Small Business Workflow - Lessons You Can learn From Google

Every business should run like a well oiled machine; it has various parts that work together for one common goal. To be as effective as possible, every member of your business needs to work cohesively in the small business workflow for maximum efficiency. So, what is a workflow for a small business and what lessons can small businesses learn about workflows from larger enterprises like Google?

What is a Small Business Workflow?

A small business workflow is a term used to describe the tasks and people/resources involved for each step in a business process. For example, a Support Center for a software company could have a workflow for handling all inquiries to ensure support tickets are always handled consistently from initial contact to resolution. That workflow would involve the handling of the initial ticket, the movement of that ticket to the appropriate representative, contact with the client who opened the ticket to obtain further information, passing of the ticket to the tech team to look into the issue, and contacting the support representative letting them know the problem is resolved, followed by the representative contacting the customer letting them know the issue has been resolved, and ultimately closing the ticket in the system. This type of workflow ensures that consistent service is always met with each step in a business process having to be completed before proceeding to the next step.

Why Does Your Small Business Need Workflows?

Your customers demand consistent service, and as a business owner it should be your main goal to deliver it. According to the American Express Global Customer Service Barometer, 70% of Americans are willing to spend 13% more with companies that they believe provide excellent service. When the majority of businesses think of customer service, they only think of the facet that faces customers such as phone and email communications. However, your customer service extends beyond just your engagement with customers and includes consistent services or products. Having the right business workflows ensure that you constantly meet desired consistency metrics. This makes having the right workflows in place more important than ever.

What Workflow lesson can you learn from Google for your Small Business?

Test, Measure, Iterate

By adding a Test, Measure, Iterate workflow for your small business, you'll be able to go to market

faster with new strategies, learn from mistakes, and deliver a better more consistent product to help you generate revenue. Two examples of the lesson in action are:

Focus on the User - Google prides themselves on creating the best experience for their users. This shows in their constant updating of their search algorithms, and their never-ending state of innovation to improve the lives of users through their technology. With their algorithms, they'll launch an update, measure it's impact on users and search results, and then take the lessons they learn to create the new version to make things even better.

Fail Fast, Learn Quickly - In today's dynamic market, failure is actually an option. By launching your service/products early and iterating, you'll most likely fail at first but the constant iteration will help guide you towards the service/product that customers demand. For example, if you're building a new website for your company, it will not be the perfectly functioning machine that you want it to be, but by releasing as quickly as it is "workable", you can then continue to iterate the website based on performance metrics to reach the state of perfection that you're looking for. Try doing a weekly or monthly recap of everything you've done or released and asking yourself what worked? what did you learn? and what you can do differently to get better results? You may not always succeed immediately, but by acknowledging your failures quickly you can guide your future efforts. When Google+ was first released, it was lauded as a problem filled social network that was a poor attempt at taking away some of Facebook's market share. However, they did not let that stop them. They quickly learned from their lessons and used Google+ as a platform to integrate all of their services and found a way to make their "social network" more popular and usable for their end-users.