

A woman with short dark hair, wearing a green cardigan over an orange top and a pearl necklace, is smiling. She is standing in front of a fountain with blue water. In the background, there are green trees and a flagpole with a flag.

**MINORITIES &**

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*Spring 2023*

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# 7 Ways You Can Make Your Company a Great Place to Work

By Ursula Jorch

Losing a great employee is costly. Your company loses time, money, and the information stored in that person's brain about how things work well and what to do next.

It's clear that employee retention is a priority for you as a leader and for those working with people in your company, which is probably everyone within your company.

The time to start addressing retention of great employees is now. Here are 7 ways you can keep your

best staff members and create a desirable place to work:

1. **Start at onboarding.** Help newly hired people know what is expected of them, including your standards of quality and customer service. Clarity of expectations makes it easier to succeed.
2. **Keep your Impact Purpose visible.** Talk about your Impact Purpose and keep talking about it at every meeting. People want to be part of something bigger than

themselves.

3. **Be willing to have your mind changed.** It's one thing to collect employee suggestions; it's quite another to decide to act on them. When people feel heard and that they affecting things, they'll be more fulfilled.
4. **Be empathetic** and make sure your managers understand the importance of that too. In a LinkedIn survey, 25% of employees left their company due to personal issues, like

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childcare or elderly parent care challenges or other family issues. By providing a willing ear, you may be able to find a solution while retaining your employee.

5. **Be kind.** Compassion goes a long way in the workplace. Treating people with respect is a hallmark of a great place to work. Being people-focused in this way will pay off for your company, and also contribute to you as a leader having a better experience at work and as a human being. Even Jeff Weiner, LinkedIn's CEO, changed his hard-charging leadership to strongly focus on compassion. LinkedIn has grown to more than 250 million members and was acquired in 2016 for \$26.2 billion.

6. **Talk to people.** One of the

companies I know that has a significant impact even though they're small is Askinosie Chocolate. Their CEO, Shawn Askinosie, does a regular gemba walk. Gemba is a Japanese word that means visiting the shop floor. He makes a point of talking with everyone. Your company may be too large to do that, but you can still talk to quite a few people, and make sure that your company's management team do the same. This personal contact helps keep people engaged because they know you really care about them.

7. **Share information.** Open book management can be one method you can use to be transparent with employees. Some companies do regular weekly meetings to share financials, ongoing issues, and to discuss the future. Keeping

people in the loop was #2 of the things employees indicated as most important to them. No one wants things done to them. They want to be part of it, to be informed.

Retaining good people requires less work than onboarding someone new. The Center for American Progress found that the average cost to replace an employee is 10-30% of their annual salary. Even if you're feeling squeezed for time, making time for this will pay off.

People spend more than a third of their adult lives at work. They want that time to matter, to be fulfilling and satisfying. And more than ever, they are prepared to vote with their feet about where they choose to work.

Make employee relationships and retention one of your priorities as a leader. You won't regret it.

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# The “WHY” of How To Start a Business

By Rhett Kniep

How to Start a Business is a big question asked by a lot of people. Why? Well, it is because a lot of people have aspirations of running their own business. It may have been something they wanted to do since childhood, or perhaps something they were exposed to in school, or an idea that came to them while working for someone else. Whatever the reason, starting a business is a lofty goal and knowing how to start a business is the foundation.

There are three basic philosophical

questions to answer before starting a business. Of course, these questions are broken down into many other smaller questions, but for our purposes here, we will discuss the basics. They are:

## 1. The Operation

## 2. The Motivation

## 3. The Culmination

First, the **Operation**. The obvious and most basic question starts here. What is the business? This may seem

elemental, but really, it is *the most important question*. Many people have a plan to start a business. Some want to start a business because the business makes lot of money. Others want to start a business because the business is something they love.

