



**EXPERTS TONY GATTARI**

# SYSTEMISE OR DIE?

**“We have yet to hear of a staff member who won’t use a procedure they have helped to build.”**

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**W**hen we talk about “systemisation” in business we are not referring to installing the latest equipment, the best software, the fastest printers or the largest server in your business. While the systems that support your business are important, the best technology in the world will be a waste of money unless you systemise.

Instead, what we are referring to is the process of building efficiency in your business through the meeting of people, process and systems. Some elements of systemisation include:

- Agreed/approved, relevant and appropriate policies, procedures and checklists;
- Consistency in activities so that team members follow a logical process for every activity every time;
- Competency in activities – every team member having and maintaining the appropriate skills to undertake their job consistently, effectively and efficiently;
- Standardisation in activities – every team member following the same logical process for one activity;
- Accessibility of information – making agreed/approved procedures and checklists easy to access, understand and use;
- Preservation of knowledge – knowledge being shared through updating procedures and checklists, team meetings and training;
- Continuous improvement – every team member having responsibility for contributing to the improvement of procedures and checklists.

Without systemisation, your business may display these characteristics:

- Your people will continue to do the work but in any way that is convenient, based on their background and training;
- Your processes will be adequate to support your services, but will be ignored, irrelevant or out of date leaving you with ongoing quality issues;
- Your systems might be the latest and greatest, but without the skilled people using the correct process, it will remain a case of “garbage in – garbage out”.

With systemisation, your business will operate more smoothly and you’ll see some or all of these improvements:

- Your people will be skilled and confident in using the right process at the right time, regardless of their background;
- Your processes will be used each time every time by people with the appropriate skills. Every activity will be produced with a consistent level of quality and timeliness;
- Your systems will be appropriate for your business and integrate seamlessly with your processes while your people will be trained in how to use them most effectively.

## **How to introduce new processes to your business**

New processes can (and should) be received with a great deal of excitement. However, it is also common for transforming businesses to have their new processes received with much reluctance and/or actively ignored in favour of the old!

The whole idea of creating standard processes and checklists is to introduce the essential consistency on which to build your business. Repeatable, trainable and service orientated processes not only ensure that you deliver consistent quality to your clients, but allow you to build an engine room that is efficient and productive (and of course more profitable).

New procedures received with reluctance and/or actively ignored suggest one important thing – there has been no consultation or input from your team – they have no “ownership” of it. Staff feel that the change is imposed and regardless of how good the procedure or checklist is, will find problems and inefficiencies which provide a reason for them to revert to the old way of doing things.

Clearly, this situation means that the time and effort invested in the new procedure is potentially lost. Also lost is the opportunity of becoming more profitable with core services.

At this point, many business owners and leaders have given up. “It’s too hard to transform”, “I knew it wouldn’t work”, “Transformation is no good for our business” are just some of the many excuses we have heard.

Our advice is not to give up but rather change tactics—for each practice that has given up, another one has successfully made the journey—and you can too. Avoid wasting the effort of building new procedures that are ignored by instead recognising that team members who “own” processes will use them.

To get that ownership, get your team involved in designing processes. Don’t be afraid or offended if they come up with processes that are very different to the process you think is best. We have seen this time and time again both in our own business and in other businesses we consult to.

We are convinced at the power of the team in this area. That leads us to our next suggestions:

- If you are concerned the ideas are a bit too radical, remind the team of the objectives and guidelines of the task and get them to assess where there are gaps
- Getting your team involved in designing new procedures is unbelievably valuable in ensuring they are adopted in your business: we have yet to hear of a staff member who won’t use a procedure they have helped to build. ■■