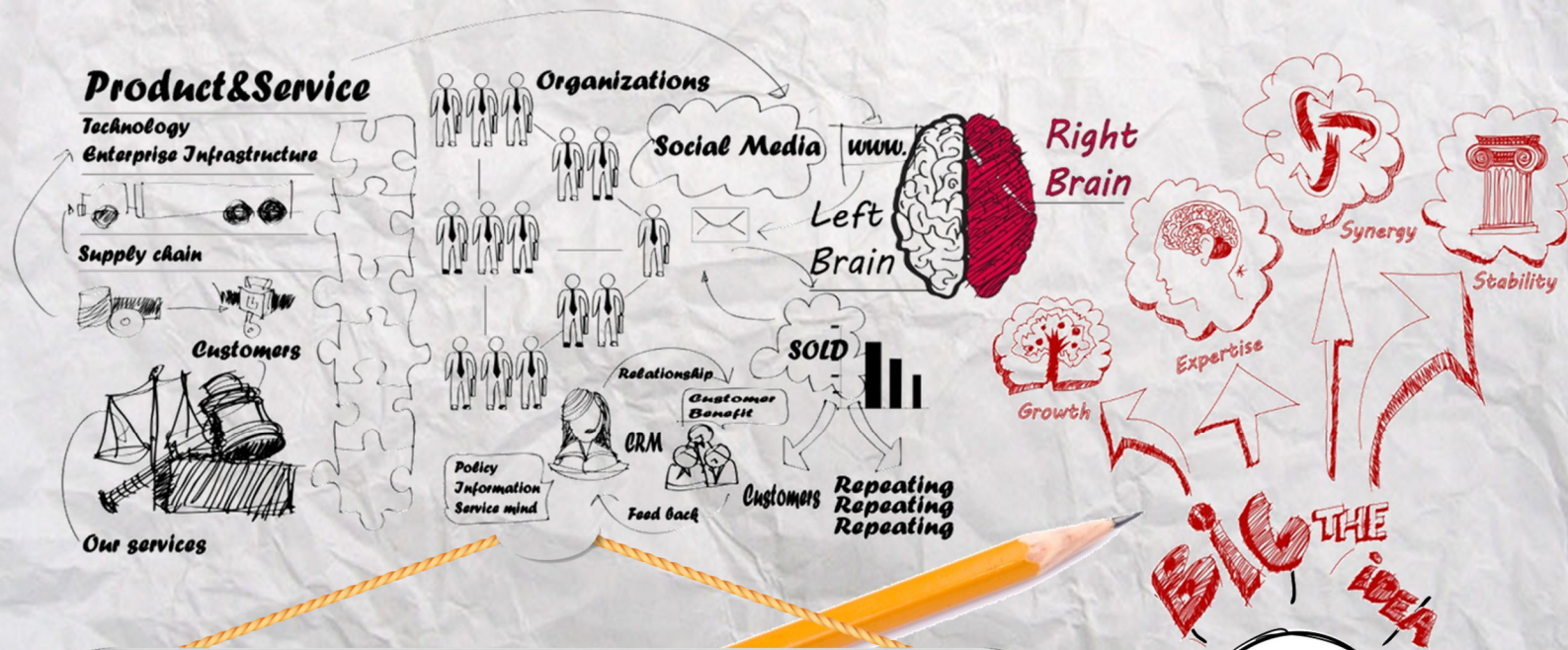


Ideas Matter!

A white paper on 'Why ideation is so important in business today'!



- Do you bubble with IDEAS?
- What do you do when you get an IDEA?
- What are your implementing disciplines when it comes to your IDEAS?
- Do you have a good note taking system?
- Even the Girl Scouts have a great new IDEA!



Carm
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Fresh Ideas !?!?!?

