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Facilitation Focus

PROVIDING A RANGE OF TIPS, IDEAS AND STRATEGIES FOR YOU TO USE OR PASS ON TO YOUR CLIENTS

Helping you achieve your business goals in 2021

Well, where has it gone?

We are almost at the end of 2020 and it seems like only last month that we were celebrating Christmas 2019.

However, the main question arises: are you on track with your 2021 business goals?

It's been a tough year for all of us, and COVID 19 has caused many of us to adapt simply to sustain their operations, and build resilience. The economists are still claiming that consumer confidence is on a long-term low and with that comes tightened belts and people tend to be far more accountable for their money.

So have you given any thought at all to what will be the trends and ideas that will continue to shape

your plans and strategies for 2021?

As a business facilitator or a business owner, you are probably aware of where your activities could improve. It's a given that we are always wanting to improve, but maybe we are not sure how to start the process.

And the first step to wanting to improve is recognising that something needs to improve or change.

However, before you start implementing changes, it's a good idea to make sure you have a full understanding of the factors impacting on your current situation.

These factors may include your current business practices, market trends or changes to the wider environment in which you operate.

A company is only as good as its people, their ability to deliver, and the promises they keep.



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MARKET WATCH FOR 2021

Does Your Marketing Strategy Need a Revamp?

As we surge into the new year of 2021 have you looked lately at your marketing strategy? Did you implement all of the marketing plans that you intended to do in 2020, or have you still not managed to get around to doing it? Perhaps you could use this little note as a reminder to refresh your business, revamp your marketing and tie up loose ends.



Conducting a Risk Analysis & Management Plan



There's no doubt that business, big and small, take risks every day. Sometimes the risks are slight, and other times the risks can be overwhelming. Sometimes, taking a risk can have huge benefits, or, in fact, it can sometimes cause business closure. Before a business decides to take a risk, a Risk Analysis should be undertaken.

Carrying out a risk assessment strategy will assist the business owner to measure the potential outcomes of the risk, and make a sound decision to avoid financial stress and / or possible business failure.

Before carrying out the Risk Analysis, a brief SWAT Analysis should be conducted, with the purpose being to identify if the risk is either Internal to the business or External to the business. Generally, internal risks are more specific, and therefore usually easier to control and monitor.

Some typical examples of internal risks can be:

- Operational
- Financial
- Location
- Staffing
- Marketing

Conversely, external risks are usually out of your control, and although you may be able to accurately predict external risks, they are generally handled with a reactive approach.

Some typical examples of external risks are:

- Government regulations
- Changing economy
- COVID – 19 is a good example of a risk that has occurred which was out of your control
- New competitors coming into

the market

Overall, the most common business risk categories are:

- Strategic – decisions concerning your business' objectives
- Compliance –the need to comply with laws, regulations, standards and codes of practice
- Financial –financial transactions, systems and structure of your business
- Operational –your operational and administrative procedures
- Environmental –external events that the business has little control over
- Reputation – the character or goodwill of the business

Preparing your Risk Management Plan

The Risk Management Plan should detail strategies for dealing with risks specific to your clients' business. It's vital to allocate time and resources to preparing the plan to reduce the likelihood of any incident occurring.

Your Plan is best developed by following these steps:

1. Firstly, identify the risk
2. Assess the risk
3. Manage the risk
4. Monitor and Review

1. Identify the Risk

- Assess each function in the business and identify anything that could have a negative impact
- Review your records such as safety incidents or complaints to identify previous issues
- Consider any external risks that could impact on business
- Involve the staff – Brainstorming works wonders to “bring them out of their shell”

2. Assess the Risk

You can assess each identified risk by

establishing:

- The likelihood (frequency) of it occurring
- The consequence (impact) if it occurred

To determine the likelihood and consequence of each risk it is useful to identify how each risk is currently controlled. Controls may include:

- Elimination
- Substitution
- Engineering controls
- Administrative controls
- Personal protective equipment

3. Manage the Risk

Managing risks involves developing cost effective options to deal with them including:

- Avoiding
- Reducing
- Transferring
- Accepting

4. Monitor and Review

You should regularly monitor and review your risk management plan and ensure the control measures and insurance cover is adequate.

