THE ONE QUESTION THAT INSPIRES INNOVATION....

Author Napoleon Hill once said, “Ideas are the beginning points of all fortunes.” And he was right. Millions of people dream of entrepreneurship or having the next great product or service. The problem is they have no idea where to begin or how to find that next best idea. Rather than throw your hands in the air, start learning how to think like an innovator.

Ideas matter – Do you want to invent new concepts, create new inventions, or think of unique ideas? No problem. Simply start asking yourself one question about everything you see: How could that be done better? Ask that and the ideas will come. Sure, they may not all be actionable, but a few will be excellent ones.

Repeating the process – This important question is one asked all the time, and every so often, a great idea that has real potential springs up. This could also happen for you. If you start asking the question, “How could that be done better,” you may just be surprised by the response that comes to mind. Great ideas are all around us, just waiting to be discovered. After all, one of the ideas could be the starting point of your fortunes. (More by Mike Michalowiza at: http://www.openforum.com/articles/the-1-questions-that-inspires-innovation?)

....LEARNING FROM A MOUSE WITH BIG EARS: According to Bruce Kimbress, West Coast operations of the Disney Institute, people come back to Disneyland for three reasons: cleanliness, friendliness and safety. A few weeks ago he took (others)....on a behind-the-scenes tour of Disneyland to show how Disneyland employees make the enchantment happen.

1. Focus on the right stuff and the money will come.
2. Take care of your employees (cast members).
3. Everybody should do the “dirty jobs.”
4. Everybody is customer service.
5. Pay attention to the details.
6. Pay attention to even more details.
7. Make your customers feel close and important.
8. Know the facts.
9. Green is good.
10. Keep customers coming back.

Rudeness on the Rise! How to Banish Bad Attitudes in the Workplace

Stressed out is one thing. Downright nasty is another. Though some employees are able to keep a cool head when tensions mount, others are cracking under the pressure and taking it out on their co-workers. As a result, “Workplace incivility” is on the rise, according to researchers at a recent American Psychological Association conference. And what exactly is “workplace incivility”? Basically, it’s disrespectful behavior in the form of rudeness, insults and generally crummy manners. Researchers have suggested that 75 to 80 percent of workers have experienced ugly behavior...(G. Neil News).

Combine E-Mail and Social Media for True Engagement
Business Week.com/smallbiz/tips/archives/2011/0

In today’s highly connected world, effective marketing is no longer about broadcasting content and promotions. Talking at your customers doesn’t fly. Social media have changed the way businesses connect and communicate with their customers and prospects. Consumers want more than content. They want to get to know the people behind the brand. That means you must engage.

The tools for engaging your audience include both social media and e-mail. It’s not a question of which challenge is better. Your customers want to expect choices. Some prefer to connect on Facebook or Twitter, and others through e-mail. That’s actually a good thing, because e-mail and social media go hand in hand.

E-mail remains the best way to get your message heard, but social media are the best way to get your message to spread. Why not leverage both? You can expand the reach of your e-mail campaign beyond the inbox by simply sharing a link to the campaign across your social channels. Additionally, adding the “Like” and “Tweet” buttons in the body of your e-mail will make it easy for your subscribers to share your message with their friends. Another approach is to use a strong social call-to-action to draw your readers to Twitter or your Facebook page to continue the conversation.

It’s no longer enough to just broadcast a message. Now you must listen and respond to your audience. These are the key factors to effective engagement marketing, and both e-mail and social media are the tools to make it possible. (Mark Schmulen, General Manager, Social Media, Constant contact, Waltham, Mass.)

CONSTANT CONTACT Launches Free Social Media Marketing Guide for Small Businesses

Visit http://www.socialquickstarter.com or the Social Media Quickstarter page on Facebook ® at http://www.facebook.com/socialmediaquickstarter to learn more.

.....Entrepreneur, journalist and radio host Susan Solovic’s new book It’s Your Biz shows prospective entrepreneurs how to sidestep the pitfalls that doom more than half of new startups while dramatically improving their odds of success. Filled with candid, real-world advice that entrepreneurs can put into immediate action, It’s Your Biz is an essential part of your business library! Order your copy today by contacting SusanSolovic.com.
IR 11-90  A new round of outreach to small employers and tax preparers that encourages them to review the new Small Business Health Care Tax Credit to see if they are eligible.