How about the idea that will change how we buy Girl Scout Cookies forever. The Girl Scouts are going to sell cookies on-line for the first time ever! Who would have ever thought this? Digital cookies! And each Girl Scout will have a cookie web page for their own orders. There are many opinions about the on-line Girl Scout Cookies idea, however I look at it as an evolution whose time has come. In fact I'm certain that the Girl Scouts will boost their sales to a level that they have never imagined. More people are buying on-line than ever before as 2014 cyber Monday proves with over \$2B in



sales (biggest ever) it is a growing trend. Not a gimmick for the Girl Scouts; a necessity. (I love the peanut butter sandwich, when Bury made it, but I digress)

My point in bringing this up; this is a change for Girl Scouts and a great idea whose time has come.

No doubt you have many great ideas cycling in and out of your thoughts each day. And the biggest problem that many have is getting them written down and implemented. And once brought to life some of these great ideas create a buzz about your company that gets positive talk going your way.

This positive talk about your business and not about your competition pushes 'positive trending' toward you and that is very powerful in the world of the crowded and competitive automotive aftermarket. And it can all start with a great idea. (Not unlike the BUZZ the Girl Scouts enjoyed when they implemented on-line cookie sales).

Ideation



This white paper is about ideation (the formation of ideas and concepts). Changes and improvements in business

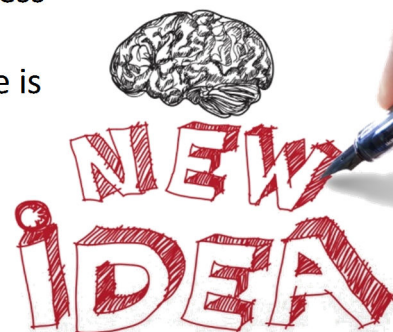
and life today happen because you build up to them through the impact that all your senses have on your conscious mind.

These input sensors spark ideas that can have a big impact on your business. When you get these ideas you need to do one very important thing. Write them down. And if it's

an idea whose time has come, you

must implement. Every business person knows what must be done, but the biggest struggle is implementation (pulling the trigger).

A partner to great ideas is listening to your intuition. It tells you things you want to know and also what you do not want to know. For many business people your intuition is a strong part of your success; if you let it steer you right. Sometimes all you have to do is listen to it. It is

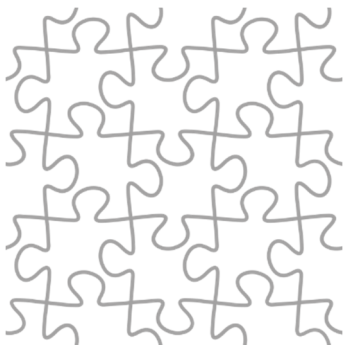


a companion to ideation and used together are important tools in business today.

So how do you manage your ideas (which ones will turn into solutions)?

First and foremost you need to get a journal and write your thoughts down. You never want to lose a perfect gem of an idea by not writing it down. Just by the sheer fact that you thought it, do yourself a favor, write it down! By writing them down you will un-clutter your mind and have a secure spot for reference.

Your business ideas will be inclusive to:



- increasing revenue
- improving culture and purpose
- building new and keeping strong relationships
- leadership development of your team and yourself
- managing cost
- improving process, systems or operations
- building stronger profits.

Don't discount any idea. Even keep the ones that may be a stretch; hey you never know. Just because no one has done it yet doesn't mean it won't work for you (more on that later). Also ideas today may have a different meaning or value in six months, a year or longer. That is the

perfect reason to write down your idea(s). Here is a tip: A one or two word idea may not be strong enough to help you remember your full idea. Therefore you may need to write down a little more than just a few words about your idea. Write down **why** it is a good idea, **how** you would implement, **who** would lead the charge and **when** you feel it needs to be implemented or completed.



