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Preparing Your Office for Rapid Business Growth

Rapid business growth can be an exciting time—it means the hard work is paying off. But as the office manager, you know that with growth comes new challenges. To stay ahead of the curve, you'll need to prepare your office to handle the demands of expansion while maintaining efficiency and morale. Here's how to get your office ready for a growth surge.

1. Assess Your Current Operations

Start by taking a good, hard look at your office's current

processes and systems. What's working well, and what's already stretched thin? Whether it's outdated software, manual workflows, or lack of storage space, identify bottlenecks that could become bigger problems as the business scales. Addressing these now will save you from scrambling later.

2. Optimize Your Office Layout

As the team grows, your office layout might need a refresh.

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Consider whether your current space can accommodate additional employees or equipment. Look for ways to maximize existing space—such as reorganizing desks or converting underused areas into collaborative workspaces. If an office move or expansion is on the horizon, start planning early to minimize disruptions.

3. Upgrade Your Technology

Growth often means handling more data, communications, and tasks, so your technology needs to keep pace. Audit your current tools to ensure they can scale with the business. This might include upgrading to faster internet, implementing cloud-based software, or adopting a more robust customer relationship management (CRM) system. Automation tools can also save time and reduce manual errors as workloads increase.

4. Streamline Processes

Inefficient workflows that were manageable before can quickly spiral out of control during rapid growth. Work with your team to identify areas where processes can be simplified, standardized, or automated. For example, setting up templates for frequently used documents or automating invoicing can free up valuable time and resources.

5. Plan for New Hires

If growth means expanding your team, prepare to onboard new employees efficiently. Review your hiring process and identify ways to streamline it without sacrificing quality. Create an onboarding plan that helps new hires hit the ground running, including training materials, clear job descriptions, and a welcoming environment. This will ensure your growing team integrates seamlessly.

6. Strengthen Communication Channels

As the business grows, effective communication becomes even more critical. Make sure your team has access to reliable communication tools, such as messaging apps or project management platforms, to stay connected. Establish clear protocols for sharing updates, addressing issues, and celebrating successes so everyone feels informed and aligned.

7. Monitor Financials Closely

Growth can strain budgets, so keeping a close eye on finances is essential. Work with leadership to update budgets, track cash flow, and ensure there's enough capital to support the expansion. Regular financial reports and forecasts will help your team avoid overspending and allocate resources wisely.

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8. Prioritize Employee Morale

Rapid growth can be stressful for your team, especially if workloads increase or changes happen quickly. Check in regularly with employees to gauge morale and address concerns. Consider offering perks like flexible work arrangements, team-building activities, or professional development opportunities to keep everyone engaged and motivated.

9. Focus on Scalability

Every system, tool, and process you put in place should be designed with scalability in mind. Ask yourself: Will this solution work when the office doubles in size? Will it still be effective as client demands grow? Thinking long-term now will save you from constantly revising plans later.

10. Prepare for the Unexpected

Growth is unpredictable, and challenges can arise when you least expect them. Build flexibility into your plans by creating contingency strategies. For instance, if client demand spikes faster than anticipated, have a plan to bring in

temporary staff or adjust project timelines. Being proactive will help you navigate surprises with confidence.

Growth as an Opportunity, Not a Stressor

Rapid growth is a sign of success, but it's also a test of your office's resilience. By preparing ahead of time, you can help your office thrive under the pressures of expansion. Stay organized, involve your team, and focus on solutions that support long-term scalability. With the right preparations, you'll turn growth into an opportunity to shine—and show just how essential you are to the organization's success. ■

Financial Planning 101: Forecasting for a Profitable Office

Having a handle on financial forecasting can make a huge difference in your office's financial health and planning. Financial forecasting helps you anticipate future financial performance based on historical data, current trends, and anticipated changes. It's like looking into a crystal ball to predict your office's financial future, and it can be incredibly valuable for making informed decisions and setting realistic goals. Here's how you can effectively use financial forecasting to guide your office's financial strategy.



projections for future periods. This helps you anticipate potential challenges, opportunities, and financial needs. Understanding the basics of financial forecasting will give you a solid foundation to build on.