These may appear to be good answers to the first question, but in truth, they are not. Not at all. Why? Because making money is a benefit but doesn't necessarily give you a life. Doing something you love is a benefit but won't necessarily give

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you income. *The answer to this most basic question must be something which encompasses both.*

Making money in a business that is boring and monotonous is a mistake millions have made. A life of making money in something you have no concern for or even despise will make a bitter person out of you. So you may have money, but if you cannot enjoy the making of it, where is the benefit?

Running a business for a product or service about which you are imbued with passion but can barely pay the bills is an exercise in futility. Ever known someone who did this? I have. They struggle to remain in a business simply because they like the doing of it. These people have confused a business with a hobby. One makes money; the other is for kicks.

The right answer to this most basic question is a business for which you

really care or enjoy, and has potential of making good money. If it has both these qualities, it may be the right choice.

The second question in the quest to find how to start a business is the **Motivation**. What is the motivation for your venture?

In other words, if you had to summarize why you are taking on debt, working endlessly, depriving yourself of free time, and bearing substantial responsibility, what would the answer be? This most crucial step is one which cannot be ignored. Assuming you love the subject, and the business had a track record of money-making opportunities, if you can address the *why* of your venture you have answered many, many potential questions that will surface down the road.

Do you wish to change something

about your world? How about your specific industry? Does the business provide for the particular needs of a specific group of people for which you deeply care? Does it better the lives of people, or does it increase the effectiveness of people?

Whatever the motivation, it needs to be something about which you feel you were created for. It must be “you” to the core. This concept runs far deeper than merely enjoying the subject of your business. It is more about the inner motivation which drives you onward. It is the essence of what the business is about.

If the business you are contemplating is something you enjoy, something that makes money, and something which fills your heart and mind with ideas and plans about how it can impact the world, it just may be the right choice for you.

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But there is one more thing to consider.

#### The **Culmination.**

The culmination of your business is the peak, the highest point, the “future” of your business. Put into a question, it is: where is the business going?

Someone may love the newspaper industry. They may love to write and edit. They may love to cover current news and tell stories. They may even work in an area of high newspaper subscriptions. But one who would consider starting a newspaper today is most likely ignoring the culmination step.

It doesn't take a research team to figure out where the newspaper industry is going. It's not up. It's away.

For someone starting a newspaper franchise 4 decades ago, the future was bright and that person could make a lot of money if done right. But not so anymore. It might have been a wise goal at some time in the past; today it most likely a trip to failure.

So a substantial consideration in the quest for the perfect business involves looking to the future of the business, and asking the simple question: where is the industry going? While no one can see the future or know if a certain industry will still be here in the days ahead, we can make educated guesses that will greatly influence our profitability.

Some businesses never seem to fade or expire or lose their appeal. And others never seem to last more than a decade. Yet most businesses have a “peak”. They have a period during which they will produce more and have more impact than at any other time.

It is your job to determine with some certainty when that time is. Is it in five years, is it two decades, or is it impossible to know?

If you can take these most basic and fundamental steps and answer these questions with clarity, you will have likely saved yourself time and money and heartache in your search for the perfect business. Knowing how to start a business begins here. And after these first elemental steps are complete, it is then time to move into the more specific questions of tax implications, business entity structures, and other such considerations.

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# *Personal Development Program: Make A Difference in the Workplace*

*By David Rickersey*

Running your own company can be a challenging endeavour. It is critical to streamline the business procedures to ensure the continuation of operations effectively with profit. Smooth operation of your company comes down to the individuals who perform the given tasks, such as staff in the production department, office employees creating and issuing documents and the supervisors overseeing the projects. Since your staff is the most important asset of your organization, you need to continuously invest in personal development programs to help them remain productive.

By presenting your employees with personal development opportunities, you will be able to nurture, as well as, retain them. The personal development training programs can encompass anything, from building a new skill to leadership training.

Given below are some of the self-development strategies that you can employ to increase the efficiency of your workforce.

