Leading from the front

Steps to Review Your Office System

Running an efficient business is all about continuously improving and 'tweaking' your office management systems so that they grow with your business and not hinder your business.

But why do you need efficient office systems in place? Here are some answers!

- To quickly and easily find important contact information.
- To be able to respond to client's requests straightaway.
- So that you can immediately submit a proposal.
- To keep track of your business.
- To be able to follow-up with clients and contacts.
- So that you can stay on track with your projects.
- To monitor your latest marketing campaign.

Sometimes though problems don't become apparent with your office systems until you actually start using them -- and then you may find out that they're not working in the way that you'd hoped.

So what can you do about it?

Step #1 Look at where the problems are.

Are you constantly searching around looking for an email address? Or cannot tell at a glance if your project is on track? Or you don't know your cashflow situation?

Step #2 Analyse what percentage of your time is being spent on administrative tasks.

Keep a diary for a week of how you are spending your time. At the end of the week look it over and see what percentage of your time is being spent on these jobs. Could this time be better spent on income-generating activities? Or market research?

Step #3 Compile a list of all non-income generating tasks that you currently do.

Could some of these be delegated? Would it help if you took on an assistant?

Once you have followed these 3 steps you should have a good idea of where your time is being spent, what your biggest time drains are, and where you can make improvements. You will be well on your way to deciding if you need to partner with a Virtual Assistant and will be able to see exactly where you need the support.

-traceylawton.com

Brighten your office area with motivational posters

Doing the same work day in and day out does at times feel boring and monotonous. People tend to lose interest in their work and feel demotivated. This is a serious concern in almost every work place. The Human Resource department of organizations are consistently working towards enhancing the mood of the work place so that people feel more dedicated and enjoy working.

In order to make the place lively and relaxing, a lot of things are concerned. Some of them are the colour coordination of the office place, the lightings, view from the workstations and also posters. While other things are mandatory, motivational posters are a unique option. They are able to entice positive energy in the work places with the encouraging messages that they display.

Motivational posters are not only encouraging but at times witty and comic too, this makes the reading of the posters light and enjoyable. Considering the heavy stress and pressure that employees undergo everyday, a slight joke or a light mood image can work miracle in bringing the stress levels down immediately. It is definitely not an easy task, as the fight is quite obscuring. While the stress levels are high it is almost impossible to bring down the stress levels to such a minimum, and that is the reason why there is great demand for some excellently written motivational posters.

As a matter of fact, these motivational posters are required not only in office areas, but also in other high stress areas like, hospitals, nursing homes, and even in schools.

Purchasing motivational posters in now made quite simple with several online poster sites, that enable you to download and print various colour and black and white posters. These posters are available in great quality and vast variety. You can also order them at get them delivered to your workplaces in just a few days.

articledashboard.com

There are many different power bases that a leader can develop and use.

These include problematic ones such as the power of position, the power to give rewards, the power to punish and the power to control information. While these types of power do have some strength, they put the person being led in an unhealthy position of weakness, and can leave leaders using these power bases looking autocratic and out of touch.

More than this, society has changed hugely over the last 50 years. Citizens are individually more powerful, and employees are more able to shift jobs. Few of us enjoy having power exerted over us, and many will do what they can to undermine people who use these sorts of power.

However there are three types of positive power that effective leaders use: charismatic power, expert power and referent power.

This article teaches you how to build expert power.

Expert power is essential because as a leader, your team looks to you for direction and guidance. Team members need to believe in your ability to set a worthwhile direction, give sound guidance and co-ordinate a good result.

If your team perceives you as a true expert, they will be much more receptive when you try to exercise influence tactics such as rational persuasion and inspirational appeal.

What's more, if members of your team see you as an expert, you will find it much easier to guide them in such a way as to create high motivation:

If team members respect your expertise, they'll know that you can show them how to work effectively;

If members of your team trust your judgment, they'll trust you to guide their good efforts in such a way that you'll make the most of their hard work; and

If they can see your expertise, team members are more likely to believe that you have the wisdom to direct their efforts towards a goal that is genuinely worthwhile.

Taken together, if your team sees you as an expert, you will find it much easier to motivate team members to perform at their best.

So how do you build expert power?

But just being an expert isn't enough, it is also necessary for your team members to recognize your expertise and see you to be a credible source of information and advice. Gary A. Yukl, in his book "Leadership in Organizations," details some steps to build expert power. A summary of these steps follows:

Promote an image of expertise: Since perceived expertise in many occupations is associated with a person's education and experience, a leader should - in a low key way - make sure that subordinates, peers, and superiors are aware of his or her formal education, relevant work experience, and significant accomplishments.

