

## **Systematize Your Business (Without Making it Boring)**

Have you ever noticed that you get some of your best ideas in the shower? Every morning, you're stuck there for a few minutes doing something you've done since you were a child. Your mind knows it has a couple of minutes to think.

Employees get the same mental holiday when you specialize and give them systems for routine tasks.

### **How Ethos3 Unleashes the Creativity of Their Team**

Ethos3 is a Nashville-based design company specializing in creating presentation designs. Doing just one thing allows them to systematize their processes much more efficiently than most other design firms. They have a standardized business development method. It's a templated proposal that includes the number of slides you'll get, the number of revisions, and the pricing formula. For project management, they use teamwork.com. Again, there's a set of templates for each stage of the development process, and the project delivery approach is the same every time. It's a recipe - just add water.

When you give people a procedure to follow for the boring stuff, they can stop worrying about what to do and pour their creative talent into how to do it. Ethos3 has finished second in the World's Best Presentation Contest, and Apple pioneer Guy Kawasaki is among its fans.

As entrepreneurs, it's easy to assume that everyone likes the adventure of bushwhacking their way through life, not knowing what's around the next bend. In fact, a lot of your employees would prefer some consistency and structure.

Systems are not the enemy of creativity. And author and consultant Kathy Kolbe has developed a personality test that proves it. The so-called Kolbe Index ranks users on four personality attributes.

**Fact Finder** describes the extent to which someone likes gathering data before making decisions.

**Follow Through** measures how much someone likes systems, structure, and routine.

**Quick Start** quantifies one's inclination to start new things.

**Implementer** measures one's knack for building stuff.

Kolbe's test shows that we all have a little bit of each attribute, yet we all also have a dominant operating style. Most entrepreneurs score high on "quick start" and low on "follow through." It's a classic combination. Most of us love starting things but quickly tire of the details.

Most of your employees will score higher than you on follow through, which means they need more structure to thrive. They may also score higher than you on fact finder, suggesting they need more data than you would before making a decision.

Specializing, and giving your team standard operating procedures, gives your employees the mental breathing room to be creative and the structure they need to thrive.