

## **How to build entrepreneurs within your business**

Last week I had the fortune to attend the well-known enterprise content management event, the AIIM Conference and Expo, which reminded me of the conversation I had with Kerry Gumas, the CEO of Questex recently. One of the things which has become apparent to me as I grow The Event Doctor! is the necessity for people to be entrepreneurs in their daily work (in fact, helping event organizers teach their staff to be this way is an emergent part of my business) in order for innovation in the entire corporation to take place.

Since this is a growing trend in the way I am driving my own business (since if a business owner isn't creative and entrepreneurial his business will be dead soon enough), I was fascinated how Kerry set this up at Questex:

Five ways to make your staff entrepreneurial

### **1) Incentivize staff to become entrepreneurs- short term and long term**

This is similar to what Dan Cole is doing (see that article here: [http://www.theeventdoctor.net/articles/SISO\\_Article\\_9.pdf](http://www.theeventdoctor.net/articles/SISO_Article_9.pdf)), i.e. having individual staff responsible for their own goals which are aligned with the group, department and company goals, and if possible giving them their own 'business' to manage. This is key to making staff feel that it is worth their while to take chances and seize opportunities.

### **2) Take direction from your customers and your customers' customers- get information and learn their initiatives**

Another of the comments which have been mentioned in previous columns, to have staff 'plug' in to your customers to synergize your goals with theirs as possible, and to go a step further, to understand your customer's customers goals. Not just at the sales position, either, but operations, marketing and in some cases from the program side. Publishers who have strict divisions between commercial and editorial may have to be careful, but it always important for your staff to know how to make your events more 'customer friendly' from a micro level in order to retain those customers.

### **3) Take risk**

This is a multi-faceted aspect. In general in the business, you need to try new things, new technologies, new programs without fear. From a personnel perspective you also need to delegate responsibility and trust your staff to make mistakes in order to become more entrepreneurial, and valuable to your organization.

### **4) Understand that there is a natural selection process**

In other words, some of your staff may not want to or be able to be entrepreneurial. Here you have a decision to make, can you afford to keep such a person? If it's an accountant, it may be OK, but in customer-facing positions, it might not be. You could always move such staff to other non-entrepreneurial positions as necessary, simply let them let them go.

### **5) See your staff not as corporate managers but as entrepreneurs**

There is a tendency to see staff as people managing 'stuff' rather than being the 'spark plugs' for the next generation of profitable events. See if you can change your thinking and those of the top staff, since your staff will be looking for constant reinforcement of your new thinking.

As I roamed the hall at the Boston Convention and Exposition Center, I could see the by-product of by being entrepreneurial, that is the success of an event in front of me. Take note, and hopefully the world of innovation can bring you to a new level of profit!

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