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In Search of the Right App

Staff Writers

Business coaching expert uses new technology of the Blackberry and iPhone to examine motivation in the workplace for business owners.

Those who regularly pause to read my columns in Quick Printing may recall a story last year about the “free” iPod Touch I received—which ultimately only cost me \$382 to start enjoying my favorite music. While expensive, in hindsight, that lesson launched me on a journey to get up to speed with modern technology. Soon afterwards, believe it or not, I actually sent my first text message. (Yes, I was lagging a tad behind the communications times.)

Of course, like chocolate, roller coasters, and your first kiss, enjoying the thrill of something devilishly unique tends to make you want to experience it again and again and again. Before long, I was a texting machine; albeit a rather slow one, given my antiquated three-year-old phone. One day my son and I had a contest, sending this simple message to my wife: “Where would you like to eat dinner?” It took him less than 10 seconds to complete said task on his Razr. After a minute of “one tap on 9–W’...two taps on 4–h...two taps on 3–e...” I finally hit Send. Anyone who’s raised a teenager, knows the “You are really out of touch” look I received for my efforts.

Being an über competitive sort, my reactionary thought was to head straight to a cell phone store and make him watch me buy a Blackberry. But my fiscally conservative/fatherly side kicked in, so I graciously accepted defeat.

I also adjusted my style going forward and, whenever he was nearby, handed the phone to him and dictated texts. It was fast and efficient, which, as you’re aware, is what the business world refers to as “maximizing workforce productivity.”

Flaw in the Plan

Unfortunately, that brilliant idea turned out to be a less than perfect long term solution. Something called “school” kept getting in his way during my office hours, and kept me hunting and pecking, which is certainly no way to run a 21st century coaching firm. In April, the president of our organization—also known as his mother—said, “You really need to upgrade.” That’s all the encouragement it took; I mean she’s the president, after all. Off we drove to AT&T, where she approved the purchase of a brand spanking new iPhone for her favorite employee...and husband of two decades.

Let me go on the record and state clearly right here: Steve Jobs and the innovative team at Apple are great at what they create. The iPhone is a tremendous device. Of course, I don’t have to say that to all the graphic designers out there; they’ve been shouting for 25 years, “Dude, Mac is just better.”

While my new touch-screen handheld computer makes texting a breeze—and I can access the Internet, check email, and Twitter from the road—the coolest feature is the App Store. You’ve likely seen their TV commercials that feature the slogan: “There’s an App for that.” With more than 35,000 offerings, there are indeed efficiency tools for everyone. However, I think all those innovative programmers filling up the App Store with cool products are ignoring a large market segment. Seems to me, no one is focusing on the quick printing industry.

My Apps

So, continuing my commitment to provide you new ideas that could immediately help your business, below are five Apps someone needs to create. Feel free to design and sell them for profit to your peers. Given the current economic environment, even at a buck per download, you might find a treasure chest of dollars hidden here:

The X File – Tired of receiving “Ready to Print” files from customers that require hours of correction before sending to the press? Those days are gone—forever. The X File is a simple, one-touch program that auto-corrects the most challenging situations. You’ll never hear again: “But it looks perfect on our monitor.”

Multiple Hats – You know you need to be out meeting with prospects and customers, working on your business, not in it. You have the best intentions every morning when you walk in the door, then reality sets in and you never leave. With Multiple Hats, you can truly be in two places at once. Simply set your iPhone to “clone” mode, and your employees and customers will think you are sitting right there with them.

Good By Me – You’re up against a tight deadline. Your press operator is standing by, ready to perform yet another miracle. The only thing missing is your customer hasn’t signed off on the final proof, and she’s nowhere to be found. Based on proprietary GPS tracking, Good By Me automatically locates your customer, and when she looks at Caller ID—even if she refuses to answer—her approval signature is automatically downloaded onto the proof.

Value-Add Tracker – Despite years of industry effort to reverse the image of being a commodity, customers continue to have the attitude: “All printers are alike.” Thanks to Value-Add Tracker, you’re finally able to prove what you do is as important as what your customers do. Be sure to purchase the optional add-on feature What Makes You So Special?, designed specifically for customers who hold the most grandiose view of themselves.

Trumpinator – You’ve given multiple chances, had several lengthy discussions, and there’s still no improvement. Bottom line: It’s time to tell that employee he’s no longer welcome to work for you. Trumpinator eliminates all the stress and anxiety you feel in these undesirable moments. At the end of the workday, simply dial the cell of the employee you’re terminating, and select a prerecorded message from the man himself. “You’re fired!” will be sweet music to your ears.

Upon returning home from purchasing my iPhone, I actually didn’t get to spend much time with it the first few days. Seems Madame President took a liking and wanted to try everything. As you might have guessed, a week later we returned to the store and procured one for her. That makes our iPhone capital investment more than \$400, plus a \$60 increase in the monthly cellular bill. As I learned last year—and you know so well—being high tech is high cost.

David Handler is the founder of Success Handler, LLC, an executive coaching firm that helps clients explore possibilities for achieving what they desire. He’s working on developing an App that adds an extra hour to each day. To start finding more time in yours, text 713/560-5601, tweet @davidhandler [tweet @davidhandler], email coach@successhandler.com [coach@successhandler.com], or visit www.successhandler.com.



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