

Monthly Newswire

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

September 2018

Mindful Management

Being an effective manager requires a strong work ethic and the ability to guide those on your team to work toward success. Taking a more mindful approach to managing your team can help you to bring out the best in people.

Mindfulness can be defined as a “psychological process of bringing one’s attention to experiences occurring in the present moment”.

Many people use mindfulness as an approach to self-improvement and wellbeing, but it can also be used in a business context.

With countless projects, tasks and employees to manage, it’s easy for managers to feel drained and overwhelmed. Mindfulness is all about living in the moment. A mindful approach to business encourages managers to slow down, take a breath and focus on doing one thing (and devote your whole attention on doing that one thing, properly).

We are all in constant communication with others through email, phone calls and messaging apps. Mindful managers don’t let all the constant distractions interfere with their ability to focus on what really matters.

Being a more mindful manager requires good prioritisation and task management skills. For example, you could identify the 4 most important things that you need to do today. Focus on these tasks and move on to the less important things only once you have completed your key tasks for the day.

In addition to focusing on key tasks, a mindful manager will block out some time to think each day. This might be as little as 15 minutes but it will allow you to step back from the day to day work and focus on the bigger picture. In addition to thinking time, block out some people management time. Use this time to connect with the members of your team, ask questions and allow them time to ask you questions.

In order to make the most of your people management time, avoid distractions including phone calls or emails. Your team members will appreciate you taking the time to really listen to them and they will feel more valued as a result.

Reducing stress in the workplace makes your people more productive

Employee stress is a problem for all businesses (and all employees). Stress naturally occurs in the workplace. When left unchecked, it can wreak havoc on employee health and productivity.

Relationships

Relationships can make or break a work environment. When people don’t get along and don’t know how to communicate effectively, it can create a lingering tension in the office. Consider investing in some training. Training sessions can promote an understanding of personality types in order to help people to work together more effectively.

New, more modern policies

Consider if there are new policies that could be introduced that would make the office less stressful, such as a

casual dress policy. People feel less stressed if they are comfortable so maybe it is time to say goodbye to suits and ties. Another positive change could be to introduce an open door policy. This will encourage people to communicate more freely with their managers.

Office environment

Take the time to walk around your office space and consider if it is possible to make it a more enjoyable working environment. Perhaps there is a lack of natural light or a lot of clutter around the office. An office cleanup followed by some fresh paint and a few new features like a coffee machine and some plants can make it more enjoyable to work in. It doesn’t have to cost a fortune but a few tweaks can make all the difference.

Promote activities that make the office more pleasant for your employees.

This might include reassigning workloads in order to spread the work more evenly between teams, giving public recognition for a job well done or starting a weekly lunchtime barbecue during warm weather. You might add perks such as office yoga classes, gift certificates after completion of a difficult project or health and wellbeing initiatives such as healthy eating week, lunchtime running sessions, etc.

Agile working

The world of work is changing and agile working is becoming the norm. Giving your team members the flexibility to work from home or at different times of the day can help them to improve their work life balance. If someone needs to focus on a particular project, they can work from home or somewhere quiet, away from the office, in order to get their project over the line. This can help to reduce their stress levels and improve their productivity.

GDPR - gaining consent to contact your customers

Under the recently introduced GDPR regulations, all businesses in the UK must have consent from their customers in order to keep their details on a database, contact them in future and so forth. So what does this mean and what do you need to do?

As far as the GDPR rules are concerned, consent means 'offering individuals real choice and control. Genuine consent should put individuals in charge, build trust and engagement and enhance your reputation.' The challenge for businesses is how to gain consent and maintain an effective contact database.



Building a contact database based on what, when and how consent was given, prevents individuals being bombarded with information they do not want and allows a business to feel confident that they are staying in line with the GDPR rules.

Gaining consent

You can gain consent when clients are asked to sign up to a newsletter or create an account, alternatively e-commerce businesses can use this method at the checkout.

For this opt-in to be sufficient under GDPR, individuals should be allowed to actively make the decision to have their data processed – i.e. tick the box that they are happy to have their data processed and kept on your database. You cannot have a pre-ticked option, which has to be deselected.

You can make the messaging more appealing by using language such as "yes, I would like to keep in touch and hear about new products, services and special offers." This text can be added next to the tick box to opt in.

Further action

End-users should always be given the option to go back to their consent declarations at any time for review, validation, to unsubscribe or to make any other changes, for example on the bottom of further correspondence emails, the option should always be given to opt out from previous consent. You can simply add an "unsubscribe" button to the bottom of emails to clients and contacts.

Ensuring you keep records of each user, who they are and when they consented is important to stay within the GDPR rules. If you are sure your customers have consented in line with the new regulations, then you have nothing to do. However, it is a good idea to audit your contact database and implement a re-permission campaign on a regular basis, perhaps every 6-12 months or so.

If you ensure that your clients understand the benefits of staying connected, they will be less likely to unsubscribe.

Using online communities to promote your business

The beauty of online marketing is that it doesn't have to be expensive. You can even use online groups / communities to help promote your business for free.

Online communities are groups of people who share advice, knowledge or stories related to a shared interest. They connect and share content on forums, on social media, or even on their own website or blog.

If you want to engage with an online community in order to promote your

business, you need to do a little bit of research.

To begin with, think about your target audience. Who are they and why would they be interested in buying your product or service? For example, if you lease IT equipment to small and medium sized businesses (SMEs) then you might want to connect with business owners and business managers online.

Next identify a few potential online communities that you can engage with. In the above example, you could consider joining a small business owners group on LinkedIn or you could contribute to business blog site.

In order to engage effectively with your new target audience, you need to avoid "selling" your product or service to them. Instead, you should contribute to the conversation and share useful articles, tips and advice. Using the above IT example, you could share tips for managing anti virus and cyber security software systems or ideas on how to get the most battery life out of your laptop / tablet. The key at this stage is to promote awareness of your brand rather than to sell products.

In order to drive traffic (and potential new business) to your company website, include a link to the news section of your website at the bottom of each article / contribution that you make on your various online groups. You could use wording such as, "click here to read more useful business tips and ideas."

Finally, make sure you track the number of people who click through the link using a tool such as Google Analytics. You can use this data to understand which topics are of the most interest to your target audience and refine your future marketing content accordingly.