

The Magic Effects of the Toolbox Meeting

The Toolbox meeting is a short sharp meeting, generally run with small groups of people, and where possible appropriate run on a daily basis. The purpose of the Toolbox meeting is to create continuity of communication and take advantage of momentum. In my experience, monthly or sometimes even weekly meetings tend to focus on what hasn't been done since the last meeting, so people can often create a negative association to these meetings.



The purpose of the Toolbox meeting is to congratulate and recognise activity on a regular basis, as well as getting the team members comfortable with the concept of communication. Many times when we have encouraged our clients to begin meetings with their team members, they often come back frustrated and disenchanted because there was little or no



response from the team members, when asked to contribute and participate. What the business owner needs to understand here is, that potentially the team members have previously experienced being asked for their opinion or asked for contribution and their suggestions and ideas

have never been put into practice. Or, worse still, never even been asked for their opinion.

So in the beginning when you start these meetings, you may get a similar response, but don't let this get you down. Persist in asking for contributions and most importantly ensure that ideas get put into practice and are seen to be put into practice. As they say actions speak louder than words.

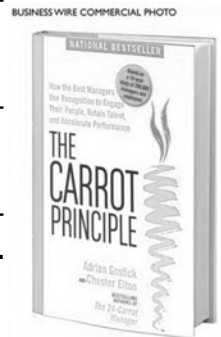


Toolbox meeting should be short, sharp, to the point and if possible daily. We're talking literally, five to seven minutes. Hold these meeting standing up. As the physiology of standing, will create more focus and a sense of urgency with the participants.



The agenda for a Toolbox meeting should be as follows: review yesterday's performance in relation to the objectives that were set. Look for very specific actions and behaviours that were taken by the individuals and recognise them for their effort.

To learn more on the specifics of how to recognize team members effectively. I would enthusiastically encourage you to read "The Carrot Principle". By mastering the leadership principles in this book, a business can potentially increase its financial indicators by up to 300%. Would that be powerful enough reason for you to get a copy of this book and master these principles?



The next part of the agenda for the Toolbox meeting is to clearly communicate the objective for today. Then ask contributions from the team members, as to any problems issues obstacles or roadblocks that they can see that may prevent the accomplishment of today's objective. Then guide the discussion to possible solutions, to overcome these roadblocks and delegate the activity.



Businesses that have introduced the Toolbox meeting, consistently give incredibly positive feedback in the areas of team member in engagement, contribution and a significant improvement in the positive energy of the group.

The Toolbox meeting philosophy can also be used in a one-on-one situation, when a new person comes on board. As an example, the new team member joins the sales team. Often, what happens is the sales manager or business owner may meet with this new salesperson once a week or once a month, or even worse, only once when it's noticed that the new team member is performing poorly.



In summary, the Toolbox meeting will be most effective, if you keep them short and sharp. Be sure not to get sucked into having long winded conversations, and most importantly keep them positive and focused on solutions as well as recognising the positive efforts of the team members.

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Often, having a meeting either weekly or monthly tends to be a painful experience of the new team member, as all the focus tends to be on what they haven't done or what they should have. Also

irregular meetings mean that a lot of information is imparted to the team member in one hit, causing confusion and overwhelm, which leads to procrastination and inactivity. Using the Toolbox model and meeting a short time on a daily basis, leads to the new team member feeling supported, and having a positive association to the regular meetings. As long as these regular meetings follow the standard agenda to the Toolbox meeting, which is clearly communicating an objective of this day and congratulating the team member for the effort they put in a previous day. Giving them small bits of information on how they can improve their activity rather than masses of information, when they are already confused and overwhelmed.



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