How to drive productivity in a small business setting

In the modern world, small businesses are the backbone of our economy. But with the increase in small business, how do we stay profitable and, more importantly, how do we make sure that the effort put in relates to increased productivity?

A recent report in Entrepreneur highlighted the fact that since the global pandemic of COVID19, working from home has gone from the privilege of management to normality for nearly everyone. Lots of companies were concerned that, by working from home, productivity would be negatively affected. After all, why would someone want to work hard when they have all the distractions of home life? The reality was, in fact, the opposite, with many companies seeing productivity improve when people were working from home. The hybrid model of working part time in the office and part time from home is a good compromise between the two.

If your employees prefer working from home, then prioritising goals and being clear and concise with expectations is paramount. Making sure that everyone knows what their role is helps trim any unnecessary work and streamlines workflow. The Eisenhower Matrix is a good tool to use when setting out tasks and goals and keeps everyone in the know.

- **Do:** for tasks that are both urgent and important – these are the top priority.
- **Plan:** for tasks that are important but not urgent – it is vital you plan and schedule a time for them.
- **Delegate:** for tasks that are urgent but unimportant – such tasks can hinder productivity, and it is recommended to delegate them or reschedule.
- **Delete:** not urgent and unimportant – some tasks may seem vital but are, in fact, a distraction once you divide everything else in the actions. In this case, you can eliminate them.

Productivity in a small business can make the difference between a good year and a great one, depending on your staff motivation. By asking staff to come up with their own innovative ideas on how to do a task, or even improve the workplace, your employees will feel seen and a crucial part of the workplace. When someone fulfils a task well, then acknowledgment and reward for their actions can help motivate them to the next task. By adopting a positive working environment, this will snowball into helping the business grow and increase productivity. With better motivation, comes the motivation to grow personally within the role and professionally.

Using efficient digital tools to help with the day-to-day tasks can also help breed productivity. Having all social media accounts in one place by using a programme such as Hootsuite, where you can access multiple accounts over different platforms, will reduce the need to individually update each page by scheduling the same post only once. Other software programmes that can take the fiddly bits out of a job will undoubtedly increase productivity.

Whether you choose to be back in the office 100%, use a hybrid working method, or even a full work from home structure, making sure that your employees are happy and motivated are the secrets to having the level of productivity that we all want to see.