### **Help them define personal and corporate goals**

First and foremost, it is important for

everyone in your company to clarify their values and goals in both their personal and professional life. Show that you care about their skill set and thoughts. Most of the issues that arise with achieving goals is the lack of clarity in the first place. During personal development programs for your employees, motivate them to navigate their path and break down the target into steps. The more measurable goals are, the easier it would be to achieve them. Encourage your workforce by putting your confidence in them that they can accomplish their target within the constraints of money, time, and most

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importantly, through their own skills.

### **Impart performance metrics**

It is essential to fix certain quantitative metrics in your employee personal development scheme to help them understand what they can practically achieve. As these metrics are met, the staff in your office will have a positive feeling of accomplishment. Being the owner of your organization, it is your responsibility to work with the employees and lead them in the right direction by measuring their performance.

### **Provide exciting opportunities outside the job profile**

Today's business houses have become so stereotypical that every member of the staff is only allowed to work within their department or designation. However, that is not helping them in developing any new

skill or hone the ones that they have. For an all-round self-development, they need to take interest in all aspects of the company work. As an employer, it is your duty to make sure that the different departments in your organization interact with one another and show interest in imbibing different skill sets. Through well-crafted personal development programs, you will be able to boost the confidence of your employees and help them to take up job functions that they previously thought they were unqualified for. This is good news for your company as you can take care of your human resource requirements internally.

### **Give feedback for growth and recognition**

Feedback should be constructive in nature instead of criticizing or disapproving. It should involve specific recommendations to promote further development and improvement.

At the personal development program of your employees, feedback should be given on a frequent basis for guiding them in the right direction. Your workforce wants to know how they are operating and what modifications can be made. Use feedback for their benefit and it will surely make a great difference in your workplace.

Leverage the aforementioned staff development tactics and shape your company's future leadership. Champion yourself by being a great presenter and communicate with your employees on a regular basis. The best way to promote self-development is by arranging for in-house or online personal development training programs conducted by industry experts. Find out about companies offering such training and make sure to tie up with one that even lets you earn CPD points.

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# Gender Equity in the Workplace

By Bill Ryan

Here it is, the year 2022 and gender discrimination is still, unbelievably, an unresolved issue in far too many workplaces. Despite attention being drawn to the issue for nearly fifty years there still exists a fundamental unfairness in how women are treated in employment environments that are either directly dominated by male senior management or at least influenced by the attitude, mindsets, and practices of traditional leadership.

Although women make up about 50% of the workforce they still

experience discrimination in several significant areas. These include unequal compensation, a dearth of organizational upward mobility, a paucity of key decision making power, and sexual harassment. These are profound work culture deficiencies and injustices. The time is long past to eradicate these blemishes from our workplaces. Such defects are not only ethically unrighteous, but they depress productive potential heretofore unrealized from among half of the workforce.

It is not as if there have not been

attempts to remediate workplace gender inequities. Many senior management teams acknowledge the historic existence of male-oriented favoritism and sexism embedded in their and other workplaces. This recognition has been acted upon with initiatives to make their businesses and organizations fairer and more equitable. Yet the problem persists. Instances of gender discrimination continue to be documented and contested within management offices, HR departments, and law firms, resulting in deployment of considerable resources for a

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seemingly unending management of the consequences of bad behavior.

Elisabeth Kelan of the University of Essex in the UK has been researching gender equity issues for over twenty years. She has determined that there is widespread agreement gender inequity is prevalent overall, but interestingly these same individuals will not admit to such incidents occurring in their own specific workplaces. Why is this so? Dr. Kelan sees several reasons for this. To begin with, many see discrimination as a fault of their competitors or of other companies, but not of their own more virtuous workplaces. Secondly, there is a belief the issue was worse in the past, but is largely being resolved, affirming that all of the mitigation efforts made thus far have worked to reduce it to a minor issue. Finally, there are those who do not fully appreciate gender equity as a big deal

and if it occurs at all it is not their fault.

If we accept Dr. Kelan's findings as authentic it begs the question, "What are people thinking?!" What I think they are thinking is what has always been thought. At levels great and small men see themselves as better leaders, sharper decision makers, keener managers, stronger deal makers, and superior competitors. And let's face it, there are some traditionalist women who think these roles are more masculine in nature as well.