One common tactic to make this information known is to display diplomas, licenses, awards, and other evidence of expertise in a prominent location in one's office - after all, if you've worked hard to gain knowledge, it's fair that you get credit for it. Another tactic is to make subtle references to prior education or experience (for example, "When I was chief engineer at GE, we had a problem similar to this one"). Beware, however, this tactic can easily be overdone.

Keep informed: Expert power is exercised through rational persuasion and demonstration of expertise. Rational persuasion depends on a firm grasp of up-to-date facts. It is therefore essential for a leader to keep well-informed of developments within the team, within the organization, and in the outside world.

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Recognize subordinate concerns: Use of rational persuasion should not be seen as a form of one-way communication from the leader to subordinates. Effective leaders listen carefully to the concerns and uncertainties of their team members, and make sure that they address these in making a persuasive appeal.

Avoid threatening the self-esteem of subordinates: Expert power is based on a knowledge differential between leader and team members. Unfortunately, the very existence of such a differential can cause problems if the leader is not careful about the way he exercises expert power.

Team members can dislike unfavorable status comparisons where the gap is very large and obvious. They are likely to be upset by a leader who acts in a superior way, and arrogantly flaunts his greater expertise.

In the process of presenting rational arguments, some leaders lecture their team members in a condescending manner and convey the impression that the other team members are "ignorant." Guard against this - it can make you look very arrogant.

Act confidently and decisively in a crisis: In a crisis or emergency, subordinates prefer a "take charge" leader who appears to know how to direct the group in coping with the problem. In this kind of situation, subordinates tend to associate confident, firm leadership with expert knowledge. Even if the leader is not sure of the best way to deal with a crisis, to express doubts or appear confused risks the loss of influence over subordinates.

Maintain credibility: Once established, one's image of expertise should be carefully protected. The leader should avoid making careless comments about subjects on which he or she is poorly informed, and should avoid being associated with projects with a low likelihood of success.

-mindtools.com

How to get the most out of your

Imagine how much simpler your life would be if you had all your business contacts together in one place. One click of your mouse would reveal how effective your latest marketing campaign has been. Know at a glance which of your products/services is the most profitable.

Your custom-designed database will put this information right at your fingertips. I'd like to share with you my tips for ensuring that your database gives you the business information you need, when you need it!

What is a database?

A database is a collection of information relating to a particular topic kept together in one place, for you to access whenever you need. You can use a database to simplify your:

MARKETING CAMPAIGN--set up a database to plan your marketing campaign; track results of your marketing campaign; or analyse trends in your marketing campaign.

CLIENT & CONTACT MANAGEMENT--set up a database to keep track of your clients and contacts; analyse your business--which products/services are the most profitable; or see which clients are buying which product/service.

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT--set up a database to keep track of

your spending; manage your invoices to clients; or monitor overdue invoices.

MEMBERSHIP ORGANISATIONS--set up a database to keep track of members; send out membership renewal letters; or monitor subscriptions.

Your list for database uses will likely be much longer--just brainstorm a list of all the places where consolidated information would make your life easier!

The secret's in the planning

You want to get the most out of your database, right? Then make sure to plan it right from the start.

Before you go running off to set up your database you need to ask yourself these important questions:

- What do you want to use your database for?
- What data do you want to keep track of?
- Who will be collecting the data?
- How much data is there to collect--50 records or 500 records?
- Who will be doing the updates?
- What reports do you want your database to generate?

You may find it easiest to map this out on a piece of paper first. Work out how your database is going to fit together. How will each category relate to the others?
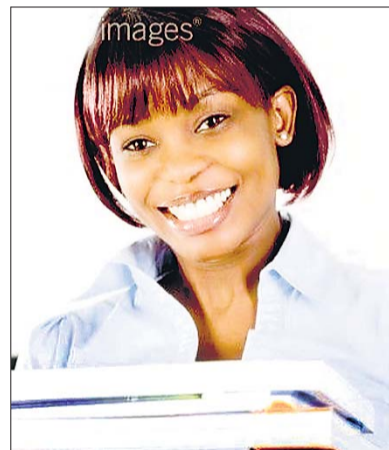
Get the maximum use out of your database

By now, you've invested a lot of time in your database plans, design, and set-up. Don't miss this important step: getting the most out of your creation.

First, you'll want to make the database as easy to use as possible. Create one-click touches to produce the information you need. Set up shortcuts so you can create the most important reports quickly. And make sure you really consider the easiest way to enter new data.

By applying this advice in your own database, yours will be easy to use AND have the maximum use value to you

How smart Time Management can

I remember an old college professor who said, as I was rushing through the classroom door, late again, "you can't manage time, but you can manage yourself." Those words still ring true and you should know how smart time management can help you.