The PPRR Risk Management Model

The prevention, preparedness, response and recovery (PPRR) model is a comprehensive approach to risk management. This model has been used by Australian emergency management agencies for decades and can save your business time and money when responding to a setback, incident or disaster.

You can use the PPRR model to put plans in place to minimise losses in the event of an incident. PPRR will help you to anticipate possible direct impacts to your business, and impacts on your suppliers and customers, which may flow on to your business. ☒

Should you be allowed to complain about businesses online?

One man doesn't think so

[Frank Chung from news.com](#) recently wrote an article regarding customers being able to complain about poor service or products online.

Frank stated: *"In a time when anonymous reviews from disgruntled customers can make or break small businesses, one man is on a personal mission to bring some positivity back to the internet."*

Paul Ryan, head of marketing company Intouch group and co-founder of the company formerly known as Wizard Home Loans, is the person behind a new venture called [Kudos2](#).

It's an online testimonial service in the vein of [UrbanSpoon](#) or [Yelp](#), but with a fairly significant catch — you're only allowed to post positive feedback.

"Service is subjective," Mr Ryan explains. "One man's drink is another man's poison. What could be good service for you might not be good service for others."

According to Mr Ryan, sometimes "people have bad days" and while your grievance may be legitimate, it's unfair to publicly sledge a business without first giving them the opportunity to rectify the issue.

"Today we're very quick to jump on negativity, but I think we should be rewarding effort. If you post a negative review online, it just breeds more negativity."

Mr Ryan hopes people will use Kudos2 to share positive service experiences, and others will make their judgement based on the number of recommendations a particular business has.



"Say you wanted to move to Port Macquarie — you'll need to find a real estate agent, an insurance broker, a dentist, a nice coffee shop," he says. "We want people to be able to jump on Kudos, type in 'Port Macquarie', and see all the businesses that have happy customers."

It all sounds lovely, but it begs a fairly obvious question — what if a business just isn't up to scratch? Don't customers have a right to warn off others if they believe they'll have a bad experience?

"When a customer has a bad experience, they want one of two things — they either want to vent, or they actually want something done about it. If it's the second one, the best people to speak to are the businesses themselves."

And if it's the first one, Mr Ryan would prefer it was done the old-fashioned way — having a whinge to your mates at the BBQ, rather than putting it up on Facebook where thousands of people can potentially see.

"Seventy per cent of people are now researching online and trusting recommendations they find — there's still Facebook, Yelp and the

rest. They can see all the negative reviews there as well, and they'll make their own decision."

Kudos2 is only three months old and Mr Ryan isn't sure when it will turn a profit. Around three hundred businesses have been given 'Kudos', and the site has around 200 registered users.

"There are 1.4 million businesses out there with fewer than four employees. These are businesses that don't have huge marketing budgets, so the question is how do they get themselves known in the wider community?"

However, on the 'flip-side' Matt Wade senior journalist from "The Age" believes that the vast majority of customers fail to complain about poor service or treatment, and are prone to suffer in silence.

Matt writes: *"A 2011 survey conducted for the Australian Communications and Media Authority found that 76 per cent of those who contacted their communications provider with a grievance did nothing more about it."*

So why are so many consumers so passive? One reason is what behavioural economists call "loss aversion" — the tendency for consumers to care more about preventing a loss than making a gain.

Conversely, there is a website dedicated to nothing else but harvesting complaints: ["6 Best Complaint Sites"](#) claim to be Australia's largest complaint site, and they claim to have received over 13,000 complaints in the past 4 years.

What do you think? Do you agree with Paul Ryan?



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Five Simple and Powerful Ways to Boost Productivity

Editor's Note:

Dr. Tim Baker is an international consultant, successful author, keynote speaker, master trainer, executive coach, university lecturer and skilful facilitator.

In a nutshell, he has conducted over 2,430 seminars, workshops and keynote addresses to over 45,000 people in 11 countries across 21 industry groups.

What are some relatively simple ways of increasing profits by 30 per cent without firing anyone or spending any money?

Here are five simple and powerful ways of doing this. Even if you only applied one of these strategies your personal and organizational productivity would be significantly enhanced and so would employee morale.

The biggest time wasters in organizations from my observations over 18 years across 21 industries are spending unnecessary time on email, attending mindless unproductive meetings, conducting performance reviews; indulging in too much fake work, and administering surveys with no follow through.

