ST APPOINTMENTS
SUNDAY TIMES
MAKING OPPORTUNITIES KNOCK ON YOUR DOOR

Winning expert power and leading from the front

Three key office systems you need to manage your business

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 system 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:
1) Keep a note of clients, potential clients, and colleagues contact information.
2) Easily and effectively follow-up with a prospect.
3) Locate critical client contact information quickly and easily.
4) 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.

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 demon-

stration 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.

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

Steps to Review Your Office Systems

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.

1) To be able to respond to client's requests straightaway.

2) So that you can immediately submit a proposal.

3) To keep track of your business.

4) To be able to follow-up with clients and contacts.

5) So that you can stay on track with your projects.

6) 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.