Tips for Time Management

Smart time management is more than just organizing your desk and making it look clean everyday. It's knowing where you are, it's planning your week, it's task managing the important stuff first, and learning how to prioritize. While it took me some time to figure all this out, that old professor's words still ring in my head from time to time and I try and live by these tips:

1. I'm always firm on what I intend to do each day and don't change the tasks I promised to get done.

2. I have learned that honesty is still the best policy so if I can't deliver, I let people know upfront.

3. Finding the best time of day to devote entirely to my writing means, I say no when I have put my schedule on the refrigerator if someone needs me.

4. If I find myself too dug in, I organize first before I begin.

5. If the time I spent in the morning writing was really effective, I do give myself a reward by heading up to my Tipi for lunch.
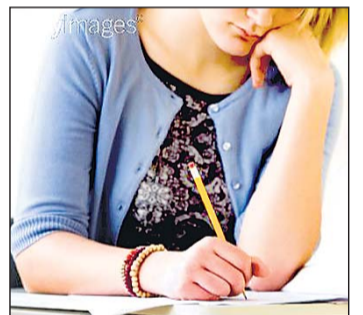
6. I always use written schedules and outline my entire week in advance.

7. I never try and write things, unless I'm highly paid, that require more research than I can afford in my work day.

8. When I'm finished for the day, I don't leave clutter, I arrange and organize everything for the next day.

9. If I find a job too big, I divide it into different tasks and pull it altogether later.

10. Finally, and I know this sounds like a top ten list, but when my husband comes home at night, he's done for the day and I respect that so I don't keep writing, I make him dinner and spend time with him.

There are other ways I stay on track managing my time too. I never do laundry and work at the same time, even though we know we all could because we work and task at home. **brighthub.com**

Three key office systems to manage your business

> Building a successful long-term profitable business isn't about "marketing" your business, it's about "managing" your business - the marketing comes once you have your management systems in place.

These days we are so overloaded with information that it's easy to lose sight of the basics of running a business, and you very quickly become overwhelmed and suffer from information overload! Just take a look at some of the ebooks, products, ecourses etc. you have stored on your PC - I bet they all relate to marketing your business, getting more clients, increasing your income etc. but I bet NONE of them tell you how to manage your business!

Building a successful long-term profitable business isn't about "marketing" your business, it's about "managing" your business - the marketing comes once you have your management systems in place.

You cannot begin to market your business if you can't find the information you need, don't know who you are marketing to, and don't know where you are in

your business.

So, let's go back to basics and take a look at the 3 key office systems you need to "manage" your business before you can start to "market" your business.

Filing Management System

Creating and maintaining a filing system is the very foundation that your business is built on, so this is the very first system you need to put in place - an efficient and effective filing system.

With a proper filing system in place you will very quickly and easily be able to find the information you need, when you need it.

Contact Management System

After you've got your filing sys-

tem all straightened out, you then need to set about organizing your contacts. This is another crucial area of managing your business. If set up correctly your contact management system allows you to:

- Keep a note of clients, potential clients, and colleagues contact information.
- Easily and effectively follow-up with a prospect.
- Locate critical client contact information quickly and easily.
- Build your business.

Financial Management System

The is the final key office management system you need to put
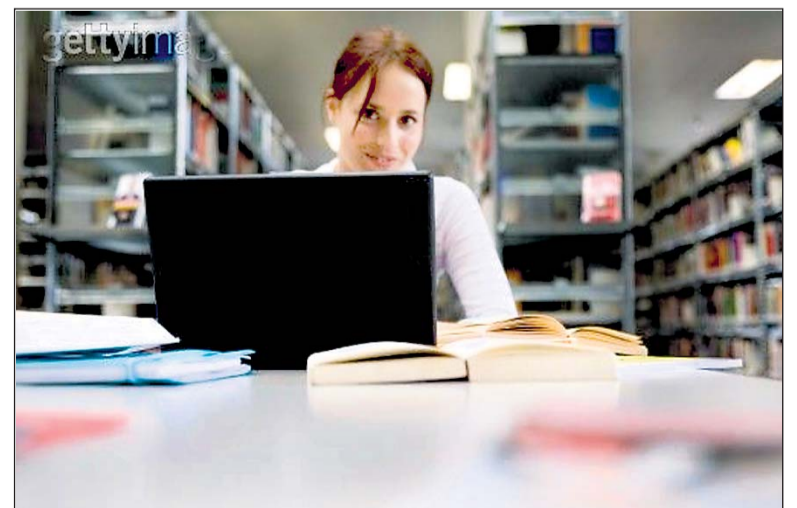
in place for managing your business. Once you know where you are in your business financially, you will be able to much more effectively market your business.

Having up-to-date, critical, financial information available at your fingertips allows you to

efficiently manage cashflow and be able to know straightaway if you can take advantage of opportunities that come your way.

So remember, go back to basics and first "manage" your business before you "market" your busi-