

Retail Express – from strategy to implementation

Overview

The need

Retail Express had identified some significant problems in its inter-departmental collaboration, including fewer outcomes being achieved from meetings, and an overall sense of team disengagement threading throughout the various departments.

The solution

To reconnect the different departments and create alignment in their strategies and activities, Retail Express started with a 2-day facilitated strategy workshop. To ensure that the strategy map would be implemented across the organisation, Michi spent time to create an operational planning process and train department heads on facilitating productive meetings.

The benefit

The most rewarding result of the planning process, according to Mr Blackman, came in the form of an overall sense of ownership and engagement across all the various departments.

"Everyone could immediately recognise the important part they play individually in tracking and reporting outcomes, and staff reported an overall sense of ownership in what happens as a business, even within other departments."

*Increasing collaboration and getting sh*t done with strategic and operational planning processes*

The Business

The largest Sunshine Coast based technology sector employer, Retail Express, had already experienced phenomenal internal growth and commercial success by the time agile attitude was engaged to facilitate a high level operational planning meeting for the management.

Retail Express delivers market leading cloud based Retail Operating Software, designed specifically to reduce costs, improve efficiency and grow sales. The business now serves thousands of retailers, from many verticals, and has international growth firmly on its radar.

The Situation and the Problem

Founder and CEO Aaron Blackman initially engaged Michi Tyson to facilitate an off-site strategy workshop to create an organisational strategy map for 24 months, as well as a high level operational plan for the next 4 quarters.

Mr Blackman was so impressed by the cultural fit, energy and connectivity displayed during the offsite strategy workshop, that he decided immediately to bring Michi Tyson back to implement the operational planning process, designed to be carried out by each departmental head on a regular basis.

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Founder and CEO
of Retail Express*

"Effectively, we had grown organically from three staff members, to nearly 40 staff and contractors in under 10 years, and had just entered that undesirable phase in business where departments had started to segment and exist in silos. Activities taking place within the various teams and departments were operating in isolation, with little or no input from other stakeholders. In fact, we later realised that some departments had been facing problems the rest of us weren't even aware of," Mr Blackman said.

According to Mr Blackman, with hindsight, the lack of collaboration across the various departments had likely resulted from the company prioritising reactive, short-term solutions over strategic planning and operational goal-alignment.

Marketing Manager, Michael Woodruff likened the previous organisational operating situation to embarking on an exciting adventure as a group, without anyone having any idea as to where they were going.

"Half of us thought we were going to the beach, and others had the idea we were heading for the snow. What resulted was just a mish-mash of activity and no real trackable outcomes."

In addition, Mr Woodruff said the business as a whole had formed a tendency to under-estimate the amount of time it took to complete a task or project, and therefore expectations were set too high. The result was an overall sense that "everyone was in it for themselves," and there was not much interest in achieving goals as a collective.



"Michi facilitated our two-day strategic planning workshop very effectively. Despite having a team of ten managers and an enormous scope – we achieved our goal and distilled 18 months of aspirations, strategy and objectives into a well-defined and prioritised plan. I'd highly recommend Michi to any business seeking group facilitation."

- *Aaron Blackman,
Founder and CEO
of Retail Express*

The Result

Mr Blackman said he could not have imagined a better outcome from the operational planning process.

"I was already confident from our first encounter with Michi that we were going to get stuff done. She brought the right energy and cultural fit. However, we also knew we were being very ambitious – we knew that from the outset. There were a lot of people in the room, a lot of information was given, we had a dozen projects on the go, and there was a lot we wanted to get done. I have to admit, anxiety levels were high."

Michi, however, rose to the challenge, and Mr Blackman was immediately put at ease when he saw how well the planning day had been structured and coordinated from the outset. He mentioned that everyone from each department and team felt encouraged to participate, and so they did.

The only concern Mr Blackman had was around the information and message possibly losing effectiveness over time, but he acknowledged that making time to refresh the process regularly at a departmental level should ensure it stays relevant and is carried out as planned.



The Most Rewarding Part

The most rewarding result of the planning process, according to Mr Blackman, came in the form of an overall sense of ownership and engagement across all the various departments.

"Everyone could immediately recognise the important part they play individually in tracking and reporting outcomes, and staff reported an overall sense of ownership in what happens as a business, even within other departments.

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They really could feel that their contribution made a difference to the success of the business as a whole, not only to their specific function in the team," he said.

According to Mr Woodruff, understanding the stressors that other departments were facing really helped to encourage mutual understanding, empathy and appreciation throughout the entire business, and members of other departments had the opportunity to then identify ways in which they could support and assist one another.

"Actually taking turns to facilitate the sessions really gives each team member ownership of that role, and makes them accountable to the task. After all, there is no point getting

dressed up in your gym gear to just sit on the sofa – people want to feel that are making a difference and actually playing an active part in getting the stuff done..."

Ready to get sh*t done?

Are you done with hearing the same excuses from your team, tired of the disconnect and lack of accountability? If you are ready to really shake things up, get shit done and reclaim your business' hunger for success, Michi Tyson wants to meet you! Give her a call now, and let's discuss what we can achieve together.