Even if one sees the data and intellectually accepts gender discrimination as a problem it does not automatically follow that requisite behavior changes will occur. When I reflect on my own past I see pertinent examples. I have long believed that gender equity in the workplace was a quality worth pursuing. It is a no-brainer. However, have there been instances where I was more inclined to

accept a fellow male's opinion over a female's during a meeting, or thought a woman colleague was too sensitive and not tough enough, or paid more attention to a woman's looks rather than listening to her thoughts? Embarrassingly, the answer is yes. It is these small, but meaningful actions that keep us from achieving progress in accepting women as full and equal partners at work.

Anti-bias training programs and the like may make some difference in altering operational behaviors, but greater progress may better result from each of us looking more deeply into how we interact with each other beyond surface manners. Clarifying the personal values that motivate our behavior patterns may reveal more to us individually and strengthen needed improvements than any mission statement or management protocol might. The time is now to end gender discrimination.

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# The Discussion Of Education In America Must Move To A Higher Level

By Jeff C. Palmer

Public education was created in part to be one of the mediating institutions that would mold the American character one citizen at a time. It is critical to the creation of responsible citizens capable of making informed decisions in order to produce and maintain a system of government that works. For at least a generation now, public education has abandoned the noble purpose of helping our young people understand who we are, where we came from, what we stand for and how to pass that on to our successors. Instead, it has embraced

the goal of making sure that young men and women are competent at whatever they choose to do in life. Competence is important, but it does little to prepare the next generation for the job of deciding what this nation's future will be.

If citizens are to remain citizens, and not merely consumers; if individual happiness is to be the product of more than the mere satisfaction of individual wants and desires; then the discussion of education in America must move to a higher level. It must touch upon the greater purposes that animate the nation.

The advent of dot-com democracy brings with it a heightened sense of both the importance and the urgency of that discussion. We live in a time when it is possible to be all places all the time; to communicate immediately anywhere in the world; to make decisions on anything from holiday gifts to competing candidates with the click of a mouse; to create mass democracy unlike ever in the history of the world. Ironically, as we possess the technology to communicate with one another more efficiently than ever before, we run the risk of becoming a

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nation of strangers - each alone in front of a computer screen, talking in chat rooms, on e-mail, through the Web.

We possess the tools to transform the nature of democratic government, to make sure that democratic government responds to the wishes of the people, expressed directly by the people. The question then becomes: Do we possess the wisdom as a people to step back and ask if that is really such a good idea?

In an age of instant access, instant information and instant gratification, do we possess the wisdom to distinguish between the desire to satisfy the momentary impulse to serve popular opinion and the discipline, foresight and discernment needed to seek the long-term interests of a nation?

These are the most fundamental

questions that have always confronted the American republic. For generations, educated citizens of that republic have found answers to these questions - at times through deliberation, at times through dumb luck. But the global context in which these questions are raised today is unlike ever in the world's history, making our ability to come up with the right answers all the more important. And that means that the quality and character of the education provided the current and future generations of young minds in a democracy will be all the more critical to ensuring the future of that democracy.

While accountability for results has been an education reform slogan for some time, it is increasingly becoming a reality for schools around the nation. When states and districts create accountability systems, the first issue policymakers face is how to tell which schools and classrooms are

succeeding, which are failing - and which are somewhere in between, perhaps succeeding at some things and lagging in others. This turns out to be genuinely complicated. Picking the schools with overall high or low average test scores is an obvious way to proceed, but the strong correlation between test scores and student socioeconomic background makes this problematic. Such an approach will tend to reward schools with prosperous students and punish those with disadvantaged pupils.

