

GROW YOUR BUSINESS

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8 Guaranteed Ways to Attract New Business

That time of year again! Reflections on what worked and what didn't are very important in regards to your business. If you want to continue to grow your business, you will want to be sure to place some attention on your methods of new business acquisition.

New business means more business, and you should always be honing and tweaking your methods to ensure that you never fall into the land of NO-business!

Heading into 2017, considering the following suggestions for attracting new business:

1. Revamp your marketing tools and beef up branding. Take some time and effort to carefully consider the details like your email signature, your stationary, and your overall business style. The smallest difference can sometimes mean the difference between landing the client and sending them straight to your competitor.
2. Plan out, attend and make the most of trade shows. Take a look through the calendar year, make plans ahead of time. Even if you forego a booth, be sure to still attend and maintain a presence.
3. Cross-promote and piggy-back on offers and other businesses. Make a list of potential partners in your area (both location-wise as well as niche-wise). Select one at a time and create a clear, unique offer for each, paying close attention to how it would be beneficial not just to you, but also to them.
4. Find your clients, saving them the trouble! Go where your client is, what experts call "play-space marketing". Think about where your client may be when they realize your service could be of use to them. For example, if you are a house painter, perhaps the local paint store would allow you to leave brochures and contact details.
5. Take a closer look at local advertising opportunities that are less traditional. Often local radio stations act as terrific sponsors at events, aim to boost partnerships between businesses and can usually come up with creative, uniquely designed options. Print publications and local TV stations are worth a second look as well.
6. Set up foolproof follow up strategies. Often we get almost to the point of conversion, when something gets in the way. Timing is a very important part of consumer decisions. If you are not persistently following up, you are potentially losing out on clients. Don't wait for them to change their mind, help change it for them.
7. Do a crash course in your business. That's right, really study the ins and outs, the goals, the viewpoint and the successes and failures enjoyed and endured. Be the master of your enterprise, and really know what it is you want out of each individual interaction.]
8. Lastly, a less conceptual, more targeted course of action- the guarantee. Find a way to make this kind of promise, no matter how small. People love to feel validated and secure.



The Top Business Trends of 2017 that Spell Success

2016 is over and done with, whether you had enough time to accomplish your goals or not. The best way to keep afloat is to head into the New Year with a working knowledge of some of businesses top predicted trends of 2017.

This way, even if playing a little catch up, you will hit the ground running (and with the right tools to see you succeed).

It will continue to be the time of tech. With many of the trends pointing towards development and adaptation of tools for the tech-challenged, it is a great time to consider investing in these types of software tools and programs. They will cut down on training and will streamline best practices in your workplace.

The rise of the Millennials inevitably marked the decline of the Baby Boomer in the business market. Top companies predict that many key businesses may go up for sale in several different markets, leading to some big changes. A sale could mean a pivotal acquisition or could mark

the era for others to flourish in a fluidly and recently-opened up market.

We will also be entering a time in which we not only embrace and try to adapt with the younger generation, but actually will begin to see influencers change and ideas come to fruition. Their ideas and mindsets were progressive and perhaps radical. We will start to see those methods become considered mainstream.

Other than technology, there will be equally as game-changing trends seen in the economic sector.

Expect to see the continuing rise of outsourcing and solo managed businesses. Freelancing and remote work will also see an uptick this year.

The increasing popularity of crowd funding and alternative means of single or group shared project management will also push their way to the forefront and as consumers, we can expect a boom in production of new and innovative products.

Digital platforms (like Amazon) will continue to globalize the import/export process and will open doors for business small and big to utilize their distribution channels.

In terms of personnel, we can expect that businesses in 2017 will adopt more alt styles of leadership and training development. Offices will become less remedial, with more leadership-based training environments and you may see alternative practices like non-hierarchical structures see more prevalence.

One of 2016's biggest trends, fitness and nutrition, will explode in 2017. With tech offering up innovations faster than they can be snapped up, the overall trend towards achieving and maintaining a good healthy balance will take a front seat.

Along with it will stand the Green trend, as we all strive to make our work and personal lives more environmentally sustainable.



Should you ditch that Nightmare Client?

Eesh, touchy subject! As a growing small business, it can be very difficult to want to turn away cash in hand. However, there is indeed a time, place and situation in which you may want to consider passing on the business, to avoid the nightmare client.

All clients are not created equally! Therefore all sales will not follow the same path. You want to focus only on those who fit your ideal client mold.

The other end of this spectrum is where you find the nightmare client. Best advice would be to get out ahead of yourself and say no from the start, avoiding the awkwardness down the line.

Ask yourself: Does this project/client get you fired up? Are you passionate about it/him/her? If the answer is no, your answer should be no.

Once involved in the working relationship there are a few red flag situations that should be enough for you to ask to be relieved of the client:

1. Issues with respect and professionalism. If the client does not offer you respect and maintain

professionalism from the start, you should feel justified in ending the relationship. Sometimes it may mean removing yourself from the project and other times it may mean dissolution of the project.

2. Compensation is not reflecting the work/time spent. Often clients can bog us down with perfectionist details, and it's important to start the relationship with clear boundaries and rates that are agreed upon. If you feel low-balled or like you were misled in terms of the workload, you may want to consider severing ties. It speaks to a dishonest nature.
3. Do you see missed payments, missed appointments and constant rescheduling with this client? This does not bode well, and would be a good sign that the relationship will not be symbiotic.
4. Has the client stopped taking advice and started acting on their own instincts? This simply means that no matter what happens, you will be held accountable, whether you implement the idea or not.

So you have determined that your client relationship cannot continue. How do you

go about best ending the relationship?

