

# Three ways innovation could be killing your business

 By [Dylan Kohlstädt](#)

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Do you work for someone who never seems to stop thinking about the next big thing that needs to be implemented? You know the type, rushing into the office and stealing productive time to call a meeting about some new idea he thought up on the toilet that morning, implementing untested ideas, and blaming the staff when they backfire?

Or are *you* that person? Do you live in constant fear that the competition is getting one up on you? Are you convinced that your ideas are the best and should be implemented immediately, without discussion? Has it occurred to you that you may be doing more harm than good?

Here are a few points to ponder:

## **New ideas aren't always good ideas**

Just because you thought of it, and you own the business, doesn't automatically make you the next marketing sensation. I once worked for a guy who must have been both deaf and blind, because he had the unique ability to ignore the groans and grimaces of his staff when he came up with his next big brainwave and immediately called a meeting to discuss it.

What his staff thought was of no consequence to him in any case, he would run with it regardless. And guess what? He ran a struggling little business that constantly battled to make ends meet and was the laughing stock of the industry. Which brings me to my next point:

## **Innovation costs money**

My ex-boss, let's call him Andy, would hemorrhage money on ridiculous ideas, and then try and cut costs by short-changing his staff, refusing to pay overtime and the like. All he achieved was a skinny bank balance and a mutinous crew. No successful business would ever spend money on an untested idea, so why would you?

## **Constant innovation affects productivity**

If you are constantly throwing new ideas at your staff members and expecting them to produce results, you're going to be disappointed. It's distracting and it's stressful. Andy was brilliant at it. I swear the man didn't sleep. Every day he had a new angle, another spin on a lame idea, and we all had to smile and nod encouragement and pretend he was a genius.

For us, it was soul destroying to watch the man sabotage his own business, and the staff turnover in that company was

insane: six months to a year on average per person.

## Four ways to manage your innovative ideas

So, what do you do? If you are that guy - that person that can't help getting excited by a brainwave, or obsesses over what the competition may be doing that you haven't thought of, there are a few simple tricks that will help.

### **1. Let a new idea incubate**

You've woken up and it hits you like a ton of bricks. That 'eureka' moment when you realise just how important it is that men should have nipples. It should be quite obvious that men don't need nipples, but someone obviously thought it was a good idea at the time and just ran with it. Get the point? Write new ideas on the board and let them sit for a while. If it's really good, it'll be brought up again. If not, then bin it.

### **2. Get feedback from your staff**

I'm amazed at how many bad business people think their staff are trying to sabotage them. Andy wouldn't hear a word of criticism from one of his employees, yet the talk around the water cooler was anything but negative.

We would criticise his decisions, sure, but we all had the best of the company at heart. If he had asked our opinions and actually heeded our advice, the man may actually have had a successful business. Your staff have your back, and if they don't like an idea it's a good bet nobody else will either.

### **3. Do consumer testing**

If you're about to spend money on a new idea and you haven't tested it, then you deserve to lose your money. Your customers are the reason you're in business, and you need their advice.

Social media platforms abound where you can pitch new ideas and see first-hand the reaction they get. And it doesn't cost a cent! [Usability testing is also cheap](#) and a great way of finding out what customers think before you commit limited resources to implementing the idea.

### **4. It doesn't always matter what your competition is doing**

Running into the office and shouting "stop the press!" every time a competitor introduces a new angle into the marketplace only serves to distract everybody. Has it occurred to you that they may also have an impulse driven man or woman at the helm that might not have done their homework?

Using these tips should help you identify good ideas from bad ones. And if you're still having trouble separating the sheep from the goats, Shift ONE has the experience and knowhow to work with you in designing a [marketing strategy](#) that will get your business noticed, without breaking the bank.

Another suggestion is to invest in a business mentor, someone who has experience and a proven track record who can help temper some of that enthusiasm; they might just save your bacon.

## **ABOUT DYLAN KOHLSTÄDT**

Dylan is the founder and CEO of Shift ONE, a creative integrated digital marketing agency with 12 full time staff members. Shift ONE was incubated by QTi and Google for Entrepreneurs and she now gives back by offering digital marketing training and workshops and talks to entrepreneurs. She has also facilitated the QTi Women in Business programme and mentors entrepreneurs, marketing managers and women in business on a regular basis.

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