Most states are interested in rewarding the schools where teachers are most effective at producing student learning - that is, the schools that add the greatest value to their students, no matter where those students start or what advantages and disadvantages accompany them to school. In its simplest form, value-added assessment means judging schools and sometimes individual

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teachers based on the gains in student learning they produce rather than the absolute level of achievement their students reach. It turns out, however, that just as students start at different levels of achievement, they gain at different rates as well, sometimes for reasons unrelated to the quality of instruction they receive. For example, middle-class-children may be more likely to have parents help them with their homework. To identify how much value a school is adding to a student, the effect of the school on student achievement must be isolated from the effects of a host of other factors, such as poverty, race, and pupil mobility. A number of states and school districts are turning to sophisticated statistical models that seek to do just that. These “value-added” models come in two basic flavors: those that include variables representing student socioeconomic

characteristics as well as a student’s test scores from previous years, and those that use only a student’s prior test scores as a way of controlling for confounding factors.

Whether to incorporate measures of student background into the model is a charged and complicated question. Those who use the first type of analytic model (including measures of student poverty, race, etc., in addition to prior test scores) do so because they find that socioeconomic characteristics affect not only where students begin but also how much progress they make from year to year. Given the same quality of instruction, low-income and minority students will make less progress over time, their research shows. If the background variables are not included, the model may underestimate how much value is being added to the students by these schools. Student background is not strongly correlated with the gains a

student will make, once the student’s test scores in previous years are taken into account. If socioeconomic status indeed influences the gains made by students, as much research suggests, this raises thorny policy questions for value-added assessment. Omitting such variables from the model is apt to be unfair to schools (or teachers) with a high percentage of disadvantaged pupils.

Public education is undergoing a reformation. The future for education means transforming our static industrial age educational model into a system that can capture the diversity and opportunity of the Information Age. That means public education must reconnect with the public - the children it was intended to serve.

Effective education is not about programs and process; it’s about what’s best for your child. Some

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districts may deal with this dilemma by using both the level of achievement and the results of value-added analysis to identify effective schools. Another response is to assign rewards and sanctions based on value-added analysis as an interim measure until all students are in a position in which it is reasonable to expect them to meet high standards. No doubt other variations and hybrids wait to be developed and tried.

The debate over including student background characteristics in the model is important. More research is needed on how the various models perform. Today, for example, we don't even know whether different analytic models will identify the same schools as succeeding and failing.

Nevertheless, either approach gives us a more accurate measure of the contribution of a school to student learning than we would have if we

looked simply at average test scores or at simpler measures of gain.

It is less clear that the models can confidently be used to identify effective and ineffective teachers. Researchers have found that teacher effectiveness (as measured by either type of model) can change a great deal from year to year. This means either that teachers often make major changes in their effectiveness or that the statistics for teacher effectiveness are not accurate. (It could be that the model does not adequately adjust for the presence of disruptive students in a class, for instance.)

Because value-added assessment for individual teachers is imperfect, many believe that it is best used as a diagnostic tool, to identify the teachers that need the most help, rather than as the "high-stakes" basis for rewards and punishments. Others contend that complicated analytical

methods that leave so much to statisticians should be abandoned both for schools and for teachers in favor of simpler calculations that can be more readily understood by policymakers, educators, and citizens. Still others are content to let the marketplace decide which schools are effective. Whether these various audiences will prefer a form of analysis that is fairer or one that is more transparent remains to be seen. As the statistical techniques improve and we learn more about the accuracy of different models, though, value-added analysis is sure to become more appealing to states and districts. They can prepare to take advantage of these advances by beginning to gather the data required to make the models work, including regular test scores for all students in core subjects, and creating longitudinal databases that link student test scores over time.

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# Academic Success Starts at Home

By Ronnie Phillips

How many times have we blamed the educational system for not providing a quality education for our children? We often find something negative in the school system to complain about when it comes to our children's education. We complain about how teachers aren't challenging the children enough, the school is using old books to educate our children, our children are scoring low on standardized tests, the material being taught is not relevant, our children need more individual attention, the school needs better teachers and principals, the class has too many