Some experts say that firing a client can leave a bad taste in other clients' mouths and leaves you dealing with a reputation problem, no matter what the circumstance. The preferred tactic is to first attempt to get the client to leave on their own.

Try raising rates, making deadline changes, staffing manipulations, or simple changes to your terms and conditions. This gives the client an out, they will feel they left on their own, and you are in the clear.

Engage your conflict resolution skills and try and open and honest conversation. Some problems can be addressed and fixed, others maybe not so easily. You do at least have to try.

If breaking up is the only way out, so be it. Save yourself! Just remember to be professional, polite and firm, yet kind. Be clear and focused in your message, avoid the blame game. Try and find a way to encourage them that this is best for both parties, as the best relationships should always do.



Tackle Turnover - What managers are doing to make good employees leave

Turnover is a small business manager's beast of burden. Retaining good employees is one of the biggest challenges, no matter the industry. Interestingly enough, many experts claim that good employees don't quit jobs, they quit managers.

There are several things that you may want to cover and recover with your managerial staff. Simple things, that when not handled correctly, can lead to the loss of one of those well-polished and valuable employees. Try and tackle the turnover by getting out ahead of these missteps.

Firstly, rethink your rules process. Rules are a necessary evil, however, cut down to the bare minimum, whenever you can. Arbitrary and poorly imposed rules both tend to cause good employees to constantly feel micromanaged, or even punished.

Make sure your managers are valuing the time of their employees, and that they are simultaneously making themselves available and approachable. Take part in the meeting scheduling and ensure that each one is necessary and an efficient use of time.

When a good employee notices that the poor performance of others is going unnoticed or undressed it becomes frustrating. Over time they develop the feeling that if no one else cares, why should they? It's one of the first steps to a star employee starting to lose their spark.

No matter the industry or role, treating employees like they are replaceable is detrimental. You need to nurture and value their skills as well as their contributions. It's much more than saying "good job" here and there. They employee needs to know that the success of the business has as much to do with their hard work as anyone else's.

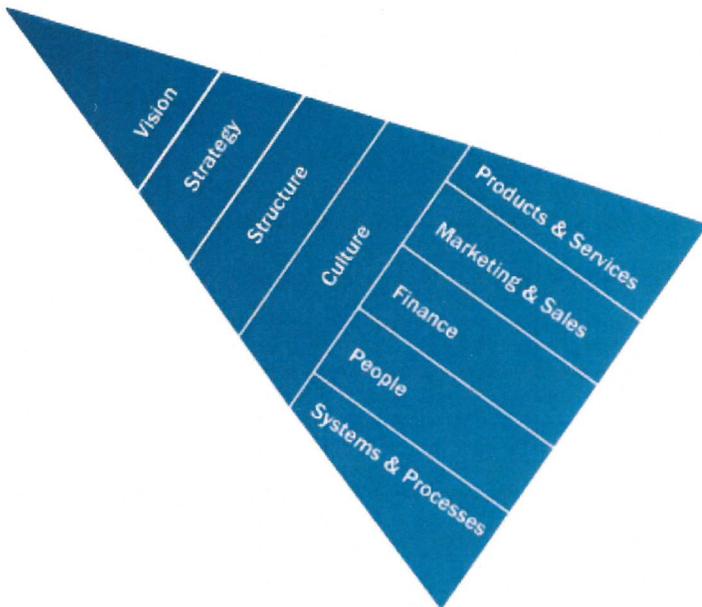
Failure to challenge is another huge problem. While a manager may be busy implementing rules, and reprimanding employees, they may be failing to recognize growth opportunities. The good employees get bored- they are ahead of the curve, competing their tasks and eager for more. Make sure they are being given that chance, challenging them both intellectually and professionally.

Good employees usually are also filled with possibility, eager to have their creativity nurtured and utilized them. It is a manager's job to stimulate that need. Ignoring it allows the employee to slowly disengage from their commitment.

Lastly, the most obvious perhaps, but also the most important. You must train management to best reward hard work, to offer positive reinforcement, to say "great job" to say "you are valued" and to show it in any way possible.

BLURB: Productivity Tips

Research shows that the amount of time in a workday actually spent doing productive work, can sometimes be as low as less than 40% of their day. Try and encourage more productivity by offering flexibility in office hours, allowing for half days to be used a couple times a month, remote work to be conducted whenever possible and for employees to feel more ownership over their schedules.



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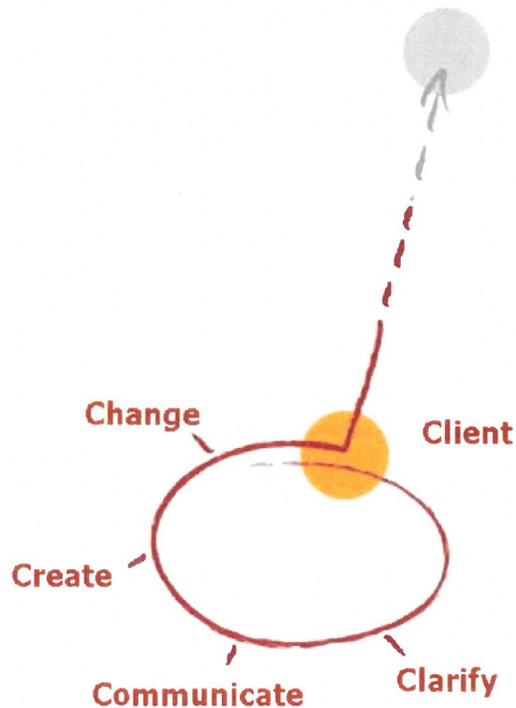
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