



DESIGNING STRATEGIES

Business Strategies for the Design Industry

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How are you feeling about the performance of your employees? Do you see some that are excellent, doing their assigned tasks, and beyond, in a professional and timely manner? Then there are others who can't manage to get to work on time, much less complete their project assignments on time, holding up other staff and delaying important deadlines. Some employees take no time at all to get on track; you give them assignments, point them in the right direction and they handle the work to with little additional input.



Don't you wish all your staff fit that mold? It would be nice, not having to keep following up with them to be sure they understood the assignments and job tasks they were hired for. Knowing that they understand their job as well as their place in your company's big picture would be a real plus. Imagine all projects and tasks being completed, day in and day out, with little need for you to intercede. Co-workers working well as teams to assure the business runs smoothly, willing to go the extra mile to be sure everyone is headed in the direction outlined in your strategic plan. All operating as interconnecting elements of a strong, cooperative and ethical work force focused on supporting your core competencies and strategies. Ahhh... wouldn't that be nice?

Visualize

What have you done to assure that employees have the support needed to do their jobs optimally? Are they clear on their responsibilities, the importance of their job, and your expectations of them as valued members of the team? Were clear job descriptions created to assure all bases are covered at all times? Did you hire and place employees based on their strengths, or did you put the wrong person in the wrong position, poised for failure? Have you planned and budgeted for necessary training to support success?



Each individual is different, with their own unique strengths and weaknesses. Unless you take the time to determine the personality type needed to adequately fill a specific position, chances are you will end up with inappropriate workers tackling projects incompatible with their core strengths and weaknesses. Leaders of a well-run company will take the time necessary to develop detailed job descriptions for every position necessary to keep the company moving forward like a well-oiled machine. They will also have a grasp of which characteristics and attributes best mesh for every available position. It should be crystal clear to new hires what their job will entail, what is expected of them and how they fit into the corporate culture and structure. Success will seldom come to employees kept in the dark about expectations.

Analyze

If you spend too much time in hand-holding mode, constantly forced to intervene with employees who can't seem to get or stay on track, and putting out fires is a normal day for you, it's time to make some changes. Many companies grow before they are ready for what growth entails regarding the addition of staff. They don't quite have their sea legs under them when that big project or sale rolls in, forcing them to increase the work force over night. These situations leave little time for preparation needed to assure the best people are hired to handle the increased work load and move the company to the next level. It is far better to plan for growth before it becomes an instant reality.



Decide *today* that you are going to get your staffing issues under control. Review your organizational chart to be sure you have all bases covered for today and for the future. Review...or create...job descriptions for each position in the company and cross-check them to avoid gaps in critical areas. Determine what skills, competencies and personality types each job requires and be sure to have a training plan in place to improve skills where necessary. Then, recruit and hire the best people you can find with the skills and attributes that best match your needs. A strategic approach to staffing will position your company to move into the future as the economy picks up.

Strategize



Change Is Coming!

Terri L. Maurer, FASID

We've been hard at work on the Maurer Consulting Group web site. This project will bring some exciting changes in our communications with the design community. Once the site is launched, *'Designing Strategies'* will no longer arrive as an e-mail attachment, but rather through an on-line e-marketing service, allowing us to make the newsletters more interactive. We will also be incorporating a Blog into the web site to provide high quality

management and strategy content to you more frequently, answer questions by our readers and have a much more interactive relationship from our valued readers.

Planning Ahead?

If you're looking for speakers to present in your showrooms, or are interested in sponsoring a program of high quality business education to help you achieve success, contact **Maurer Consulting Group**. We're currently scheduling for the last quarter of 2010 and all of 2011, so contact us today – tmaurer@maurerconsultinggroup.com.

The employer generally gets the employee he deserves.

Sir Walter Bilbey