Many of your current policies, programs, promotions and service commitments started as really good ideas; they came from your entrepreneurial drive. And what once worked well may have seen their effectiveness wane or



erode over time. Nothing lasts forever. Remember that once you implement a great fresh idea it will be copied by your competition and you will lose the luster of having implemented an original idea

(It's OK because you'll be known as an innovator and the competition must play catch up with you). That is why having a constant flow of ideas is so important. Sometimes your ideas are way ahead of their time. However having them written down will allow you to implement when the time is right or implement now and be aggressive and ahead of the curve. It's good to be an innovator ... the point of the plow.

So 'recharging' and 'restocking' your ideas on a continual stride to stay relevant is a great discipline to have. It allows you, as Michael Gerber says: "To work on your business and not in your business" (*E Myth* by Michael Gerber)

Some people have ideation as a given strength. If you develop ideas easily and constantly, count ideation as a strength. But be sure you are always writing them down; so you don't have to remember every one. Some are easy to implement, some are way out of the box. Someday the 'box' will be very close to the reality of your ideas and

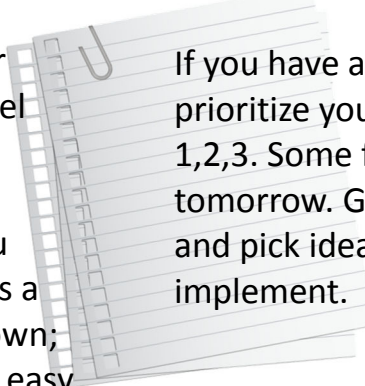
you will appreciate that you had the idea and wrote it down. Then implement!

If you are not a person that bubbles with ideas, don't fear, there are many people around you that would love to give you a few. Involve your family, friends, customers and especially your team. Get them involved. Put a bounty on an implemented idea. Never ignore an idea from a customer; they will have some of the best ways to help you grow and improve your business.

If you have a good list going stop occasionally and prioritize your ideas. You can even rate them A,B,C or 1,2,3. Some futuristic ideas could be labeled 'T' for tomorrow. Go with your intuition on prioritizing your lists and pick ideas you are going to implement.

Note: One great way of **keeping a good journal** is the program Evernote. Search for it on the internet. There is a free version and you can create folders with each idea segment so you can organize your thoughts. It's very easy to recall any idea you have with Evernote.

Evernote is not only PC based it allows you to use your portable Smartphone or tablet to access your journals. So when ideas strike, you can enter or review them anywhere or at any time.



You can group your ideas by key business segments such as Sales, People, Margin, Training, Operations, Service, Product(Inventory), Cost Management, Strategy, Customer Service, Supplier Relations, Promotion, Marketing, Digital Assets, Productivity, Purpose, Process; you get the idea.



When it's time to bring a new idea to life you must visit your written idea list to be sure you've not missed any other idea that could be related or connected and become a significant addition to your newly launched idea. The value of writing down your ideas in a list, prioritizing and segmenting will become apparent when it's time to implement. (You can use this same discipline for your personal world. If coaching, fund raising or home projects, this is a great method).

Implementing your ideas.

IMPLEMENTATION

Implementation may not be a slam dunk. You cannot just flip a switch and presto a new idea comes to reality. Developing the idea to implementation will require you

- What will be the realized impact to the business?
- Ease of implementing
- Use of people resources to implement
- Costs of idea
- Savings that the implemented idea will produce
- Equipment necessary
- Technology needed
- Am I confident knowing everything I need to know about this project before implementing (I don't know what I don't know)
- Who knows more than me?
- What is the down side?
- What scares me?
- What is exciting about it?
- Do I have any past experience?
- Are we playing catch up?
- Does this idea need to be sold to my team, my customers?
- Can this be tested?
- Can I call anyone to help?
- Will an action plan be created to bring accountability and life to this idea? (If not it may never see the light of day)
- How will this idea impact the culture of my company?

to do some evaluations (see above sidebar) and create an implementation plan.

