

Small Office, Home Office Information Newsletter

Welcome to the first edition of the Small Office, Home Office Information Newsletter. This has been a long time coming and it's been something I have wanted to do but never seemed to have the time. So tonight, instead of sitting down watching Friday night football I'm back in the office preparing this email.

My plan is to produce and email once a every two weeks and it will soon be made available via email but at least this one will only be available via PDF download because I want to play around with layouts etc.

My Two Weeks

These last two weeks have been an incredibly crazy time for us. Toni's business, of which this is part, has more than reached the tipping point and work just keeps pouring in.

Only today one of our regular clients let us know that he would have an additional \$17,000 worth of work for us to wrap up before Christmas – and that's in addition to the \$50,000 worth of work he already has already ordered to be completed by Christmas.

How we manage to cope with it all will be interesting because, once again, one of our writers is beginning to show signs of losing interest in meeting deadlines. Another new writer who appeared to be very anxious to work for us was so anxious that she never bothered to return any of the work she had been allocated this week.

So it's going to be a challenge but then we seem to thrive on challenges and we always apply our personal motto to challenges like this – improvise, adapt and overcome!

Laying People Off

A couple of days ago I posted on the blog about laying people off. Sacking staff for whatever reason is not something that we like to think about but it's definitely something all small business people should think about because we are all going to have to do it sooner or later.

Guy Kawasaki wrote a very interesting post on his blog called The Art of the Layoff (http://blog.guykawasaki.com/2006/07/the_art_of_the_.html) and it is definitely well worth reading.

A couple of points he made are worth mentioning here:

* **Take responsibility.** Ultimately, it is the CEO's decision to make the cuts, so don't blame it on the board of directors, market conditions, competition, or whatever else. In effect, she should simply say, "I'm the orifice. I made the decision. This is what we're going to do." If you don't have the courage to do this, don't be a CEO. Now, more than ever, the company will need a leader, and leaders accept responsibility.

* **Cut deep and cut once.** Management usually believes that things will get better soon, so it cuts the smallest number of people in anticipation of a miracle. Most of the time the miracle doesn't materialize, and the company ends up making multiple cuts.

Given the choice, you should cut too deeply and risk the high-quality problem of having to rehire. If nothing else, it enables you to declare victory: "We've turned things around and we're hiring again." By contrast, multiple cuts are terrible for the morale of the employees who have not been laid off.

Keeping People On

We had some fairly momentous news last night. Toni's father has just taken extended leave from his job as a manager for a large retail chain and may choose to ultimately retire. He is 62 and was looking forward to a few more years before retirement but, for a number of reasons, he's tired and he's had enough.

Sometimes I don't think we value our older staff enough. It's those people, the ones who have been with the business for years, who have the experience and can get things done with a minimum of fuss. They may not be up with all the latest technical advances in stock control and things like that but they know their job.

When they go they leave a big hole in the business that's hard to fill so don't be in a hurry to trade-in that mature worker in favor of someone younger. You've invested a lot of money in giving that mature worker the experience that he or she has so don't waste it by letting them go before they're ready to go.

Before I go, I know that there are lots of people who run web sites in conjunction with their small business or home office. If you're one of those and you think that your site is under-performing but your budget is limited and you can't afford a professional then come over to the Cre8asite Forums (<http://www.cre8asiteforums.com>) and check your site into Website Hospital.

And that's it for this newsletter. If you have any questions please don't hesitate to ask and I always appreciate your comments on Small Office, Home Office Information

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