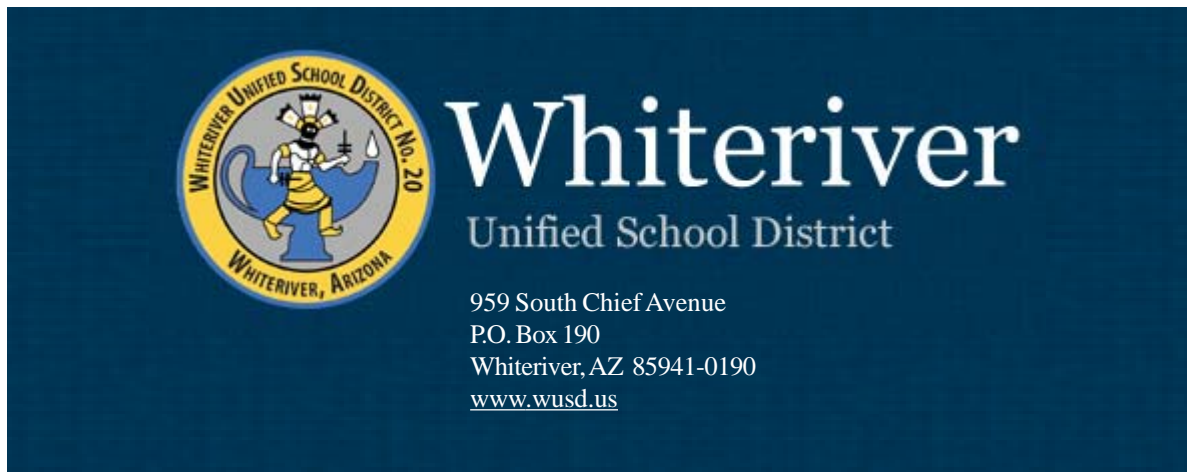
students so our children can't learn, or our children have too many hard classes in the morning-the list goes on. Let's stop a minute and ask whether the teacher or the school is entirely to blame for our children not getting a good education.

We live in a society that tends to blame someone else for the problems we face in society. Yes, our schools and teachers do have a responsibility to provide a good education for our children. But let's look at a few facts about who spends the most time with our children and who is our children's first teacher.

When children are born, the parents have the responsibility of building their educational foundation. In other words, parents are their children's first teacher, starting when the day the child is born or even while the child is still in the mother's belly.

Some parents look forward to providing a strong educational foundation for their children from day one. These parents read to their children from an early age and even before the child is born. These parents provide as many educational opportunities for their children as possible long before their children start

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kindergarten, and this process doesn't stop when the children start school. These parents are involved with their children's education throughout their entire academic journey. Research tells us that these children generally have a positive educational experience, with academic success being almost guaranteed.

Yet just as many parents-or maybe more-don't spend a lot of time preparing their children for their future educational journey. There are many reasons this could be happening to parents, such as busy jobs, not enough time in the day, and parents' belief that the school should do all the educating. Whatever the reason, these children are being cheated because of their parents' lack of time for preparation and support. These parents don't understand that children spend the first five years of their lives at home, which is one of the most important times to start developing their children's educational foundation. If nothing is being done during those years, the children fall behind in their educational development, and when they start school, they already lag behind their peers. As a result, teachers must work harder because these children require more individual attention, which takes away time from students whose parents prepared them for kindergarten.

When students start kindergarten behind their peers, they are subject to develop behavioral or social problems because they are academically behind other children of the same age. This is a major problem for the teachers, schools, and our education system as a whole. As more students start behind, more resources are needed to bring them up to their grade level. Bringing students up to their appropriate grade level is very difficult and could take several years. Who is the blame for this problem?

Instead of blaming someone, I believe that we as a society should try to do something about this situation. Although we can't require all parents to be more involved with their children's education, perhaps we can start by putting together some guidelines for what successful parents do with their children and providing workshops for parents all over the country to ensure that they understand the importance of providing an educational foundation for their children. I believe parents would do better if they knew better. Our society should make it a priority to ensure that parents are aware of the importance of parents' involvement in the success of their children. Getting that information into the hands of our parents and providing the support needed for their success could improve our entire educational system. The time to start is now.

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