

Boost your bottom line

Secrets to an effective employee suggestion program

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Marketing

One of the most effective ways for a growing business to cut costs and save thousands of dollars in these tough times is to challenge your employees to identify waste and make suggestions on how to eliminate it. When you do, you'll build morale and improve your bottom line. John Tschohl, founder and president of the Service Quality Institute, shares these secrets to an effective employee suggestion program:

Keep it short.

A program that runs 30 days or less keeps enthusiasm high.

Make it fun.

Dry, dull campaigns get little attention and lead to poor results. When you incorporate fun and humor, employees become more involved.

Build it on recognition.

You don't have to offer monetary rewards or trips to Las Vegas to get employees to participate. Recognition is a much stronger motivator than money. Recognize employees in a timely manner through public praise. That might include an article in the company newsletter.

Involve everyone.

That includes both frontline employees and executives. The idea is to get everyone to consider his or her job and ask, "Is there a better, less-expensive way to do this?"

Implement ideas quickly.

If you don't implement employee ideas quickly, they will lose interest — and faith — in what you are trying to accomplish.