So many ideas get half-baked because all steps of an implementation plan don't get completed. Why? Good implementation requires great discipline and an action plan. The core of a good action plan includes

prioritization, **who** is responsible for the task and **when** will it be completed. Assigning a champion (the who) to an element of the plan and a date of completion builds accountability. **And accountability is where it's at today.**

When things don't happen it is usually accountability by an action step owner that is the cause or break-down point. When the commitment of people and time



become fully engaged implementation becomes reality. (For a copy of an excel format action plan go to my

[success partner](http://successpartner.com) website and the services tab and click on downloads)

How do you pick the best ideas to implement? Your decision may be impacted by:

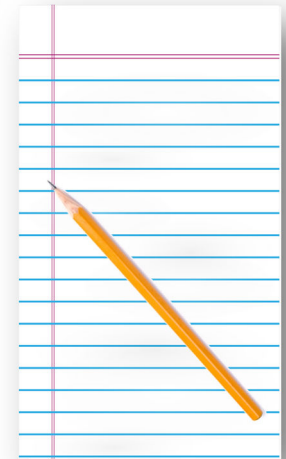
- You having a critical deficiency and you must play catch-up therefore no option
- You want to build differentiation with your customers and stand out as a supplier. Being proactive and smart.
- Asking your team what they feel should be next great idea to implement. Having their buy in is huge.

Revisit your lists.

Don't forget your ideas. As said earlier when you write them down make them clear enough so you aren't wondering what you were thinking. When you revisit

your lists that clarity will help in the development your ideas and even spark new ones.

Creating and managing (reviewing) your idea list should be done weekly. If you have ideation as a strength then you understand the value of this. You need to update, evaluate and even cross off ideas that have been implemented or no longer are relevant; always be improving and updating your list.



This is a perfect discipline to have in creating a culture of constant improvement. The culture of improvement and innovation extend out of your business through your associates and to your customer. Customers want to be involved with winners and to support companies whose



culture is strong and committed to their success. Your customer will feel the excellence you are creating and will support you because you are the best of the best in all you do for him or her.

Now let's consider YOU!

Re-Invention of YOU is something YOU must do; ideas that matter for your self-improvement. You must find the time, at the minimum twice a year, to re-evaluate and re-invent YOU; yourself as a leader, an implementer, a manager, a coach, a marketer, a customer service champion, a sales person, a promoter, a process improver, an operations guru, and as a business developer. What are you doing great, what needs improvement? What do you need to change? What do you need to do more of? What should you stop doing? (You should keep a private list of personal ideas to help you in your personal improvement) You are not the person you were when you started in business and you will not be the same person next year or five years from now. The metamorphous is evident, but it should be done deliberately. This personal change is refreshing for you and healthy for your business. The market does not stand still for you. As a leader you must change with it and the key is to stay ahead of where you need to be.

You will thrive building your business and yourself through the implementation of ideas that matter for your business and yourself.



You know what needs to get done; now all you have to do is implement.



The Author.

Carm Capriotto is the founder of two unique businesses that serve the automotive aftermarket.

- **Carm Capriotto Success Partner**



Success Partner an automotive aftermarket support firm that provides auto parts firms with sales training, financial, operations, leadership advisory services and assistance to build ideas into accountable positive change and fruitful rewards.

- **RemarkableResults.biz**

Carm hosts a weekly podcast interviewing aftermarket professionals who share their stories of Remarkable Results. Keep in touch with your peers and find out the stories that they attribute to their success. A weekly must do! Visit the website for all episodes.



Carm has over 35 years' experience in the aftermarket as business owner and as an executive with a WD with

stores and spent those years where the rubber meets the road focused on the service professional.

Carm's key strengths based on Strengths finder 2.0 include strategy, responsibility, competition and ideation. His sales training courses focus on knowledge transfer and implementation. In an advisory role he realizes that business owners know what their challenges are, they just need the guidance to develop strong action plans with accountability. Besides being a podcaster, trainer and adviser he lives as an empty nester with his wife Ann in dairy country. He is always creating and improving; and can for you.



To learn more about how to build an accountability factor and get things done in your business visit...

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