There are doubtlessly others, but these five are covered in this short article.

1. Do an email audit

How much time do you spend daily on compiling and reading emails? Too much time? Why don't you find out exactly how much time? Keep a log for three days on when you attend to emails. Get your staff to do the same. Then work out an average amount of time per person across the business. Multiple that average time per week by the mean weekly wage by 52. This gives you the total cost of using email annually across the business. Then multiple that by two to compensate for the lost time not doing other more productive business activities.

The number will scare you. Then set up an email protocol and ensure that employees and managers follow it. If you can reduce the amount of time on email by 25 per cent would that make a difference to the business's bottom line?

2. Reduce the number of procedural meetings

Like emails, do a meeting audit. How many meetings do you attend each week? What percentage of your time is spent sitting in meetings? More importantly, how many of these meetings are a waste of your time? I am all for increasing the quality of communication in a business.

But it is often the mindless procedural and reporting meetings that occur once a week that are time wasters. Meetings are costly. Six people in a room for a one hour meeting can cost the business \$850 to \$1,200. You need to be able to justify that expense. A 20 per cent reduction in these kind of meetings can save a business thousands, tens of thousands or hundreds of thousands of dollars a year, depending on its size.

3. Replace performance appraisals with performance development

Performance reviews are a waste of time. There is no empirical evidence I know of that demonstrates conclusively that increased performance results from the dreaded performance review. A better focus is on short, regular, focussed conversations around performance. [The Five Conversations Framework](#) is such an approach. At any rate, there needs to be a shift from appraising performance to developing performance.

4 Stop surveying people and start listening

Organizations spend thousands of dollars a year conducting a variety of online surveys assessing levels of employee engagement. Ironically, getting staff to complete the engagement survey is often the only form of engagement! When the results

are collated they are generally discussed at the senior management level and little else happens. More time ought to be spent on discussing the results with staff and less time asking them to fill out these surveys.

5. Eliminating fake work

Peterson and Gaylan wrote a thought-provoking book called, "[Fake Work](#)". Their general argument is that we spend too much time doing what they refer to as fake work; that is, work that isn't directly or even indirectly linked to the strategic direction of the business.

They believe that a small percentage reduction in fake work will lead to significant productivity across a large organization. Using the time-honoured 'To Do List' can help in this regard. These days you can complete a To Do List on your smart phone.

And remember: writing the list itself is not the point. It is the prioritization of tasks and the adherence to that list that makes all the difference. Imagine for a moment if everyone in your organization was committed to correctly using a To Do List every day. What difference that would make to eliminating fake work?

There are doubtlessly other ways of increasing productivity that are cost effective and I would love to hear some of these from you.

But as I mentioned at the outset, if you only committed to one of these ideas and followed through, it would make a profound difference to the productivity across the business you are working in.

Dr Tim Baker is an Associate Member of the AIBEF, and is an international consultant and author of [The End of the Performance Review; A New Approach to Appraising Employee Performance](#).

Understanding Your Customer's Needs



Most business owners have an intuitive understanding of their customers' needs -- but that intuitive understanding becomes a much more powerful tool if you articulate and analyze it.

Only then can you fully understand how to most effectively build the kind of customer relationship that will help your business succeed over time -- this principle is central to the very heart of the formulation of marketing.

As a starter step in your marketing plan, ask yourself the following questions:

- Who are my customers?
- Who are my potential customers?
- What kind of people are they? What are their incomes? What are their needs?
- Where do they live?
- Can they buy? Will they buy?
- Am I offering them real benefits, when and how they want them?
- Is my business in the best place?
- Is my pricing right?
- How do customers perceive my business?
- Who are my competitors?
- How does my business compare with my competitors'?

Every customer's satisfaction (and dissatisfaction) comes from what they expect and anticipate expectations – *what your customer thinks he or she should experience* – and the reality of what you deliver, or endeavour to deliver to

them. If the experience you deliver exceeds those expectations, you can expect customer loyalty, customer lifetime value, and brand equity to flourish.

Meeting (or exceeding) customer expectations is the most valuable aspect of customer satisfaction. A satisfied customer is one that has had their expectations met.

