

Here is our New Year selection of Business Tips to help you succeed

In this month's helping of hot tips from Kent Trainer, we cover our early February programme.

Tip 1: Staff have a habit of leaving just when they are most valuable. Your valuable staff will need care and attention if you are to retain them and keep them motivated, so develop a retention plan. Things to address include development opportunities, creating a sense of ownership, mapping out a progression path, providing new challenges and keeping their salary competitive.

Pick up a wide range of HR Essentials on 16 February.

Tip 2: ISO certification requires auditing by an external certification body and audits by trained internal staff. The aim is ongoing review and assessment, to verify that your business systems work well, and to make continual improvements to them. Internal auditors are most effective when they can review areas of the business away from their normal working teams, so they can ask more challenging questions about the processes and request robust evidence of their colleagues.

Take our ISO9001 Internal Auditors' Course on 14 February.

Tip 3: Coaching and mentoring get the best from colleagues by taking the time to question and listen to them. To really hear what they are telling you, imagine that there is a volume control on that voice in your head that comments on everything you hear. As you start to listen, turn the volume on your internal voice, until all you hear is the other person.

Learn how to use Coaching and Mentoring with your colleagues on 19 February.

Tip 4: Closing a sale is the vital step we often miss - due to fear of rejection. You cannot afford to do this. Listen for the buying signals, don't be afraid to ask: "can I take that order now?" and, when they say yes, take the order and stop talking. Once you've made the sale, nothing you can say will improve your position - it can only set you back.

Learn more valuable tips in Sales Essentials on 28 February and, if you are responsible for a sales team, then Sales Team Management on 23 February is for you.

Tip 5: When a team member is over-confident and under-performing, they will often resent too much support: the amount of support you may feel it takes to protect your business from risk. One strategy is to set clear targets and let them get on with it but, to keep the risk level acceptable, set their work in smaller, discreet chunks. This will give them clearer evidence of their own performance and you more control over their work.

Spend a day learning more about Managing Under-performance on 21 February.

Tip 6: When you set prices, remember that there are aspects of your potential customers' perceptions that you can control ... and aspects that you cannot. You can't control the comparisons they make, their experiences and how they perceive your brand. But you can control price comparisons that you offer, promotions and how you word the price. Would you rather pay £25 or "Only £24.95"?

Explore strategies for budgeting, costing and pricing in Financial Planning on 15 February.

Tip 7: Motivating team members is often as simple as showing them respect and recognising the contribution that each one makes. However, to go one step further, look for ways you can put your team members more in control of their own work. Show them how to assess their own performance and let them find ways to improve it..

Learn more about motivation, communication, balancing priorities and a range of other aspects of Supervisory Management on 27 February.

Courses running in early March are:

Richard - please can you help me out here

Find out more about these and our full programme, at www.kenttrainers.co.uk, or call our office on 01892 823053

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