

Monthly Newswire

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

November 2016

TOP TIPS FOR PRESENTING

Most of us will have to give a presentation at some point. You will probably use PowerPoint, which can be a good thing, if it is used correctly. Here are a few top tips.

Engage your audience

When it comes to delivering a presentation, your goal is to engage your audience. The presentation itself is only the start - your aim should be that your audience will want to continue to interact with you again in the future.

This will give you the opportunity to work on your business relationship with them, positioning yourself as a subject matter expert, and building trust.

Encourage your audience members to interact

Using PowerPoint becomes much less of a crutch if you have an interacting audience. Instead, it becomes a nice tool to help you along. The real catalyst in that situation is the discussion itself and you should use your slides as discussion points. They will help you to keep your thoughts organised and act as a framework for the discussion.

Ask thought-provoking questions

Asking the right questions will help you to bring your presentation to life. You want your audience to think about

the points that you are making and engage in conversation. Make it clear that you value the views of your audience and encourage them to share their opinions with the rest of the room.

Follow up in a new way

It is important to follow up with your audience after your presentation. However, you could think of new ways to follow up. For example - set a PDF of the key points on a timer so that it is automatically emailed to your attendees at the end of your presentation. Another option would be to send a hand written thank you note with a USB key attached containing the slides. The key is to be a bit different, and therefore memorable.



FLEXIBLE WORKING IS HERE TO STAY

The businesses that will thrive today and tomorrow are those that can be truly flexible. Businesses that are embracing flexible working can use it to help cut costs, attract talent and radically improve productivity.

Technology has changed the way we communicate and it is currently changing the way we work. Gone are the days when office workers spent every working moment in a cubicle or

at a desk. The rise of digital communication tools, collaboration apps and productivity suites, coupled with the benefits of the 'always on' nature of the web, have set the modern business free. Flexible working is the natural evolution of work in the brave new digital world. Today, businesses large and small can operate anytime, anywhere.

What do we really mean by flexible working?

Essentially, it means freeing up your employees to work in the way that suits them best. That can mean mobile working via a smartphone or laptop, working from different locations thanks to remote access to the business network, holding meetings through video conferencing, home-working and flexi-time, which

allows staff to tweak their working hours. Underpinning it all is the technology that helps your team to work in a way that suits them best, from any location.

Benefits for business

By putting the technology and processes in place to facilitate flexible working, rigid and old-fashioned infrastructure can be overhauled, allowing businesses to install more efficient systems. Flexible working can also be invaluable in both staff recruitment and retention, especially for those with family commitments. Beyond parents, flexible working can help keep work/life balance in check for all employees, as they have the right systems and technologies in place to better manage their workload.

By cutting the time your staff spend travelling and by giving them the tools they need to work on the go when they do travel, dead time is converted back into productive time. These hours add up. And it's not just businesses that benefit, people do too. The boost to morale and productivity generated by scrapping an employee's commute or their endless travel to and from meetings cannot be underestimated.

COACHING FOR SUCCESS

In the past, coaching was not offered as a benefit but mandated to those who were failing to achieve their workplace goals. The term "coaching" was synonymous with "remedial training" and carried an implication of failure. Fortunately, those days have passed and savvy business leaders and HR professionals have realised that coaching can be a great benefit for high performers.

Traditionally employers have turned to training programmes to develop talented employee's skills. However in recent years that trend has been shifting towards a newer tool for talent management: management coaching.

Technically the term "management coaching" applies to the act of coaching C-level employees; but more recently this type of support has been offered to mid-level managers and high potential employees across firms. Regardless of the intended audience, the goals are largely the same - to improve the effectiveness and enhance the performance of the individual, with the intent of improving the business as a whole.

How does it work?

The core value of coaching is in its ability to focus on the specific needs of the individual as viewed through the lens of their firm's ecosystem. While training can develop general skills such as time management or planning, coaching allows the manager to focus on the exact

challenges of their personal environment, and to develop targeted strategies to overcome them. This combination of the trusted adviser relationship and intense focus on applicable skills makes coaching one of the fastest and most effective tools in resolving workplace performance issues.

A further benefit of management coaching is its focus on the development of skills by the individual being coached. Rather than forming a dependent relationship where the manager must always rely on (and have access to) their mentor, an effective coach will work to reduce the amount their client depends on them, thus building confidence and self-sufficiency in the recipient of the coaching.

Some coaches employ the Goal, Reality, Options and Will (GROW) model. By defining the goal, accounting for the current realities of the environment in which the individual operates, finding options to achieve the goal and then applying the individual's will or commitment to complete the process, coaches can lead managers through a structured process to achieve their targets. Other coaches use a holistic model to incorporate aspects of self-awareness and personal growth into the process of developing the manager's leadership abilities.

WHAT CAN WE LEARN FROM DISRUPTIVE INNOVATION?

Disruptive innovation is a term, created by Clayton Christensen, to describe a new invention or product that alters its market. It typically refers to innovation that results in changes on a large scale. For example, the digital camera which replaced Kodak's traditional film cameras or digital streaming services which have effectively replaced CDs as the primary way to consume and listen to music.

With each innovation, there is risk taken on by the firm that introduces it and there is disruption faced by the users. The businesses that promote the new product or service innovation face uncertainty in not knowing if it will succeed since they are challenging an established market. They are introducing an alternative, which, if it catches on, will mean that users have to adjust and accept a new way of doing things.

So, what can we learn from disruptive innovators which we can then apply to our own businesses? For a start, not all innovation has to be on a large-scale; small changes can make all the difference. For example, process innovation could have a positive impact on the profitability and efficiency of your business. Aim to create a benefit to your business; e.g. to reduce the time it takes to produce a product or service or a new, more efficient way of delivering your end product or service to your customers.

As with any innovative development, your employees will probably see a disruption to their day job. Perhaps they have to learn a new way of doing things or even learn how to use a completely new system. The business is taking a risk in changing what has always worked and the employees may be unsure as to how the changes will impact them. They will need time to become accustomed to new ways of working and this could create a degree of disruption across the firm.

That said, with appropriate training and change management processes, you should be able to ensure that your new innovations are adopted quickly and with minimum fuss. And as with any change in business, success is all about planning.