Gather Historical Data

Start by collecting historical financial data from your office's past performance. This includes financial statements, sales records, expense reports, and any other relevant documents.

Understand the Basics

Financial forecasting is all about predicting future financial outcomes based on existing data. You'll use historical financial information, such as past revenues, expenses, and profit margins, to create

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Analyzing this data helps you identify trends and patterns, which are crucial for making accurate forecasts. The more comprehensive your data, the more reliable your forecasts will be.

Identify Key Drivers

Identify the key drivers that impact your office's financial performance. These can include factors such as sales volume, customer acquisition costs, seasonal fluctuations, and market conditions. By understanding these drivers, you can better predict how changes in these factors might affect your future financial outcomes. For instance, if you know that sales typically increase during certain months, you can adjust your forecasts accordingly.

Choose the Right Forecasting Method

There are various forecasting methods to choose from, each with its own strengths and weaknesses.

Common methods include quantitative approaches, like time series analysis and regression analysis, which rely on historical data to make predictions. Qualitative approaches, such as expert judgment or market research, are useful when data is limited or when you're dealing with new or uncertain conditions. Choose the method that best suits your needs and the data available.

Create Financial Models

Develop financial models based on your chosen forecasting method. These models will help you project future revenues, expenses, and profits. Use tools like spreadsheets or specialized forecasting software to build your models. Input your historical data, key drivers, and assumptions into these models to generate your forecasts. Make sure your models are flexible and can be adjusted as new information becomes available.

Review and Adjust

Financial forecasts are not set in stone. Regularly review and adjust your forecasts based on actual performance and any changes in your business environment. If you notice discrepancies between your forecasts and actual results, investigate the causes and refine your forecasts accordingly. Continuous review and adjustment ensure that your forecasts remain accurate and relevant.



Communicate with Stakeholders

Effective communication is key when it comes to financial forecasting. Share your forecasts with relevant stakeholders, such as team members, executives, and financial advisors. Explain the assumptions and methods behind your forecasts and how they impact your office's financial strategy. Clear communication helps ensure that everyone is on the same page and can make informed decisions based on your forecasts.

Plan for Different Scenarios

Financial forecasting often involves planning for various scenarios, including best-case, worst-case, and most likely scenarios. By considering different possibilities, you can prepare for a range of outcomes and develop strategies to manage potential risks. Scenario planning helps you stay proactive and adaptable, even when faced with unexpected changes.



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Use Forecasts to Inform Decisions

Use your financial forecasts to guide decision-making and strategic planning. Whether you're considering expanding your office, investing in new technology, or adjusting your

budget, forecasts provide valuable insights into the potential financial impacts of your decisions. Base your decisions on the data and projections from your forecasts to make informed, strategic choices.

Final Thoughts

Financial forecasting is a powerful tool that can help you anticipate future financial performance and make informed decisions.

By gathering historical data, identifying key drivers, choosing the right forecasting method, creating financial models, and regularly reviewing and adjusting your forecasts, you can stay ahead of potential challenges and opportunities. Effective communication and scenario planning further enhance the usefulness of your forecasts. With these strategies, you'll be well-equipped to guide your office toward financial success and stability. ■

Oversharing: Can You Please Curb Your TMI



By Lynne Curry

When “Heather” met with her boss to request a week of personal leave, she didn’t intend to spill her deepest secrets. But Heather needed someone to understand—the sleepless nights, the gut-wrenching choice, the unbearable fear of raising a child with birth defects.

Her boss listened without judgment. Still, in the days that followed, Heather couldn’t

shake the feeling she had exposed too much. Did her boss look at her differently now? Or was she the one seeing her boss through a new lens—resenting her for not validating Heather’s decision. Heather seethed with confession remorse.

