Employees: a business expense or asset?

Your organisational strategy is one of the key systems for achieving your business goals. It stands to reason then that structuring your employees will be one of the most important functions that you as a business owner will perform.

Before you begin, you need to understand the importance of structuring the roles of your employees around your business, and not the business around your employees.

You may be surprised to know that 'people problems' are the number one frustration in most businesses... more so than money, competition, legislation or anything else. What causes the greatest frustration when it comes to 'people problems' is motivating employees to do things they do not want to do.

If you want a thriving business, you need to create an environment in which people want to do what the business requires of them rather than have them operate just because they have to. Employees need to understand their outputs are directly linked to the attainment of the business's strategic objectives.

It's therefore vital that employee roles and responsibilities are structured correctly and clearly understood by each person within the business.

To structure staff, you begin by determining your company's strategic objectives. This means you need to understand exactly what goals you are hoping to achieve through your business.

Next, you need to determine the outputs required to realise those objectives, including the systems that will facilitate those requirements.

Finally, you need to determine how many people you need to make all of this happen. Inspirational and motivated employees are one of the greatest assets in a business and should not be neglected by any degree.

A good idea is to hold regular business development meetings with all employees present.

Such meetings offer one of the most effective platforms for delivering your vision and securing the emotional commitment from employees to move forward.

They also create a sense among your employees that 'we're all in this together' and we're all simultaneously hearing the same messages.

This is also the perfect forum in which to address employee concerns and fears, both directly and indirectly.

It creates the opportunity to exchange information between management and employees and is most effective when the communication from management is not instructive.

In these meetings your team can discuss the business's strategic objectives, particularly where you are right now (your baseline), where you want to be when the objectives have been met (your target), and the gap between the two. Together, you can determine the actions required to close those gaps, and the persons responsible for taking those actions.

As with any plan, you can also agree to milestones along the way and the frequency with which you will review your progress against the plan.

In the end, employees are inspired by growth. It is therefore important to prioritise and afford employees the time to focus on their growth.

Allowing employees to grow with the business, and making sure that their growth is on par with the strategic objectives, will provide rewards to both the business and its people. Everything that is done in the business must be aimed at fulfilling its strategic objectives, otherwise you're wasting your time, money and manpower.

To find out more about structuring your staff around your business to enhance business performance, we invite you to join the Masthead Financial Advisor's *Association.*

Contact your regional Masthead office or visit www.masthead.co.za

Mimi Pienaar: Who do you need to achieve your strategy and goals?