



**Best practices for companies moving to the next level
Friday, April 25, 2008**

7 Synergies of Business Success

1. Grow from the inside out.
2. Develop a brand promise and live it daily.
3. Put people first.
4. Hire leaders and managers.
5. Lead to create wealth.
6. Values validate valuation.
7. Monitor, monitor...what ever you measure will improve.

Intangible...the quality of the company is directly proportional to the quality of the CEO.

For an assessment to see how you stack up on these issues, [click here](#)

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Innovation Starts With Team-Building

Whether you want to create new product innovations or instill some new ways of working, you will glean strategies for your business from the new book ***The Game Changer: How You Can Drive Revenue and Profit with Innovation***, by AG Lafley and Ram Charan (Crown Business Books, April 2008).

While describing the culture of innovation at Proctor & Gamble, the authors start with the premise, "Innovation - the seed of organic growth - is a matter of process and culture and business strategy. The real payoff comes from people getting comfortable together and sparking off one another; innovation is chiefly a product of social interaction. You've got to manage people before you can manage their ideas."

Here's 10 ideas on how to manage people so that they will be more innovative:

1. **Create a physical environment that promotes discussion and social interaction** - For example, put small conference areas with white boards around your building to promote conversations, problem solving, healthy discussion.
2. **Fun** - One California software company takes all their employees to Disneyland twice a year.
3. **Funny** - Another construction firm holds an annual Academy Awards format program with only fun awards: best dressed staff member, most embarrassing employee moment, project management 'aha' of the year, etc.
4. **Get out of the way** - Set up scenarios for your team to work as a self-directed work team. For example, empower the team to make all decisions about work assignments on projects (that means do not attend the meeting or change the decisions afterward).
5. **Hold employees accountable** - Accountable employees will take initiative. If you act like their parent, they do not need to take initiative.
6. **Encourage group problem-solving** - Teach employees how to

environment -
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analyze a problem using the Creative Problem Solving model (e-mail pam@smartgrowth.com if you do not have this template). Require them to work with other employees on this model before bringing the problem to you.

7. **Reward the team before the individual** - A Denver architecture firm provides a monthly bonus to all staff when profit and revenue goals are met...business development staff are not on commission.

8. **Create a culture of collaboration, not competition** - Remember that anytime you are managing people, 1 + 1 can be greater than 2.

9. **Focus on mistakes as learning opportunities** - A graphic design studio re-organized its weekly staff meeting to ensure that 80 percent of its time was focused on positive events and 20 percent on mistakes, problems, errors. When mistakes occur, you can not wait until a staff meeting anyway.

10. **Train, train, train** - Training provides motivation to employees. Ensure that every employee has a training plan of action every year. The total quality management model calls for 96 hours of training per year (classroom, on-the-job, informal, on-line courses, reaching etc.)

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