

Opening Doors

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8 Ways to Ignite Innovation Inside Your Company and Light Your Way Out of the Recession

The recession is in full swing, and companies everywhere are feeling the pain. Yours is likely no exception. Shrinking budgets, layoffs, and a smothering malaise that's settled over your workforce make it hard to see the proverbial light at the end of the tunnel. Sometimes, even the most optimistic leader finds them self wondering, "Is there an end to this particular tunnel?" Sure there is, but you're going to have to excavate it yourself – and you're going to have to light your own way.

Innovation is the only ticket out of this recession. This is true for America as a whole and it's certainly true for the individual organizations that make up our nation. The heart of innovation, of course, is people working together eagerly, intelligently, and productively. Innovation is all about good teamwork.

If you're like many leaders, you have a group of shell-shocked lay-off "survivors" who are wandering around lost in a state of general worry and angst about the economy. You can use innovation principles to direct their anxious energy toward solving critical problems for the company. It helps them; it helps you; it helps everyone.

So how can you deliberately create a more innovative culture at your company? Here are some tips to help you get started:

Understand the (non-flashy) new role of leadership. If you're a "command and control" type, you'd better start rethinking your style. Today, successful leaders aren't flashy and aggressive. They lead through inspiration and collaboration. Look at your current behaviors and determine which are helping you achieve your vision for leadership

through engagement and which are holding you back. Start small – and stick with it.

Search for untapped talent on your team. Employees who are recognized as unique, and who are seen as having significant contributions to make, become more engaged and passionate about their work. They light up to far brighter levels than ever before. Look for the hidden strengths and untapped potential of your existing employees and you'll see them transform before your eyes. It's almost like hiring a team of new creative superstars.

Encourage creative abrasion...but eliminate toxicity. Conflict is natural, expected, and, because it's a sign of diverse thinking on your team, even desirable. However, leaders must take steps to keep the conflict focused on the issues and not let team members direct their ire at one another personally. And you must deal with toxic, manipulative employees who gain the trust of others on the team only to viciously turn on them later. In order to innovate, people must be able to connect with each other in a real, deeply personal way. If just one person refuses to open up or truly engage, or if he throws barbs at other team members under the guise of humor, he'll cause an erosion of trust. And in the absence of trust, no real progress can be made.

Make sure quieter employees have a chance to glow. You've no doubt noticed that certain people naturally dominate the discussion while others tend to hang back and go with the flow.

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"If you're not failing every now and again, it's a sign you're not doing anything very innovative."

WOODY ALLEN

(1935 – present)

American actor, author, screenwriter and film director.

"The most successful people are those who are good at Plan B."

JAMES YORKE

(1941 – present)

Professor of Mathematics and Physics, Maryland University.

"Innovation is the specific instrument of entrepreneurship. The act that endows resources with a new capacity to create wealth."

PETER F. DRUCKER

(1909 – 2005)

American educator and writer.

"Innovation is the ability to see change as an opportunity – not a threat."

AUTHOR UNKNOWN



Though it was rather windy and the only cloudy day within the three week period surrounding July 13th, it was a very enjoyable day for all at the 2009 BOMA Golf Tournament! OpenWorks was pleased to be represented strongly with four teams made up of some of our top customers and franchise owners.

BOMA CUSTOMER GOLF TOURNAMENT

July 13th 2009

Willows Run Golf Course

Redmond, WA

Attendees: Denise Fleetwood, Account Executive
Chelsea Bergesen, Administrative Assistant



Far left: Denise Fleetwood and Chelsea Bergesen. Left: Denise Fleetwood using the OpenWorks golf towels to shield herself from the wind and impending rain.

OpenWorks also sponsored a business card drawing and a contest for the longest drive on Eagle's Talon Hole #18, at which, customers competed for a grand prize given by OpenWorks at the awards dinner. Customers were able to enjoy a relaxing day off, a great round of golf at a top course, dine with friends and co-workers, as well as a prize auction to finish off the day.

Customer outings are great opportunities to interact with customers on a different level than the day-to-day business level to which everyone becomes accustomed. It is another important way to invest time and strengthen the relationship with the customer and your business. But do remember that alongside doing these activities, it is the everyday quality that you deliver to them, keeping their building in top condition, that makes the biggest difference. These investments are significant in customer's eyes and express to your customer that you value and are investing in them and their business.

We look forward to doing more customer appreciation events this year and encourage you to partner with us in letting our customers know they are highly valued. Remember that Relationship Management is one of the wisest and most cost effective investments you can make in your business.

CALENDAR OF ADVANCED TRAINING CLASSES

* **Arizona OpenWorks**

4742 N. 24th Street, Ste. 300
Phoenix, AZ 85016

MONTHLY FRANCHISEE BUSINESS MEETING

Date Friday, September 25th
Time 12:00pm – 2:00pm
Location Saguaro Conference Room.
Lunch will be served.
Topic Running Your Business, Part 2

* **Washington OpenWorks**

1750 112th Avenue N.E., Ste. D151
Bellevue, WA 98004

MONTHLY FRANCHISEE BUSINESS MEETING

Date Thursday, September 24th
Time 1:00pm – 3:00pm
Location Conference Room
Topic The New Deep Clean
Restroom Machine
(Demo and sale). Ionic
Cleaning-New Technology

Helping Our Franchisees



OPENWORKS SALUTES OUR

Franchisee of the Month

Arizona

Rick Frizell – Rick Frizell is one of the newest members of the OpenWorks Franchise community, he has only been with us since the beginning of 2009. Recently, there was a walk through inspection done at his biggest account, the Arizona Grand Resort. Rick sold this account, started the account and has maintained this account with minimal assistance from an Open Works Representative. Rick has shown that he exemplifies how a franchise owner should conduct themselves in a professional manner and is already in talks with Arizona Grand to take on more responsibility. He has formed an excellent relationship with the client contact, this in turn, will lead to additional business as the Arizona Grand completes Phase 4 of the expansion project. Awesome job, Rick, keep it up!