After a staff meeting, “Karla” casually admitted, “I don’t actually believe half of what I said.” When a coworker challenged her, Karla smugly explained she didn’t “trust management” and considered it a “badge of honor” to clock in as one version of herself and clock out as another. After that conversation, her coworkers questioned whether they could trust her to be honest when it mattered.

Oversharing v. Hiding

What about you? Do you reveal too much personal information at work? Or do you wear a mask to hide the real you? A November 2024 survey revealed 57% of U.S. employees felt their coworkers don’t know when, where, or how to be honest in the workplace. [Many described their colleagues as too honest](#)—whether by oversharing personal details (65%), criticizing coworkers and their company (53%), or venting about work issues (52%).

The risks of oversharing

While openness fosters connection, oversharing can erode professional relationships. Consider the potential consequences of allowing your mouth to be an open faucet to your mind:

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- **Reputation** – Sharing your emotional struggles or personal drama may cause others to question your judgment, competency, credibility, and emotional resiliency.
- **Workplace Politics** – Confidences can be weaponized and later used against you.
- **Discomfort** – Your personal disclosures can make others uncomfortable.
- **Emotional Fatigue** – Your coworkers have their own challenges; they may not have the bandwidth or desire to absorb yours.
- **Regret** – If, like Heather, you overshare deeply personal experiences, you may later feel exposed and judged.

What's created this cult of excessive, unrequested honesty? Some point to the pandemic, which blurred personal and professional boundaries. Others cite social media's influence, where constant validation encourages people to disclose everything, no matter how personal.

The Value of Authentic, Honest Communication

While oversharing has its pitfalls, research highlights the [benefits of authenticity](#) in

the workplace. We trust authentic people. We respect those who communicate openly and genuinely. We value those who say what they feel, without putting on a fake face. Employees who feel safe being themselves experience [greater job satisfaction and lower stress](#).

Striking the Balance: Authenticity Without Oversharing

You can bring your authentic self to the workplace while maintaining professionalism.



Here's how:

1. Integrity

When you're true to yourself—saying what you mean, meaning what you say, and standing up for what you value—others can trust you.

2. Set Clear Boundaries

Temper honesty with professionalism by deciding what you can appropriately share and what needs to remain private. Avoid discussing intimate relationships or unguarded revelations of your deepest secrets.

3. Practice Situational Awareness

Before sharing, consider:

- **The audience** – What's your relationship with your colleagues?
- **The setting** – Is this the right time and place?
- **The sensitivity of the topic** – Will this make others uncomfortable?

4. Ensure Relevance

Ask yourself: *Why am I sharing this?* If your disclosure doesn't add value or foster genuine connection, leave it unsaid.

5. Assess Risk

Would you be comfortable if this information were shared beyond your intended audience? If the answer is no, don't share.

6. Balance Honesty with Tact

Being truthful doesn't excuse gossiping, engaging in office drama, or venting negativity.

7. Positive transparency

Honesty benefits you and your workplace when it involves standing up for what you value, owning your mistakes and taking accountability.

The bottom line

Authenticity isn't about spilling everything; it's about knowing what matters, when to speak up, and how to do it with impact.

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Lynne Curry, PhD, SPHR, SHRM-SCP, authored *"Navigating Conflict"* (Business Experts Press, 2022); *"Managing for Accountability"* (BEP, 2021); *"Beating the Workplace Bully,"* AMACOM 2016, and *"Solutions 911/411."* Curry founded www.workplacecoachblog.com, and

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A life-changing, self-training manual for navigating difficult conflicts and situations

No one understands how to handle and manage conflict like **Lynne Curry**, and no one writes about it better. If you ever have to deal with conflict (and you will), Curry's book helps you identify and improve how you handle conflict. This is a must read.



— Sean Eichrodt, Securities and Investigations Management, The GEO Group

Order Now!