Over the past 10–15 years, businesses are placing a renewed focus on customers. They're doing this because they see that customers have more choice than ever before, particularly with the dynamic growth in Internet sales. If customers don't perceive that what your business is offering is worth what they've paid for, they'll take their money to a competitor who offers better value. That competitor may be right next door or on the other side of the world.

What is definitely lacking in most organisations is a real understanding, empathy and focus on their customers, and a genuine understanding of what value they can provide to their customers.

However, the goal here is to not just meet customer expectations; it should be to 'wow' customers and exceed them. When you exceed your customer's expectations, you create an experience that the customer remembers. This experience is often passed onto friends which generates word of mouth referrals and can help create a positive impression of you and your business.

Understanding the needs of your customers is the key to giving them outstanding service. To give good customer care you must deliver what

you promise. But outstanding customer care involves getting to know your customers so well that you can exceed their expectations.

To really understand your customers well, you need to always make them feel welcome, and illustrate that you look forward to helping them whenever you are in contact with them.

The potential rewards are huge: You can dramatically increase customer loyalty, and they in turn, will help create a strong referral system through positive word-of-mouth feedback and recommendations to their friends.

Two of the easiest (and best) activities that you can undertake that will definitely help you to understand your customer better are as follows:

One way is to simply put yourself in their shoes (*after all, as well as running a business, you are also a customer to many other businesses*) and try and look at your business from their point of view.

The second way is simply to ask your customers what they think ...

Are they happy with the service you provide? What do they think you can do to make their experience better? Would they recommend you to others?

Many of your regular or loyal customers are complimented when you ask them for genuine feedback to help you improve your business.

TRY IT!! ☒



BizTips



Apologize, Don't Debate

If a customer has a problem, apologize and fix the problem. Make sure to let customers vent their grievances, even if you are tempted to interrupt and correct them. Then give them a refund, new item, or whatever will fix the problem.

Debating or haggling over a refund creates ill will. Repair mistakes immediately. Keep in mind that a complaint about your company is an opportunity to turn the situation around and create a loyal customer.

Obviously, there will be some customer requests that are too outrageous to comply with. If that's the case, do your best to offer a moderate, appealing alternative.

Feedback Keeps You Focused

Ask your customers to rate your service on a regular basis. This can be done via a short questionnaire included with every product sold or mailed to key clients.

Keep the questionnaire short so that it is not a burden for customers to complete, and make sure they know they can decline to participate. Always let customers know the purpose of the survey is to serve them better.

If they fill out the survey and have no problems, it is a reminder of what good service you offer. If issues do arise, they can be addressed.

Stay Flexible

You must be flexible when it comes to your customers and clients. This means doing a project for a client in a pinch, having an early morning meeting even if you like to sleep in, and meeting on Saturday even if you usually

reserve your weekends for yourself. Flexibility can also mean getting information for your client, even though it may not be in your area of expertise.

Say, for example, you're catering a wedding and your client needs information on Irish wedding customs. It's just as easy to make a call to your local library and fax the information to your client as it is to say "I don't know anything about that."

And making that extra effort will ultimately pay off with a very satisfied customer.

Always Say "Yes!"

This doesn't mean giving up your personal will to your customers but it does mean finding a way to help customers with their requests. If you run a gift business you might wrap a present for an important client, even if you don't usually provide gift wrapping.

You might stay up late to finish a project if a client suddenly has a deadline moved up, or travel in a snow storm to meet a client even if it means an unpleasant trip for you.

Always saying yes, means the words "that isn't possible" should be forbidden from use in your business. You cannot afford to use them.

If this sounds expensive and inconvenient, it is, but it is less expensive than losing a customer and having to spend money and time landing a new one.

Under Promise, Over Deliver

Make your customers believe they are important to you by always appearing to go the extra mile. Build a little cushion into a deadline and deliver early.

Estimate that a job will cost more than

you think, and bring it in lower.

Many small businesses make the mistake of reversing this maxim - over promising and under delivering. This is a true recipe for disaster. You may get the business, but your level of service will make it difficult to compete. If 24-hour turnaround is excellent service in your industry, don't promise it in 12 just because the customer requests it.

What Makes You Different?

Why should customers buy from you and not from someone else? What does your attitude and actions say to your customers?

