Building A Team, Getting Feedback, Assessing Your Business and more...

James Schramko here with a Business Tips News update.

Alright, today I want to talk about team. At some point you're going to need to scale your business by getting people to come on board and help you with your business.

So here're my top tips for having a team.

One of the best things you can do is get yourself an assistant. These days we hear the term VA or virtual assistant. Now I found that having a virtual assistant to help me coordinate the things that I would've done myself is actually getting more leverage for me. As you grow a few more members in your team, having that one person who you can send an email to or type a little note into skype and ask them to do something for you. It gives you like hands and legs. As tempting as you hire people to be starting to deal with all the different people that you've hired, but I found it much easier to have your virtual assistant be dealing with those people as you grow. That way you can actually manage more people effectively.

I still think you should have daily meetings and you should brief your individual team leaders. But also having that virtual assistant to help you manage your systems and structures is a tremendous asset.

The other thing is it's important that people know that your VA is representing you within the business. So when your VA asks for something they might as well know that it is literally coming from you. And your VA is the person that you'll be communicating with more than most people. So it is essential that you pick a VA who is switched on, who understands what it is that you're trying to achieve and that thinks in a similar way that you would think about things. So they could almost anticipate the way that you're going to ask for things and the way you'd like to receive things. And once you get that communication in place a VA will be an irreplaceable person in your business.

Now that leads me to my second tip. The second thing is to make sure that you have always got two people who can do every task in your business. Of course one person doing it is the minimum but if that person is sick or wants to have holidays, you are now single point sensitive. So we've probably covered this a couple of times but have two people be able to do everything in your business. That means cross training and hiring just before you need somebody else. That way you've got the depth in the team that you can quickly cover scalability situations when your business starts to get more popular. You can also hire and train faster because you've got someone there who can train while the other person does the work. That has been one of the critical keys for us on our transition from going from one team member, me, all the way up to, I think we're in our 60s now in the last few years and just from natural growth of our business and being able to cross train and grow each department. As soon as you hit a team of 3 or 4 people, that team is probably big enough and you should now add another layer. Appoint a team leader and start cross training within that small group. And

you may have a few layers to your business, however if you have a daily meeting, those layers all collapse each day as you hear from each person in the business.

When you're starting out with new people it's always a good idea to set clear expectations and be quite firm from the outset about what you do want. It's very hard to be soft and have week boundaries and then to tighten them up later. It's much easier to be a little bit tighter and a little bit firmer from the beginning and then to ease up as you get a working relationship with your people. Please, start off firm, be very clear about what you want and if you identify that you've got the wrong person, it's better to act on that early rather than later.

Let's talk about feedback. I've touched on this before but I just want to develop it a little bit further. There're two main ways you can do this. One is through observation and just observing and that's one of my favourite methods. The second way is to ask for feedback and that is to simply elicit feedback. And you can do that by specifically sending out a survey perhaps. It's a great time to do that just before you rerelease a product or before you start a new one. Go and survey your target audience and find out how you can make your product better. What it is they liked about it? Why they bought it and if you can use their nice comments in your new product, perhaps on the sales page or the sales material. Another way that you can get this is to set triggers. And one of the triggers is in your email sequencing which we talked about a week ago. And the other one is you can setup things like triggers with your support desk. Say a ticket goes unanswered for a certain period; you can send a feedback asking if everything is okay. Was there something we could've done to make it easier for you to send back a reply earlier, etc? And of course good popular support systems like Zendesk automatically have feedback mechanism built in if you just turn it on.

Here's my ultimate tip for customer satisfaction. If you really want to sell more to your current existing customers, send out a handwritten note. A handwritten note is high touch, high quality, high open rate and very rare. So send out a handwritten note or two. You'll get tremendous feedback from it. Especially as we get more and more digital, more and more electronic the good old fashion things will definitely be the way to stand out. A handwritten letter, a phone call, actual service. These are the things that people miss and crave. Remember when you can find someone up and actually speak to a person? Well these will be the big things in the future. Instead of having to dial 2, dial 3, dial 7 or SMS. Handwritten letters.

As we approach the middle of the year, this is a great time to take stock of your business and figure out how are you going? What does the score card look like? It's 6 months in; roughly you could double what you've done near to date and to get an idea on what you're looking at on an annual basis.

What I do with my SilverCircle students is every few months we hold an intensive workshop where some of the students come in and sit down with me for a day and we map out their business and we plan into steps and action items for them to go at and implement which we follow up every week. You should set something like that for your business. Sit down with a white board, map out what you've done in the last 6 months, map out what you'd like to do in the next 6 months and make some action items and put them on your whiteboard. The top three perhaps. It might be to create a better content, it might be to get more traffic, it might be to come out with a new product line, it might be to go and find some strategic alliances, it might be just to get some coaching to take your business to the next stage. I've just opened up SilverCircle for the next week or so if you're interested in applying to get that help from me then make sure you send me an email or leave a message. I'll explain more details about it.

I hope you enjoyed this week's tips. I'll speak to you next week.

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