Office Technology Upgrades That Pay for Themselves

Investing in office technology can feel like a big commitment, but the right upgrades often pay for themselves in time savings, cost reductions, and improved efficiency. As an office manager, you're in the perfect position to identify which tools and systems can deliver the biggest return on investment (ROI). Here are some smart technology upgrades to consider and how they can make an impact.

1. Cloud-Based File Storage

If your office still relies on physical filing cabinets or outdated on-premise servers, it's time to switch to a cloud-based storage solution. Services like Google

Workspace, Microsoft OneDrive, or Dropbox offer secure, easily accessible storage that can eliminate the costs of paper, printing, and maintenance. Plus, cloud storage reduces the risk of losing critical files and allows your team to work from anywhere.



2. Automation Tools

Repetitive tasks like data entry, scheduling, or invoicing can eat up a lot of time. Automation tools like Zapier, Monday.com, or automated billing software can handle these tasks for you, freeing up your team to focus on more strategic work. By reducing human error and increasing productivity, these tools quickly offset their initial costs.

3. VoIP Phone Systems

Traditional landlines can be expensive and inflexible. Upgrading to a Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP)

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system like RingCentral or Zoom Phone lets you cut costs while gaining advanced features like call forwarding, video conferencing, and voicemail-to-email transcription. These systems are especially useful if your team includes remote workers or needs flexibility in communication.

4. Energy-Efficient Hardware

Old computers, printers, and other office equipment can be energy hogs, driving up utility bills. Replacing outdated devices with energy-efficient models, such as laptops with low-power processors or ENERGY STAR–certified printers, can significantly lower electricity costs. Over time, the savings on energy bills can make up for the upfront expense.

5. Customer Relationship Management (CRM) Software

A robust CRM system like Salesforce, HubSpot, or Zoho can streamline client management by centralizing contact details, tracking interactions, and automating follow-ups. This not only saves time but also improves customer

satisfaction and retention—ultimately boosting revenue. A well-implemented CRM system can quickly prove its value by helping your team close more deals.

6. Project Management Platforms

Managing team workflows manually or through endless email threads can be inefficient. Tools like Asana, Trello, or ClickUp keep everyone on the same page, reduce miscommunication, and streamline task assignments. By increasing productivity and ensuring deadlines are met, these platforms save both time and money in the long run.



7. Modern Payroll and HR Software

Manually handling payroll and HR processes can be tedious and prone to errors. Upgrading to software like Gusto, BambooHR, or Paychex simplifies payroll, benefits administration, and compliance tasks. These platforms reduce the need for outsourcing and minimize costly mistakes, offering a quick ROI through saved time and resources.

8. Smart Office Devices

Smart thermostats, lighting systems, and energy management tools can help you control utility costs with precision. For example, a smart thermostat adjusts heating and cooling based on occupancy, while motion-sensor lights ensure you're not paying for electricity in empty rooms. Over time, these upgrades can lead to significant savings on operational costs.

9. Faster Internet and Wi-Fi Upgrades

Slow internet speeds or unreliable connections can cost your office more than you realize in lost productivity and frustration. Upgrading to a faster internet plan or investing in a high-performance Wi-Fi system can help your team work more efficiently and seamlessly, especially when handling large files or conducting video calls.

10. Digital Payment Solutions

If your office handles transactions, upgrading to digital payment systems like Square, Stripe, or PayPal can reduce processing times and fees. These platforms often come with reporting and tracking features that simplify bookkeeping and improve cash flow visibility.

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Office Technology Upgrades That Pay for Themselves

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Making the Case for Upgrades

When proposing technology upgrades to your employer, focus on the ROI. Break down the cost savings, productivity improvements, and other

tangible benefits to show how the investment will pay off over time. Provide examples, such as how a new CRM could reduce client churn or how automation tools could save hours of repetitive work each week.

