

How to Keep Good Ideas Alive

Does your company have a graveyard of good ideas? Fresh ideas keep businesses afloat and competitive in today's market and shouldn't be overlooked.

Here are a few suggestions for creating and implementing good ideas.

Survey key players – Ask the most creative members of your team their ideas for improvement or expansion. Also, ask if anything is holding them back from suggesting new ideas, then work to remove these barriers.

Determine its scope – What kind of idea are you planning to implement? Is it something that tweaks your existing systems? Or is it an innovative change that will turn your industry upside-down? You must acknowledge the resources needed to implement your idea, like staff, money, and technology requirements.

Seek outside validation – Sometimes the quickest way to kill an idea is by keeping it an in-house secret. Instead, survey your major clients to get a sense of their reaction.



Secure Your Paper Trail at Your Printer

Consider implementing the following tips to secure your business documents.

Beef up your armor. Make sure that your devices aren't using a public Internet connection. Check with your IT providers to ensure you are protected.

Reset default passwords. One easy way to secure your printer is to change your device's default password so that unauthorized users can't access sensitive data.

Secure outputs. Forgetting to pick up printouts provides others the opportunity to access sensitive information intentionally or accidentally.

Switch to MPS. Managed Print Services shifts the management and security of your imaging devices to a trusted managed services partner. MPS offers the added benefits of cost and time savings, since your staff will no longer have to worry about securing and maintaining your printing equipment.

Contact us today to learn more about securing your printing devices.

Trade Micromanagement for Trust

Try these tips to help you let go of the details and focus on the bigger picture.

Ask Your Staff - Getting honest feedback from your staff on your management style will help put things into perspective. Anonymity is key, so it may be a good idea to hire a third party to survey your staff.

Get Your Priorities Straight - Take a step back and analyze your to-do list. Separate items that require your involvement from those that don't and delegate where possible.

Get Real with Your Team - Tell your staff you're working on your micromanaging ways. Honesty goes a long way when building trust. Be explicit in what details you need to know in upcoming projects. Focus on answers to questions of "when" and "where" and let your staff figure out the "how."

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How Workflow Automation Can Change Your Business for the Better

When it comes to workflow, automation isn't about replacing people, it's about helping people. What could you accomplish if you didn't have to respond to 20 percent of the emails that you receive? How would your day change if you weren't required to go through eight tedious steps to finalize just one sale? What if you could have real-time statistics without having to run any numbers yourself? Would you have time to be more creative? Would you finally be able to implement that back-burnered idea? How would your business change?



Embracing automation is about putting key tools into place. Here are a few reasons to implement workflow automation software.

Streamline communication – Automation software is designed to compile all of your daily communication into one centralized location. Access an email from last week to compare to yesterday's memo on one handy dashboard. You'll save time—and ultimately money—by implementing automation software into your communication streams, and you'll never have to worry about misfiling an email.

Mitigate mistakes – In business, even a seemingly small error can result in significant financial loss for a company. Implementing automation software can save you money by reducing human error. The software prompts orders to be sent immediately after payments are received, resulting in fewer customer complaints. Employees are no longer responsible for setting and remembering deadlines, because reminder emails are automatically sent. By mitigating mistakes, automation software will help your business run smoother.

Increase accountability – In addition to reducing employee mistakes, automation software also diminishes employee excuses. No longer can a team member say that they "didn't get the memo," because the software is designed to automatically notify and send next steps to the appropriate people. Employees must finish tasks before the next notification, and supervisors will be notified if tasks aren't completed in the time allotted—improving company-wide accountability.

Strengthen client relationships – Following up with clients can easily slip through the cracks as team members quickly move on to their next sale after sealing the deal. Why not automate a follow-up survey via email to better understand your clients' satisfaction and their future needs? Automating the follow-up process provides a clearer picture of your performance by eliminating falsified client satisfaction surveys or unreported negative feedback. Removing this task from your employees' to-do lists frees them up to focus on what really matters—sales!

With these advantages in mind, it is easy to see how business owners must not only accept automation, but actively pursue it in order to stay competitive in today's tech-driven environment.



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Sell Smarter, Not Harder

The key to selling smarter, not harder is a combination of building strong relationships and looking at the sales process from your customer's point of view.

Explore latent needs – Up your sales by familiarizing yourself with your customers' latent needs and figuring out how those needs fit with what you have to offer.

Alleviate doubt – Add credibility and remove any doubt in your products or services by providing case studies and testimonials to your customers.

Be mindful of budgets – Price is a concern for every business, so finding ways to accommodate a budget goes a long way when increasing your personal credibility.

Explain the consequences – If explaining the benefits of what you're selling doesn't work, try outlining the consequences of inaction to prompt a sale.

Inform your customers – Try email marketing with a bulleted list of benefit to establish a baseline of knowledge and open the door for a follow-up phone call.



How Color Printing Can Change Your Business for the Better

Color increases a reader's attention span and recall by more than 82 percent. Think about how adding color can impact your company's brand recognition or the success of your latest promotional push. Your customers will pay more attention to your message and be able to remember more of it if color is incorporated into your printed materials.

Color increases comprehension by 73 percent. You want readers to absorb your message and make sense of it as it relates to them. Using color helps to increase the likelihood that your customers will truly understand the point that you're trying to make, and will make them more receptive to your message.

Color increases payment response by up to 30 percent. When you are talking about money in your pocket, 30 percent is nothing to scoff at. Try incorporating color in next quarter's invoices, or highlighting key information like account numbers, due dates, and total amount due in color. Don't forget to change to the color version of your logo while you're at it. Then compare payments received to those of your previous quarter. Research suggests you should see a bump in accounts paid.



Maximize Productivity this Holiday Season

The holidays can be a joyful, yet busy time. So, how can you stay focused at work when so many seasonal distractions abound? Try these tips:

Take a Break Before Your Vacation Begins - Take a day or two off to get ready for the holiday before your actual vacation starts. Having your personal life in order will help you focus when you get back to work.

Ignore Social Media - Social media can be especially distracting during the holidays. So, dedicate specific times of day to check your favorite social media sites and stick to it.

Take Time to Brainstorm - Take advantage of the downtime (and overly chatty employees) by getting creative with your team. Take this time to problem-solve, or think through a project that you can set into motion in the new year.

Focus on Today - Remind yourself that today is not a holiday. Holding yourself to a "typical day" standard will help you avoid the holiday hype and get your work done.

New Year, New Software: The Case for Updating

There are some serious benefits to be reaped—and major consequences to avoid—that should encourage you to update your business software this new year.

Here are a few reasons that justify updating your company's software.

Save time – With new software in place, your entire team can work steadily without disruptions or fear of technical difficulties for the foreseeable future.

Increase security – Threats to your company's data are ever-increasing, and the only way to manage this problem is to regularly improve internal data protections.

Improve collaboration – Updating your word processing software permits co-authoring of documents and viewing edits in real time.

Adapt for mobility – Building a mobile-friendly business will yield positive results by increasing employee response time and general productivity.

Contact us to learn more about IT upgrades to benefit your business.



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