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## Six Steps To Create A Website That Fills Your Pipeline

by Stuart Crawford, Ulistic



Your website must convert visitors to prospects today.

## How To Hang On To Your Top Performers

by Michelle Collins  
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Whether they're generating sales, making important strategic decisions or handling difficult technical problems, your top-performing employees are the keys to the success of your business.

You don't want to see them go. But chances are you're not the only one who knows their value. So, what does it take to make these employees stay with you when headhunters or competitors start calling?

According to Sharon Jordan-Evans, co-author of "Love 'Em or Lose 'Em: Getting Good People to Stay," there are five primary reasons that employees stay where they are:

1. Challenging and interesting work
2. A chance to learn and grow
3. Good rapport with co-workers
4. Fair pay
5. A great boss

Now that you know what your top performers are looking for, you need to learn how you can give it to them. Doing this may be easier than you think. Here are five guidelines to follow.

1. Talk to your employees.

While you may be nervous about the answer, the best way to find out what it will take for an employee to stay is to ask them outright, says Carol Skube, a senior consultant with Personnel Decisions International in Minneapolis. Once you've asked them, encourage them to list every factor that they can think of. "It's going to be the rare person who says 'money' and only stops there, because your real high performers are after growth, development and responsibility," Skube says. She also points out that the process doesn't have to be complex and formal.



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## 7 Habits of Highly Effective IT Departments

by Chris Geiser - [cgeiser@pcstechnology.com](mailto:cgeiser@pcstechnology.com) - PC Solutions, Inc.

It's been 20 years since Dr. Stephen Covey published his book *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*. Today, I will take a look at those habits and see how they apply to IT Managers of 2010 and beyond.



Habit 1: Be Proactive

Steven Covey writes that your life doesn't just happen. Whether you know it or not, it is designed by you. Proactive people recognize that they are responsible for the outcome of their life. By contrast, reactive people are affected by their physical environment, often blaming their circumstance or even the weather for their mood and behavior.

Reactive IT Departments are Easy to Spot Walk into an office and you might immediately see the tell-tale signs of a reactive IT department. It's the users. You can tell that they are concentrating, but it doesn't look like they are getting much work done (long stares at their screen, sighs, not much typing,

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## Business Continuity Tip

Think locally.

A well-thought-out recovery plan takes into account multiple disaster scenarios, but it should also convey a realistic approach to preparing for the events most likely to occur in your area. For example (and to point out the obvious), a Florida company probably does not need to prepare for an ice storm, and likewise a business in Wisconsin should not focus on the effects of a hurricane. Be realistic about the threats you are prone to face, and focus your planning on those most likely to happen.

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asking co-workers if they are experiencing the same issue). Much of their finite energy is being applied, not to their work, but in trying to adapt their way of working to suit the constraints of their IT environment. They've taken their issues up to their reactive IT Manager who usually cites all of the system and budget constraints that prevent him/her from fulfilling the users' request.

By contrast, Successful IT Managers are always looking for new ways to accommodate and even anticipate their users' needs. They spend time developing monitoring sets so they can be notified of potential system degradations. They do regular maintenance on their network. Most importantly, when talking with their users, they use proactive language like, "We can, I will, etc . . ." to convey what next steps they are intent on taking.

Habit 2: Begin with the End in Mind

Stephen Covey writes that all things are created twice. First, there is the mental creation, the envisioning of what will be created.

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## Connected Businesses Win

Networks connect your world securely, reliably and more efficiently. used with permission from the [Cisco Small Business Website](#)

People in small and medium-sized businesses (SMBs) regularly connect with others who are vital to their success. Customers bring income, the lifeblood of any business. Partners, such as contractors and suppliers, provide services and products for daily operations. Prospects are vital for growth and new opportunities. And employees are the brains, hands, eyes, and ears that make a business successful.

A network can connect them all, according to Deb Mielke, operator of HomeOfficeReports.com, a Web site providing technology advice and information to small and home-based businesses. "Electronic communication is a great way to reach a lot of people," she says. "The beauty of networking and the Internet is that it can make a little guy look like a big guy."

But what is a network? And how can it connect your world securely, reliably, and efficiently?

Cisco commonly refers to the concept of a Secure Network Foundation which encompasses a flexible communications platform that both delivers business information needs and positions a company for growth. Note that "computer" is nowhere in that definition. That's because networks, even in the smallest businesses, can do more than simply connect machines. They also deliver voice (telephone) and video, and connect functions such as sales and bookkeeping to make business more efficient, collaborative, and profitable.

### CORE NETWORK COMPONENTS

Routers and switches are the foundation of every network, physically connecting everything. Not long ago, that meant computers, printers, and maybe servers. But now it includes wireless devices and telephones, too. As a network's foundation, routing and switching gear should have room to grow, both in capacity (number of users) and capability.

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## 4 Ways to Make Sure Meetings Are Not a Waste of Time

by Marlene Chism, [www.stopyourdrama.com](http://www.stopyourdrama.com)

Meetings can be a big waste of time or the biggest time saver. It all depends on your skills of keeping the meeting on track and engaging your staff. The challenges that keep your meetings from being productive include going on way past the allotted time, getting off track, and meetings that turn into gripe sessions. Here are four basics to running an effective meeting that keeps you completely in charge and engages your employees.

1. Set the expectations
2. Acknowledge the elephant
3. Beat the dead horse
4. Engage them

### Quote of the Month

The difference between a successful person and others is not a lack of strength, not a lack of knowledge, but rather in a lack of will.

Vince Lombardi

### LOL



#### Set the expectations

One reason meetings get off track is due to negativity. It could be just one drama queen who always has something negative to say, but my bet is that she is speaking for the tribe, and she gets some sort of glory from her peers for having the courage to say what everyone else is thinking. Whether it's everyone or just one person, the way to eliminate the complaining is to set the expectations before the meeting begins. This starts with a good agenda with a time allotment for each item on the agenda. Be realistic about the time it will take for each part, and this will help you avoid running over time. When you begin your meeting you may want to start out by acknowledging the elephant in the room.

#### Acknowledge the elephant

If there has just been a dramatic or unfortunate event, don't ignore it and pretend it will go away. Whether it's a pay cut, a firing, a policy change or a merger, you must bring it up briefly so that your employees feel heard. It goes something like this: "I know that many of us are very unhappy with the recent changes. It is affecting all of us and some of the complaints are valid, however I am going to ask that you try to work through it. We are not going to be discussing these challenges today. We may have a forum in the future, but today we will be talking only about XYZ on the agenda. If anyone does bring up something not on the agenda, we can put that topic on the flip chart and address it at a later date, but not today. Does everyone understand?" You will get a nod of agreement, and then you can move on to your agenda.

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