn to advertise a job vacancy, you can even set up the job listing so that the applicant can click on an "apply now" button and then apply using their LinkedIn profile as their CV. This makes it much easier for candidates to apply for the role.

Use an applicant tracking system

Each application you receive should ideally be automatically entered into an applicant tracking system. Not only will such a system ensure that you have all applications on file, it will also organise applicant's CVs and cover letters. Your online application can have fewer forms, which are annoying to fill out on a mobile device, because an applicant tracking system can read and organise any documents that applicants upload.

John Harrison & Co
CHARTERED ACCOUNTANTS

Please contact a member of our team if you would like to discuss any of the issues raised.