Start Small, Scale Smart

You don't need to overhaul your entire office at once. Start with the upgrades that address your office's biggest pain points or offer the quickest payback.

Once you see the benefits, you can build a case for additional investments.

By embracing technology that pays for itself, you'll not only save your office time and money—you'll also position your team to thrive in an increasingly competitive, tech-driven world. As an office manager, your strategic decisions in this area can have a lasting impact on the business's success. ■

Turning Around Underperformance: Strategies for Tough Conversations



You wear many hats, from overseeing daily operations to ensuring the team's productivity. One of the more challenging aspects of your role is handling underperformance. It's a delicate task that requires a balance of empathy, clear communication, and strategic action. Here's a step-by-step guide to help you navigate this complex issue effectively.

Recognize the Signs Early

Underperformance can manifest in various ways,

such as missed deadlines, poor-quality work, decreased enthusiasm, or negative attitudes. Pay close attention to these signs and address them early. The sooner you identify and tackle the problem, the easier it will be to manage.

Approach the Situation with Empathy

When addressing underperformance, it's crucial to approach the situation with empathy and an open mind. There could be underlying reasons for the employee's decline in performance, such as personal issues, health problems, or a lack of resources. Start the conversation by expressing your concern and willingness to support them.

Example: "Hey [Employee's Name], I've noticed that you've been struggling with meeting

deadlines lately, and I'm concerned. Is there anything going on that you'd like to talk about or any way I can support you?"

Set Clear Expectations

Sometimes underperformance stems from a lack of understanding of what is expected. Clearly outline the employee's responsibilities, goals, and the standards they need to meet. Provide specific examples of what good performance looks like and ensure they have all the necessary tools and resources.

Example: "To ensure we're on the same page, let's review your key responsibilities and the quality of work expected. For instance, meeting project deadlines and maintaining accuracy in reports are crucial."

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Provide Constructive Feedback

Constructive feedback is essential for improvement. Be specific about what needs to change and offer actionable advice. Focus on the behavior or task, not the person, to avoid making them feel attacked.

Example: “I noticed that the recent report had several errors. Let’s work on improving accuracy. Perhaps double-checking your work before submission could help.”

Develop an Improvement Plan

Work with the employee to create a clear improvement plan. This plan should outline specific goals, the steps needed to achieve them, and a timeline. Regularly review their progress and provide ongoing support and feedback.

Example: “Let’s set some specific goals for the next month, such as reducing errors in reports by 50%. We can schedule weekly check-ins to discuss your progress and any challenges you’re facing.”

Offer Training and Development

Underperformance may be due to a skills gap. Provide opportunities for training

and development to help the employee improve. This could be through workshops, online courses, or one-on-one mentoring.

Example: “I believe a refresher course on report writing could be beneficial. I’ll arrange for you to attend a workshop next week.”

Monitor and Follow Up

Consistent monitoring and follow-up are crucial. Keep track of the employee’s progress and provide feedback along the way. Celebrate small victories to motivate them and acknowledge their efforts.

Example: “I’ve seen a noticeable improvement in your report accuracy this week. Great job! Keep up the good work, and let’s continue to build on this progress.”



Take Decisive Action if Needed

If there’s no improvement despite your efforts, you may need to take more decisive action. This could include reassigning tasks, implementing a performance improvement plan (PIP), or, in extreme cases, considering termination. Always follow your company’s policies and procedures when taking such steps.

Example: “Despite our efforts and the improvement plan, there hasn’t been sufficient progress. We’ll need to discuss the next steps, which may include reassignment or a formal performance improvement plan.”

Document Everything

Keep detailed records of all interactions, feedback, and steps taken to address the underperformance. This documentation is vital if you need to escalate the situation or if there are legal considerations.

Example: “To ensure we have a clear record, I’ll document our discussions and the agreed-upon improvement plan. This will help us track progress and provide clarity.”