Do you make your customers feel welcome and wanted? What lasting impressions will your customers have from purchasing your products or using your services?

Make the experience for your customer a memorable one and let them remember your for your superior customer service.

Concentrate On Service

The businesses who thrive in increasingly competitive markets are those that focus on service.

Give free reign to your experienced, knowledgeable salespeople to convey their passion for your products, and encourage them to build relationships with your chosen customers.

Be a wealth of information to customers, and advertise your experience by offering seminars or workshops. When feasible, offer to order hard-to-find items and sizes.





Australasian Institute of Business and Enterprise Facilitation Inc

In 1995 the Australian Government published the Report by the Industry Task Force on Leadership and Management Skills headed by David S. Karpin. The Report is entitled "Enterprising Nation" – a report which provides the most comprehensive insight ever into the way Australia prepares its managers for work and leadership into the 21st century.

One of the formal recommendations made by the Task Force is that "a comprehensive accreditation process be established for small business trainers, educators, counsellors, mentors and advisers so as to upgrade the quality of small business advice."

The Report states "Accreditation would establish a high standard for the skills required ... and it would also provide small business owner managers with a consistent and easy method of identifying suitably skilled trainers, educators, counsellors, mentors and advisers."

About AIBEF

The AIBEF was founded in 1997 as a result of the recommendations of the Industry Task Force on Leadership and Management Skills. In their report, entitled Enterprising Nation, the taskforce recommended that: "... a comprehensive accreditation process be established for small business trainers, educators, counsellors, mentors and advisers so as to upgrade the quality of small business advice."

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In their report, entitled *Enterprising Nation*, the taskforce recommended that: “.... a comprehensive accreditation process be established for small business trainers, educators, counsellors, facilitators and advisers so as to upgrade the quality of small business advice.”

It's a fact that, at the moment, the business advice industry in Australia is self-regulated, and virtually anyone can call themselves a business or enterprise facilitator, advisor, coach, facilitator, trainer or consultant.

Check out Google for instance; there must be a dozen (or more) sites on “*How To Start Your Own Business Consulting Venture*”.

The AIBEF is the Peak Body for Business Facilitators, Coaches and Trainers, and we, the AIBEF Committee, hope to continue the association's great work to further promote the professionalism and quality of our members, and to endeavour to act as a respected voice and advocate for the wider community.

The AIBEF represents a profession that is proud of its independence and confident of the service it provides, committed to continual improvement in the skills and knowledge of our members and Business and Enterprise Facilitators in general, who ably assist in the professional guidance and support of business, enterprise and community development.



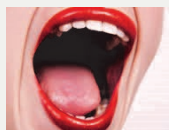
Welcome to our Newsletter

Facilitation Focus is an opportunity for Business Facilitators, Coaches, Facilitators, Trainers and Consultants to ask questions, offer answers, and become part of a group where we can all join in peer-to-peer discussions and conversations about challenges, experiences and outcomes. ***It is also worth noting that 'Focus' can be included in your Continuing Professional Development (CPD)***

Facilitation Focus is a publication for a rapidly changing world.

Almost daily, SME's are facing constant changes, and it is vital that the Business and Enterprise Facilitator is current with their expert advice and guidance.

Facilitation Focus has as its main aim to access to a professional network of peers through the AIBEF, and by gaining more insight into business and industry best practices, as well as increasing the focus on the important aspects of their own business, an AIBEF Focus member can accomplish amazing results.



Something To Say?

Letters and Article contributions from members and readers are most welcome

Please send your comments to info@aibef.org.au

WHO ARE BUSINESS OR ENTERPRISE FACILITATORS?

Virtually any professional, qualified person or organisation involved in assisting entrepreneurs, organisations, or communities to improve their Skills; Knowledge; Business; Staff; and/or Life.

The role of a Business and Enterprise Facilitator is to promote local economic growth by providing support to local entrepreneurs, groups or entire communities wishing to start or expand a small business enterprise or to assist to develop a concept where the community will benefit

The concept of Business and Enterprise Facilitation is a model of development that supports the creation of wealth from within a community by nurturing the resourcefulness of its people.

The Australasian Institute of Business and Enterprise Facilitators is an international not-for-profit institution that works with entrepreneurs, small groups and / or communities to establish sustainable, grassroots enterprise projects.

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