

Title:

Business systems - what are they?

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851

Summary:

You may have heard about them before, but never quite thought about how they can help you personally. Find out what you can automate in your business to make life easier and free up your time to grow your business today.

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Article Body:

You may have heard about them before, but never quite thought about how they can help you personally. They seem to be an ambiguous element of the business world, and when they are discussed, always seem to be this...thing...that other companies and organizations do.

What I am referring to is Business Systems

From the beginning of modern capitalism in our society, the most successful companies were those that developed a system, or group of systems, to complete their tasks and meet the needs of their customers. Take Henry Ford and the Ford Company, for example. Mr Ford obviously realized the power of developing and implementing a system that saw his Model T Ford produced quicker and more efficiently as his company grew. His never-ending approach to finding a simpler and more effective method of completing a task pioneered the way for many major corporations, and helped Ford stay competitive in the motor vehicle business.

But, most people in business don't make cars. In fact, they most likely sell clothes, books, time (through a job), commodity goods, intellect (through consulting), and so on. But, what particular business systems could possibly put into practice that will see their organisation become more proficient, easier to manage and produce better results for their customers?

A system can be defined as methods, organisation, or considered principles of procedure (Oxford Dictionary). And throughout your daily activities, there are certain tasks that you do every day or often enough that you have a certain way

of doing them.

So, what types of activities could you systemize or create "considered principles of procedure" for, that will enable your organisation to be more efficient?

Emails - there are most likely a number of emails that arrive in your inbox daily or weekly, that you can create a system for processing them. Set up rules or commands in your email processor that automatically places emails from specific people into topic-related folders. For example, email newsletters into the folder for that email newsletter. As the emails arrive, they will be filtered through this system, and your inbox will not be overly cluttered with emails from many different topics.

Staff training - Do you have a specific approach to how you train new staff? Is it documented the steps that you take to educate the new staff member about your business, its goals, the OH&S discussion? Even if you don't have staff yet, imagine what you must put into a system for when you do. Make a list of all the steps in the staff training process - almost like a checklist. This alone will help you to train your staff in a systematic way that leaves little to no room for forgetting an important part of their induction.

Inventory management - Inventory control and management is a large part of many organisations. There have been numerous software packages created that assist companies in managing their physical stock. If you have large stock levels, then consider investing in these established software systems for the business. If not, then spend some time breaking down those typical steps that are taken in the stock control, stock ordering and quality control procedures. When is the stock checked for minimum quantity levels? What is the minimum order of stock for each item? Is there a procedure that checks the stock when it arrives from the manufacturer, ensuring a minimal loss of damaged goods, and ultimately upset customers? A good way to start this is to also make a list of those things that need to be managed and monitored on a regular basis.

Sales process - if you are involved in selling in any way, then you most likely have an approach that works for you already. However, what if there are 4 sales people all selling the same product, and all selling it totally differently? Of course, a human being's personality must be allowed to shine through, but there are going to be specific tasks that every sales person must carry out to maintain the image of the company. Write these tasks down. Spell out exactly what the staff member must do, say, wear, act like, and so on, so that every customer can come to expect the same level of service and approach from each member of your sales team. Create a system that they earn, rather than hoping

they will make sales in their own way using their own methods.

The reality is you are already operating a number of systems in your organisation. These are sometimes referred to as habits. The way you manage your files, phone calls and even how you make your tea or coffee are all systems. However, to be truly successful in a business, you need to record and officially structure these systems so that the organisation continues to function without your presence - for example, when you are on holiday.

Then, all your hard work and effort in creating a business that your customers have grown to depend on will not be wasted. Others can continue doing exactly the same thing, in exactly the same way, for many more years to come.