

# 11 Easy Checklist Secrets to Build a Great Business

By Syd Stewart

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Do you want to

- Eliminate lapses or mistakes?
- Improve the quality of your product or service?
- Create business stability across the generations of your staff?
- Train new staff faster and better?
- Capture your best practice and experience?
- Capture improvements easily?
- Demonstrate that you have not been negligent?

If so checklists are your answer.

Here's how to checklist your way to a great business:

- 1) Take a simple task where things are being forgotten or missed and create a checklist. Start in a small way and build it up. Don't worry about getting everything right first time.
- 2) Make a list of tasks to be done in the correct order on a sheet with check boxes to mark off that the tasks that are completed. Just write down what you are doing now as a starter. Incorporate instructions into your checklist.
- 3) Break down complex tasks into small manageable building blocks. Try to break up the task into pieces where minimum or low risk links or interfaces exist. Keep it simple.
- 4) Use diagrams. Remember, a "picture is worth a 1000 words."
- 5) Use checklists to control the interface between a) staff and departments internally and b) between you and your customers and suppliers. Failures often occur at interfaces
- 6) Involve your staff in the creation of the checklist. Remind staff that checklists mean no loss of esteem. Airline pilots use them all the time. Checklists permit good professional practice. Staff involvement will also lead to their commitment to use the checklist.
- 7) Maximise the use of experience within and outside your business. Use other people's ideas. Don't

try to reinvent the wheel. Find out what others do. Beg, borrow and swipe checklist ideas.

8) Request your staff check off the checklist with their initials and date. File your checklist as record of your good practice. If a customer challenges your performance, you've great evidence to demonstrate that you were not negligent in any way.

9) Modify the checklist to close any gap, if mistakes are still occurring. Keep doing this until you can reproduce the task without lapses. Checklists just make this so easy.

10) Make sure you use the correct checklist. Introduce a system that ensures your staff will always use the most up to date version of the checklist. If not old lapses will recur. Keep the latest master checklists in a clearly titled folder (paper or computer).

11) Make the checklists readily available. You can use folders for different areas or processes of your business, so that your staff can readily find the right checklist for the job.

Simple checklists yield so much power.

Start today, create your first checklist and start the process of building your great business.

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