California

Griselda Arriaga – Griselda has been a franchisee since 1999. She is constantly doing what it takes to keep her customers happy. Any time they ask for extra services Griselda is willing to accommodate them. Recently she was able to sell her services to an additional building one of her current customers manages. Griselda also orders all the supplies on her own. Ms. Arriaga is truly a business owner who knows what it takes to be successful in this industry. Thanks for all your hard work, Griselda.

Washington

Stephan Krumov – Stephan Krumov should be recognized for the outstanding job he has done recently with one of our accounts. He has gone above & beyond to deep clean this facility & build a strong relationship with the customer. He understands how to incorporate quality cleaning with ongoing follow-up with the customer and then the ability to adapt to a changing environment. Keep on shining, Stephan!

1st row- Left to Right: David Abdeen, Cornell Bucurenciu
2nd row- Left to Right: Al Fernando L Chua, Christina Ray, Martha Antoine, Lucica Bucurenciu, Lucretia Bucurenciu, Peter Antoine, Alberto Alvarez, Paul Atherley



Left: Lucretia Bucurenciu, Lucica Bucurenciu, Cornell Bucurenciu, Alberto Alvarez. Below: Left to Right: Al Fernando L Chua, Paul Atherley



WAXIE CARPET CARE

SEMINAR AND MACHINE TRADE SHOW

On July 16th, 2009 the OpenWorks California regional office invited all franchise owners to attend the Waxie carpet care seminar and machine trade show. This seminar was scheduled to offer all franchise owners additional product information and training as well as an opportunity to introduce them to the new Waxie encapsulating carpet care system. The morning began with a continental breakfast giving our franchise owners an opportunity to get to know each other and share business successes. The seminar began shortly thereafter, demonstrating new and improved equipment, as well as the new green and more effective cleaning products. Once the seminar had come to an end, lunch was served and pictures were taken after which the machine trade show portion began. A good time was had by all and the knowledge gained was immeasurable.

Achieve Their Dreams . . .

Franchise Referral Program

The program is very simple – just call the Regional Director in your region and give him/her your name and the name and phone number of the person whom you are referring. If the referral decides to purchase an OpenWorks franchise, then you make...

First Referral = \$ 750.00
Second Referral = \$1,000.00
Third Referral = \$1,250.00

** referrals that result in a sale **

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open works
there is a difference

COVER STORY

Problem is, if your big talkers and "star employees" are always allowed to verbally run over the quieter/less visible members of your team, the same ideas and solutions will always get implemented. Insist that everyone jot down their initial ideas in silence and then share them, round-robin style. Impose a time limit so that no one is able to out-talk her quieter teammates. Sometimes, simply moving a predictably dominant person away from the front of the room and parking her next to a more reserved team member can change group dynamics dramatically.

Don't let team leaders keep too tight a lid on the jar. A leader who dominates and controls his or her team will squelch creativity. If you're the leader, you must take deliberate steps not to do this. For instance, don't sit at the head of the table. Use positive reinforcement (both verbally and nonverbally). Don't get into a prolonged conversation with only one or two other team members. If you're not very, very careful, you'll end up biasing the people in the room by virtue of your position of power. People have a natural tendency to defer to the leader, even when he or she is trying very hard not to be dominating. You have to watch everything: tone of voice, body language, facial expressions... everything.

Make meetings fun, exciting, and inviting. Boredom and drudgery do not facilitate innovation and problem solving. That's why it's so important to make sure

you're holding light, fun, engaging meetings that people actually want to attend. If they don't want to be there, they won't be in the right frame of mind to accomplish anything worthwhile – and they won't.

Shine the light of accountability on your team. Even the most energetic, productive meeting means nothing if people don't follow up the decisions they reach with action. As a team, create a common picture of what personal accountability looks like. Then, delegate very specific assignments to very specific people. Finally, set a date for a follow-up meeting in which everyone must report on whether they fulfilled their commitments, and if not, why not.

From time to time, escape the office for a creative excursion. When you really need to tap into your team's creative talents and boost their ability to work together, you need to get offsite. Yes, even in – in fact, especially in – these stressful times. Off-site team building exercises can be held in many different settings, from a visit to the zoo to a tour of a plane manufacturing plant to a bowling tournament. These adult "field trips" yield fresh insights on teamwork and help you think about problem solving in a new way. And they also help you see others on your team in a new light.

After reading this advice, you may be thinking, Okay, all this talk of toys and trips to the zoo is fine for other companies but certainly not for my team. We're struggling to stay alive. We just don't have time for innovation.

You're absolutely wrong.

Innovation is everyone's job now. You must make time for innovation. At the very least you can devote one hour of team time a week to a truly innovative brainstorming session. Even if you don't see immediately usable outcomes, there is unmistakable value in keeping people engaged in the excitement of their work. All it takes is for one person to have a bright idea and pass it on to others.

Based on an article by Kimberly Douglas found on businessknowhow.com

FirstWorks™
TRAINING GRADUATES

Congratulations!

to the following graduates for successfully completing the intense 10 day FirstWorks training program:

Arizona

J. Trinidad Vazquez

Washington

Valentin Andreev
Chuluuntsetseg Chuluunbaatar
Pamjit Singh