



Get Your Good Idea Out of the Suggestion Box

Got a great idea for your workplace that you want to make sure sees the light of day? Getting your idea out of the suggestion box and giving it a chance at implementation requires careful planning.

Look at the big picture – Try to think beyond your job or your department. Consider external factors like competition, impact on customers, and shifting markets, as well as internal factors like production capabilities, employee scheduling and available resources.

Prepare a strong, objective case for your idea – Use supporting facts and figures to clearly define the costs and benefits of your proposal. Be prepared to identify positive, achievable outcomes like increased productivity, reduced waste, or improved safety.

Consider your presentation style – Present information in an organized, easily understandable format. Avoid the temptation to show off your expertise with unnecessarily complicated charts, tables, and graphs. Tone down the technological bells and whistles that can overshadow substance.

Invite questions – Anticipate and be prepared to answer the questions that are likely to be asked such as “How will your plan effectively interface with other business operations?” and “What’s unique about your idea?” It shows you have done your homework and that you are confident in your proposed idea.

Avoid criticizing past and current operations – Criticism shuts down dialogue. People may feel a need to defend functions they helped design and implement. And remember, functions that seem obsolete now may well have been very effective best practices when they were created.

Every day good ideas languish in the suggestion box because they have not been adequately thought out before they are presented. Get others to give your ideas serious consideration by first giving them serious consideration yourself.

Alternative Resolutions, Inc.
Appleton, WI 54912 • (920) 993-1490
www.alternativeresolutions.biz

Words to Live By...

“The constitution only gives people the right to pursue happiness. You have to catch it yourself.”

Benjamin Franklin



A BRIGHT IDEA

Listen to understand

“Just the facts, ma’am” may have worked for Detective Joe Friday, but if you want to resolve conflict you have to address feelings as well. Feelings provide clues - to behaviors, needs, emotions, responses, *and* to opportunities for resolution. Feelings take us beyond the “what” to the “why”. A willingness to understand the “why” encourages productive dialogue and reduces defensiveness. Feelings matter, so listen for facts and feelings.

Strong teams = Productive teams

Effective teams require commitment and resources. Resolving the conflicts that cause dysfunction and increase costs can be addressed through mediation or facilitated processes. Strong communication and conflict resolution skills that support a collaborative team can be developed through training. Coaching provides individual opportunities for focused leadership and professional development. Alternative Resolutions is the “one call does it all” place to find the resources you need to create the productive team that will make your organization excel.

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