

Episode 92: Encouraging staff in a small office setting

Small office or large, everyone can have the same problem.

1. Quickly get to acceptance.

With any change there is shock, denial, anger and acceptance – the quicker you get to acceptance the better.

To do this you need to do a good job of explaining what you are doing and why.

What is the value of the change (ie: a new records system) and why do it?

The team has to understand and be bought-in; otherwise it just looks like extra work.

It's not good enough to say, "because I said so." That may be true, but unhelpful.

2. Have some fun.

Even hard jobs can be fun if you do them the right way. Think about doing a launch party or kick-off celebration.

You can do it in a restaurant or a bar or wherever makes sense to your business.

If the work is going to mean a lot of weekend and night work, do a family event.

Do not be scared of spending some money on the kick-off; include it in your costs.

A business reason means there is a benefit – don't ignore the people costs.

3. Celebrate Success

As with any project, you need to set goals and milestones – respect and publish them.

Make sure the whole team knows what they are and mark when you make them.

Use email, or even better, wall-charts and signs to show progress.

If you have major milestones, make sure you give people time off after making them.

If you are not making progress, share the reasons and the plan to fix. Resist changing the end date.

If the team is bought-in they will work through the issues with you.

4. Reward the contributors

While a THANK YOU is always good, your team may be thinking money.

Pay the overtime if they are owed it and give days off in lieu where deserved.

If people go above and beyond, recognize with spot awards or prizes.

These don't always have to be money; they could be dinner for two at Chilies.

Whatever makes sense to your team and the challenge ahead of you.

Bottom Line: If you are making a change for a good business reason, make sure you don't forget the people doing the work.

While holding them to the goals, recognize the achievements and reward the good work.