Foster a Supportive Environment

Create a supportive environment that encourages open communication and continuous improvement. Recognize and reward good performance, and promote a culture of feedback and development.

Example: “Let’s continue to foster an environment where everyone feels supported and encouraged to grow. Regular feedback and development opportunities will be a part of our team’s culture.”

Handling underperformance is never easy, but with a structured approach, empathy, and clear communication, you can turn a challenging situation into an opportunity for growth and development. ■

Top Metrics to Measure and Improve Employee Performance



One of your key responsibilities as an office manager is to ensure that your team operates at peak performance. But how do you measure something as nuanced as employee performance? The key lies in identifying the right metrics—ones that give you actionable insights without becoming overly burdensome to track. Once you have these metrics in place, you can use them to guide improvements and help your team thrive.

1. Productivity Levels

Productivity is a cornerstone of performance measurement. Start by assessing the amount of work completed within a specific time frame. For example, you could track how many tasks, projects, or client cases an employee handles each week. To make this metric meaningful, set realistic benchmarks based on the nature of your office's work. Productivity tracking tools like project management software

can simplify this process, giving you a clear view of individual and team outputs.

2. Quality of Work

High productivity doesn't mean much if the work isn't up to standard. Measure the quality of work by reviewing accuracy, attention to detail, and how often employees meet or exceed expectations.

For instance, are client deliverables error-free? Are deadlines consistently met without last-minute rushes? You can also gather feedback from clients or colleagues to assess the perceived quality of an employee's contributions.

3. Attendance and Punctuality

While it might seem basic, tracking attendance and punctuality is a useful metric. Frequent tardiness or absenteeism can disrupt workflows and impact team morale. Keep an eye on patterns, but be empathetic to occasional absences due to personal circumstances. If issues arise, address them proactively by discussing underlying causes and finding supportive solutions.

4. Goal Achievement

Are employees meeting their individual goals? Goal tracking provides a direct line of sight into performance. Use SMART (Specific, Measurable,

Achievable, Relevant, Time-bound) goals to create clear expectations. For example, a goal might be to improve client response times by 10% or to complete a certification program by year-end. Regular check-ins will help you gauge progress and offer support when needed.

5. Collaboration and Teamwork

Individual performance is essential, but how employees work together is just as critical. Measure collaboration by observing how employees contribute to team projects,



resolve conflicts, and support their colleagues. You can also use tools like 360-degree feedback surveys to gather insights from peers. Strong teamwork enhances overall

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Top Metrics to Measure and Improve Employee Performance

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office efficiency, so this metric should never be overlooked.

6. Customer or Client Satisfaction

If your office serves clients or customers, their satisfaction can be a powerful indicator of



employee performance. Use surveys, feedback forms, or online reviews to measure how well employees are meeting client expectations. Metrics like response time, resolution rates, and overall satisfaction scores provide clear areas for improvement.

7. Learning and Development

How often are employees seeking growth opportunities? Track participation in training programs, certifications, or skill-building workshops. Employees who invest in their development tend to stay motivated and bring fresh perspectives to their roles. Encourage this by creating a culture that values learning and provides resources to make it accessible.

8. Innovation and Problem-Solving

Employees who bring innovative ideas or solve problems proactively can be a huge asset. Track how often employees suggest process improvements or take the initiative to resolve challenges without waiting for instructions. Recognizing and rewarding this behavior encourages a mindset of continuous improvement across the team.

Using Metrics to Drive Improvement

Once you've identified the metrics that matter most to your office, use them as tools for growth rather than just measurement. Share performance results with employees through constructive, one-on-one

discussions. Highlight their strengths while identifying specific areas for improvement. Create development plans that align with both the employee's career goals and the office's needs.

Remember, performance metrics are not about micromanaging or penalizing employees. They're about creating transparency, fostering accountability, and giving your team the tools they need to succeed. By focusing on the right metrics and using them wisely, you can build a high-performing, engaged team that delivers results. ■

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