



## Use This Simple Technique to Eliminate Discombobulations and Get Your Business Growing Strong.

Have you heard the term, discombobulation? In your business, discombobulations are all those things that aren't working right; the fires that crop up every day, the places where you're inefficient, where there's waste and confusion.

Discombobulations devour your day, and force you to spend way too much time fixing problems and babysitting your crews rather than focusing on marketing and sales activities to grow your business. Discombobulations are keeping you from growing, eating up your profit, stressing you out and eating into your life!

What I am going to do right now, is give you a simple, but powerful technique, that I call a "Post Up," that you can use to help you ferret out and fix some of the biggest discombobulations in your business. This Post Up is a simplified version of a technique used by some of the world's top companies – companies like Marriott, Honda and Toyota – to gather input from their employees to make their businesses more effectively.

Using this "Post Up" technique will make your business more effectively too, so that you can have more time to grow your business or maybe spend a little extra time with your family.

Here are the steps you need to take to do your own Post Up:

### 1. Map out the steps that you follow to sell and deliver your services.

Keep it simple. You really don't need a lot of detail. For our purposes, less than 10 steps will do. Here is what I use with my clients:

Sell work → Schedule and Prep → Complete the Work → After Job.

That's really all you need. If you have a design and build business or division, you should add a step for "Design".

### 2. Hold a "Post-Up" meeting with your team.

Schedule a 1½ or two hour meeting to get your team together. I suggest that you invite your management team and the folks in the field. Get a room big enough to hold everyone. Get a big piece of paper maybe 2' x 6' (use butcher paper or a white paper roll from Staples) and tape it up on a wall. You will also need enough pens and 2"x 2" Post-it note pads for everyone coming to the meeting. Write the steps that you use to deliver your services across the butcher paper on the wall.

The actual meeting is very simple. When your employees arrive, tell them *"The purpose of the meeting is to find ways to make the business run better."*

Then give everybody a pad of Post-it notes and a pen and say:

*"You are working in this business every day and I want your help in identifying the biggest sources of problems, fires, inefficiency, waste and wasted time in our business. I'm going to give you 10-15 minutes and I want you to think about the problems that you see in our business and write one problem per Post-it note Write as many problems until you run out of ideas. Please be honest and don't hold back."*

When everyone is done writing, ask each person to share a problem from one of their Post-it notes, then take the Post-it note and post it up on the butcher paper at the appropriate step in your sales and service process. Often, several people will have identified the same problem, so gather all of those Post-it notes and put them all up. Several people identifying the same problem, means that it is a common problem and maybe a costly one. Continue until there are no more problems to share.

In about an hour, you'll now have a clear view of some of the biggest problems causing the waste, inefficiency, fires and customer problems in your business. **These problems are probably costing you thousands of dollars in profit and wasting hours of your time each day.** When I facilitate Post Up meetings, I typically get between 30 and 100 ideas up on the wall. Here's an example from one I did recently.



The Post-its will tend to cluster in specific areas. These are the problem areas that were causing the most fires and eating up most of people's time in the business.

### 3. **Prioritize the problems and Fix them.**

If there is time at the end of your meeting, take one or two of the problems that you find and get your team's help in finding the causes of the problems and developing solutions. Create procedures for the solutions and put them into practice in your business. Check back to make sure that the solutions worked and adjust them if they didn't.

You don't need to solve all the problems in one meeting. Solve a few more problems each week and week-by-week you will see your inefficiencies and your fires will go away.

The result of the Post-up will be a smoother running, more profitable business. And with fewer fires, problems and interruptions, you'll have less stress and more time to do the other things you need to do to grow your business.

Imagine how great your business could be if you used this simple Post Up technique once a quarter! So pull out your calendar and schedule some time to have a Post-Up with your team. Go ahead. Give it a try. It will make a big difference in your business!