- View a Youtube video about [how to deduct a home office](#), and more at IRS's YouTube Channel.

- A [Direct Sellers webinar](#) includes basic tax information for direct sellers including the nine factors used to determine if an activity is engaged in for profit. Other recent archived presentations will include Contractor Withholding by Government Employees and International Activities of Domestic Charitable Organizations.

  - Recent [Tax Tips](#) include the following and more: Tips for Employers Outsourcing their Payroll
  - Keep Good Records Now to Reduce Tax-Time Stress

- The Departments of Health & Human Services and Treasury have taken the next steps to establish [Affordable Insurance Exchanges](#) – one-stop marketplaces where consumers can choose a private health insurance plan that fits their health needs and have the same kind of insurance choices as members of Congress.

- [Reinstatement of Airline Ticket Taxes](#): The IRS provides a statement on the reinstatement of the airline ticket excise tax. Notice 11-69 provides guidance.

- [Fiscal Year 2012 per diem rates are now available](#). These rates are effective October 1, 2011.

- In response to customer feedback, IRs has updated and expanded the information on [The Use of Electronic Accounting Software Records: Frequently Asked Questions and Answers](#) page on IRS.gov. For further information, also see Headliner 303.

- [Fifty Additional Community Banks across the Country Receive $767 Million to Help Small Businesses Access Capital, Create New Jobs](#)

  The 50 community banks that received SBLF funding as part of the announcement include:
  - Bankcorp Financial, Inc. (Oak Brook, IL), $14.6 million
  - First Robinson Financial Corporation (Robinson, IL) $4.9 million
  - First Busey Corporation (Champaign, IL), $72.7 million
  - Southern IL Bancorp, Inc. (Carmi, IL), $9.0 million
  - Prime Banc Corp. (Dieterich, IL), $10.0 million

**Now that a new federal NLRA posting** is required for most private-sector employers, you most likely have questions. The mandatory posting change takes effect November 14, 2011. (G. Neil, HR Insider). Get the answers to all your questions about the NLRA posting. The NLRB (National Labor Relations Board) issued a final rule requiring most private-sector employees to notify employees of their rights by posting a notice.
DCEO Energy Incentives include Boiler Tune-Up: DCEO is now offering incentives for natural gas savings resulting from boiler tune-ups, pipe insulation and steam trap repair or replacement. (SEDAC News 9/14/2011)

DCEO has just released a Request for Application for the Community Solar and Wind Grant Program to support the development and implementation of distributed community and commercial-scale solar thermal, Solar photovoltaic, and wind energy technologies in IL. Go to DCEO Energy Incentives for guidelines and an application.

Solar and Wind Energy Rebate Program: DCEO (Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity) is now accepting applications for the Solar and Wind Energy Grant Program to encourage utilization of smaller-scale solar and wind energy systems in IL. Eligible applications include homeowners, businesses, public sector and non-profit entities. Program guidelines and application: DCEO Solar and Wind Energy Rebate Program.

SEDAC/GETTING HELP FROM THE IL SMART ENERGY DESIGN ASSISTANCE CENTER

Did you know the IL Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO) offers financial incentives for energy efficiency improvements in Public Sector building designs that surpass energy code requirements? Incentives of up to $2.50 per square are available. Ideas for designs that exceed code minimums include:

- Increase building insulation levels
- Incorporate high quality windows, doors and skylights
- Improve ventilation systems through the use of outdoor aid damper shutoff control, demand control ventilation, economizers among other measures
- Use high efficiency heating and cooling plants
- Add high efficiency lighting and other controls

You can review the SEDAC web site at: www.sedac.org to help you learn more about incentives, credits, energy efficient technologies and sustainable building practices.

New Law Changes System for Awarding Patents: Legislation overhauling the nation’s patent laws will help federal officials quickly process a fast-rising mountain of applications filed by inventors. President Obama signed the measure into law on 9/16. An overhaul of the nation’s patent system, the first in almost 60 years, should help speed the path from innovation to implementation in bringing new ideas to the marketplace. Other provisions in the America Invents Act will reduce costly legal battles that sometimes sidetrack innovative ideas for years. The U. S..Patent Office has a backlog of 1.2 million pending patents. According to the AP, it takes as long as three years to get a patent approved. More than 700,000 patent applications haven’t even been reviewed yet.

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