

Spring Clean Your Business

April 2014

Why spring clean your business? It is a good idea to periodically shake the dust loose and examine your business routines to see if there are any areas needing improvement or change.

From the list below, pick the key ideas that might make the biggest difference to your business.



A Fresh Look at Customer Relations

A business is nothing without its customers. Achieving customer satisfaction and maintaining your customer relationships require more than selling a good product or service, so spend some time analyzing your customer relations strategy. Do you gather customer feedback? Are you using this feedback to improve your service level? Is your team providing an outstanding customer experience? Are you sufficiently connected to your customers through your marketing communications tactics?

In addition to revisiting all of the above, ensure you:

- **Check your customer list.** Customer information can become outdated fast due to people moving and changing email addresses and jobs. Is the contact information you have still accurate? When was the last time you were in contact with your customers?
- **Run a customer satisfaction survey.** In general, if people aren't happy with a service provider, they are more likely to disappear than to let the provider know that something is wrong. So try to find out directly from your customers how your business is doing and if there are any areas that can be improved.
- **Assess the value each customer brings to your business.** Run an analysis to see which of your customers have the best lifetime value, who brought in more revenue of late, and which ones are expensive to maintain.

Reassess Your Operations

- **Talk to your employees about what goes well and especially about what doesn't.** Those on the daily front line are more likely to see things that might become roadblocks. Make sure they understand you want to have an honest conversation about operational weaknesses so you can address them in time.
- **Update information about your competition.** See how your products and services compare to those of your competitors and do this exercise in a very objective manner.
- **Talk to key players involved in your business.** Catch up with business partners, vendors, and suppliers to see how relationships look from their end and whether they are taking actions that might adversely affect or help your business.
- **Run lean and mean.** Review utilities, phones, shipping, and any other services you pay for. Can you get better pricing or a package deal? Go through your expenses with a fine-tooth comb – you will be surprised at how all the little things add up.
- **Look at the physical space of your business.** Does your location need a visual makeover or just tidying up? The way you present your business creates a powerful image with your customers. Also determine if you need any upgrades to equipment, software, security, and infrastructure.



Get Back to Basics

As time goes by, small-business owners get more into a management role and further away from the trade. So it is always good to remember the reasons for starting your business and get back to that initial passion. Relive the energy of those days and take back that momentum and motivation. Your mindset is very important to your success.