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HOW EXCELLENT COMPANIES AVOID DUMB THINGS

**Breaking the 8 Hidden Barriers That
Plague Even The Best Businesses**

NEIL SMITH

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MAIN IDEA

Every company has people working within it who know how to do things better through hands-on experience. When they try and bring these ideas to the attention of management, they usually hit one (or more) of eight hidden barriers. If you can remove these barriers and let some brilliant employee ideas bubble to the surface, you can tap into what might turn out to be an absolute mother lode of profitable ideas.

“My experience has convinced me that every company, no matter the sector or the size, no matter whether it is an industry leader or an industry laggard, is sitting on a goldmine of untapped ideas. In short, the barriers are the reason a company does dumb things, not the employees themselves. The question is how to mine the gold by identifying and removing hidden barriers. My experience has shown that when a company asks its employees what it can do better— and, most importantly, removes the barriers to change— the results are staggering. “

– Neil Smith

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|--|-----|----------------------|
| B A R R I E R S | ▶ 1 | Avoiding controversy |
| | ▶ 2 | Poor use of time |
| | ▶ 3 | Reluctance to change |
| | ▶ 4 | Organizational silos |
| | ▶ 5 | Management blockers |
| | ▶ 6 | Bad assumptions |
| | ▶ 7 | Size matters |
| | ▶ 8 | Existing processes |

1. The eight hidden barriers Pages 2 - 5

The eight hidden barriers which prevent great employee ideas from coming to the surface are:

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|-----|----------------------|-----|---------------------|
| ▶ 1 | Avoiding controversy | ▶ 5 | Management blockers |
| ▶ 2 | Poor use of time | ▶ 6 | Bad assumptions |
| ▶ 3 | Reluctance to change | ▶ 7 | Size matters |
| ▶ 4 | Organizational silos | ▶ 8 | Existing processes |

2. Twelve principles for breaking those barriers. Page 6

To break those hidden barriers, apply these twelve principles:

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|-----|-----------------------|------|---------------------|
| ▶ 1 | CEO involvement | ▶ 7 | Facts, not opinions |
| ▶ 2 | Organizational buy-in | ▶ 8 | Consensus |
| ▶ 3 | Champions | ▶ 9 | Increase revenues |
| ▶ 4 | No external targets | ▶ 10 | No disruption |
| ▶ 5 | Implement to own | ▶ 11 | Permanent change |
| ▶ 6 | Hard to remove | ▶ 12 | Change in culture |

3. The results you can and should expect. Pages 7 - 8

More often than not, change programs end up succeeding because they make things simpler. The results tend by and large to fall into three natural categories:



