
Green shoots of growth

Selena Bolingbroke

Associate Director, MetaValue



As more non-profit organisations look to diversify their income base so as not to be reliant on shrinking public grants and contracts, the role of staff in identifying new services and new markets cannot be underestimated. Selena shares some perspectives on how you can harness the potential of your people.

Businesses which are looking to grow are always advised as a first step to listen to their customers. For traditional profit-making businesses this will take the form of finding out from existing customers what would make them buy more services or goods, or what new services and goods they would want to buy. All-important is the intelligence that needs to be gathered before embarking on your growth strategy.



But an often neglected and more easily accessed source of 'market intelligence' and ideas for growth is with the staff in the organisation. This is especially true for public sector service delivery organisations where there are high numbers of staff with direct 'customer' contact roles. The temptation often is to start with external sources of market intelligence – industry reports, market trends etc. However for growth ideas to work and be sustainable, it is important that you focus on what is right for you as an organisation. To identify growth avenues right for you, you've got to start with internal intelligence and use market intelligence to validate and build on the internal ideas.

A hallmark of the MetaValue approach to working with customers is staff intensive workshop solutions to engage in different aspects of business planning – from stakeholder engagement through to marketing and branding plans.

One particular workshop that engages staff in the service innovation and idea generation for growth planning is the Green Shoots workshop. We have held workshops involving hundreds of staff from all different sections and levels of the organisation. The result is thousands of ideas generated in a very short period of time that can then be tested and validated through further market analysis and financial modelling.

One organisation MetaValue recently worked with, took on the principle of staff engagement in growth planning, beyond the formal business planning period and established a permanent 'Green Shoots Task Force' as a forum for staff from across the organisation to meet regularly to put forward and discuss new ideas for growth and service innovation.

As well as a well-stocked source of great ideas for growth, the staff engagement activity itself provides other benefits:

- Increased individual and team motivation
- Greater understanding of and buy-in to the organisation's vision, strategy and plans



- A more agile workforce that is more engaged with the dynamics of their organisation and more sympathetic to the challenges of growth.

Our message at MetaValue is that all staff in the organisation – whatever their role, front of house, back office, support service or business development – have a vital role in ensuring that the organisation has a continuous process of ideas generation and channels for service innovation through active engagement in business planning for the future.

Selena Bolingbroke

For more information:

Please visit www.metavalue.co.uk

 @metavalue

Meeta Thareja

meeta.thareja@metavalue.co.uk

Suzie Campbell

suzie.campbell@metavalue.co.uk