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## FILE IT WHERE?

File by use...not by source.



BY DENNIS O'NEILL

*The Business Growth Coach*

**E**ver wonder...where did I put that? Keep in mind this simple idea for filing. The chances are when you next want a document it's because you need it for some regular specific use. That use is where you should be able to go to find it. File by use...not by source.

I worked in radio for a long time. We got hundreds of great pieces of material from The Radio Marketing Bureau. Every station had a huge file of "stuff" filed under Radio Marketing Bureau. Many complained that they got lots of stuff from the Bureau but seldom did they use it. That was their own fault and their loss. It might as well have all been filed under "miscellaneous".

The materials might have been 'sales tips', or information about each category of business that our advertisers were in. e.g. auto dealers, furniture stores, service businesses...or dozens of other

valuable categories. When you needed any specific piece you went to the files. Most stations just filed it with the ton of material in the huge file marked 'Radio Marketing Bureau'. Usually it was a large drawer full, not a file at all.

I discovered it served better to ignore where it came from...the source.

File it under use. A file on 'Auto dealer information', a file on 'furniture stores', etc. We needed separate files on 'Selling materials', 'promotions', various advertising media and on and on. A file for each use we would have.

So when you need information, whatever the use for the material, you could go to the file for your specific use. Seems elementary. Yet almost nobody did it that way.

File by use; not by source. ■

*Dennis O'Neill, the Business Growth Coach is located in Niagara-On-The-Lake. For more information on how to grow your business, call 905-641-8777 or visit www.dennisonneillcoach.com*

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**BRING OUT THE BEST IN YOUR BUSINESS**  
*Dennis O'Neill the business growth coach*

**Author of UP YOUR VALUE How to Really Grow Your Business**

## Commit to making Errors of Commission

BY TIM EMPRINGHAM

**A**ccording to Rosabeth Moss Kanter, when it comes to innovation the big mistakes are "generally not errors of commission". Put another way a former boss used to say "if you're not failing you're not trying". Ultimately they both mean that it's actually the lack of innovation that is the most risky approach to doing business.

So if the riskier approach is to do nothing and avoid innovation, then why are so many leaders and companies sitting on the side lines waiting for someone to invite them into the game?

I believe that the answer lies in two primary factors. First, many business owners and leaders perceive innovation as the act of taking big chances, risking on big projects with big financial costs that have low odds of success in hopes of eventually hitting one home run that will compensate for the costs of all the losers. Second, most people are not typically programmed for a high tolerance for differences or change so we tend to travel the most familiar roads and rely on the most familiar approaches to product progression, which ultimately result in less valuable incremental improvements.

The keys to succeeding in Innovation then are to commit oneself to making the Errors of Commission in the most intelligent way possible, and to commit

to being open to ideas from unusual sources and in unusual places.

The design firm IDEO has coined the phrase "fail early and fail often in order to succeed sooner" which I think elegantly captures the essence of the first part of the commitment. It is a strategy that seeks small wins through rapid prototyping and testing of theories that will ultimately deliver new ideas with the least risk.

As an added bonus, if you build your Innovation process around a commitment to testing ideas quickly and inexpensively you open the door to being able to test more ideas from more sources which opens the door to tackling the second part of the problem. Because you are now able to test more theories and it is less expensive to try out new ideas you will automatically be more open to those ideas that would have traditionally been too unusual to catch your eye.

Commit today to failing early, failing often, and failing in new and unusual ways as the first step to succeeding sooner in the creation of new growth in your business. Make "Errors of Commission" your new secret weapon in changing the game on your competition! ■

*Tim Empringham is an independent consultant specializing in creating growth through Innovation and Design. www.keyconsulting.ca.*