BUSINESS SUPERFUEL

PART TWO – ARE YOU READY TO BE A SYSTEM ADDICT?

Composed by Kevin Tewis-Allen. (FCIM Chartered Marketer)

- DIGITAL OPERATIONS
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"Are You Ready To Be A System Addict"?

www.kevintewis-allen.com

The Automated Nation

To grow and scale your business it is a given that you will require a certain amount of technical automation. Whether it is stock control, database, CRM, accounting or billable hours these systems can enable organisations to improve business capability.

These **digital tools of the trade** do contribute to positive business operations and help ensure delivery of your product and/or service. They also inherently provide teams and business owners with an unusual sense of satisfaction and **new professional confidence** that the job or project at hand can now be done to the best possible standard. Now that it is **'in the cloud'** (so to speak), life will be just perfect!

These systems are indeed an excellent addition to any business model and how could you argue differently. These new digital systems are **developed and tested by an army of coders** and very clever tech people in US, ASIA and Europe. So I'm an **advocate** for sure of the **automated nation**!

So where do things get a little tricky? Oh yes HUMANS (The board and employees)!

Capability – The power or ability to do something: " The Company's capability to increase productivity"

Your team and board of directors need to be **system addicts**! They have to **live the digital operation**s and really embed themselves into this new potential process and ensure there are guaranteed and sustainable benefits to the business.

When the organisation brings in new systems and employs new staff, training on the cloud solutions/hardware is critical but lets not forget most are on subscription and most **are linked to your business via an API** (*for example so that your website can track orders in order for the company to address productivity*).

These systems require regular updates often from new changes to Google's algorithm that can temporarily disable your website sales. Don't be afraid to ask for **quality assurances** in new tech/software, they should be able to be your long term trusted business partner (pre and post).

Why is this an issue then, sounds all very straight forward?

Truth is – Often a credible capability assessment has not been produced by the board!

Crunch time - it is critical that the 'top down' team know the exact impacts to business operations (profit, staff, delivery/customer service) because without a clear understanding of granular impacts it is very easy to stare into the eyes of 'digital sales teams' and be **bamboozled** by:

1) not knowing a true and coherent understanding of the 'word **digital**' in this context
2) the SWOT/impacts to your operations (are you 100% sure that your team can deliver and that there has been a detailed risk assessment on all the key areas of business operations.
The old adage says, if its too good to be true, it probably is.

Where to start?
Here are my three action points to get ahead of the sales jargon . . . . .

1. Ask The End User (External capability assessing)

Does the end user in your industry benefit from the introduction of this proposed technology/system? Are you able to pass on a cost saving, speed up delivery, improve quality assurance? Would there be the business USP's that you would gain from spending on this? Have you tested this with a recent email survey so that you paying customers can have their say about improving the business?
It is often these people who been the brunt of a bad idea, time and time again so asking them about your big idea could be key o big growth or not!

2. Ask the staff (Internal capability assessing)

The sales teams in these 'system' sales roles are quick to blind you positive digital, case studies and projections miles above your current targets , they never tell you how much people lower will be needed in this automated system! I have first hand experience where not enough capability assessments were addressed. All everyone saw was the sales figures once implemented. What no-one factored in correctly was the sheer level of on-going administration this new layer of optimisation. The human factor had been ignored and once again the mighty tacit knowledge that employees has sight of was not considered.

3. Contingency Planning (Risk and Change management)

Linked to point 2 above, once a business has agreed to adopt a system, change it is very hard and costly to roll back. Always in these case is to micro-test. Take a small division and let them be the test pilots before you roll it our group wide. The best way of identifying risk is the proof of concept. The sales team selling to you has no real idea if this works for you, they just want commission. Don't be put off by digital or told it's a scary place, like with all projects start small, have controls and go with what works for you.

Contact : Kevin@kevintewis-allen.com