

Special points of interest:

- Here are just some of the business issues we can help you with:
- Strategic Marketing: Planning to increase your customer base and getting them to buy more, more often. .
- Developing a shared vision. How to get your employees as excited about where your business can go as you are.

Inside this issue:

- 3 Important Customer Service Policies 2
- How to Keep Your Promotions Out of the Trash 2
- Office Humor—Prospective Employee Lingo 2
- Catching Your Consumers' Eye 3
- 4 Levels of Employee Motivation 3
- What Makes Work Fun? 3
- Assess Your Goals to Achieve Your Goals 4

Check Yourself...Is Your Business Succeeding

A healthy business demands routine checks and examinations.

As a business surpasses the initial start-up phase, basic survival is the measure of success.

At this stage, there are still limited systems and employees; there may be a marginal profit; expenses are covered and cash flow can and must be projected.

Failure to thrive can be attributed to owner burnout, lack of vision, insufficient funds and marketplace factors.

Too many businesses get stuck in this stage. These are the businesses that are sold at a loss or

just close down when the owner has had enough.

Every business should strive for optimum health and to perform like an Olympic athlete.

Now is the time to train your business and make critical decisions.

Are you going to go for the gold or are you willing to settle for being a recreational player?

If you are reaching for the gold, then you are going to have to train your business, assess the weaknesses and attack them rigorously, optimize your strengths, consider growing and expanding your business and reinvest in its success.

This will require constant monitoring. Not every athlete captures the gold.

However, constant monitoring and exercising increases your business' success and potential for optimum health.

We can help you determine whether your business is succeeding and how you can enhance your performance.

Ask us how to get started today.

A Checklist for Your Vision

A clear vision is a necessary precursor to business success. Your vision presents to your team and your customers a picture of what the business will look like when it's finally done.

Once you have brainstormed your vision and written a draft, ask yourself these final questions:

- Is my vision realistic and credible?

- Is it well articulated and easily understood?

- Is it appropriate, ambitious, and responsive to change?

- Does it orient my team's energies and serve as a guide to action?

- Is it consistent with the organization's values?

- Does it challenge and inspire

my team to achieve its mission?

Creating a strong and formal vision is not an easy task, but it can be a fun one. After all, this is about defining your dreams and making your business what you want it to be.

We can help you throughout your visioning process.

3 Important Policies for Customer Service



There are three basics to excellent customer service.

Smile

Service with a smile may sound like a cliché, but it works. Your staff will be remembered all the more if, apart from being polite and helpful, they are cheerful and friendly.

Be eager to please

If a customer's request is not a straightforward one, be sure to

convey your eagerness to help. The receptionist or sales assistant who sighs loudly in any response to a query, or gives the standard answer "I don't know," or "If it isn't out, we haven't got it," will drive customers to the nearest competitor who does.

Encourage initiative

Train your team to be aware of opportunities to turn tentative queries into sales. In other words seize the chance to promote

your company wherever you can.

With competition between companies becoming ever fiercer, effective staff training to encourage excellent customer service will only pay off. Contact us to learn how we can help you introduce a customer service strategy that will keep them coming back time and time again.

There's no limit to what we can accomplish—if we don't mind who gets the credit.

Keep Your Promotions out of the Circular File

How many times a day do you file someone's promotions under "junk mail" in the circular file? The need for brevity and clarity, simplicity and relevance in all communication is critical. Especially when it comes to your promotional material.

Brochure apathy is almost a recognized disease, and this brochure-itis has spread chiefly

because too few examples of the genre do what they're meant to be doing. They are not concise or clear, not well written or designed to make an impact.

Take a look at the direct mail you have kept. Use it as a model for your own. What about it spoke to you? How can you follow its lead? Think about the graphics and headlines. Do they

grab and hold your attention? Are there elements that you can replicate without duplicating?

Good material makes its point in the first twenty seconds. If it passes the twenty-second test but is not read in its entirety, it has a greater chance of leaving an impression or being read in the future.



Office Humor: Prospective Employee Lingo

What they say: I'm honest, hard-working, and dependable.

What they mean: I pilfer office supplies.

What they say: My pertinent work experience includes...

What they mean: I hope you don't ask me about all the McJobs I've had.

What they say: I take pride in my work.

What they mean: I blame others for my mistakes.

What they say: I'm personable.
What they mean: I give lots of unsolicited personal advice to co-workers.

What they say: I'm adaptable
What they mean: I've changed jobs a lot.

What they say: I'm always on the

go.

What they mean: I'm never at my desk.

What they say: I'm highly motivated to succeed.

What they mean: The minute I find a better job, I'm outta here.

Catching Your Consumers' Eye

Do people pay attention to your promotions?

One simple and very cost effective way of ensuring your (potential) customers read your mail is to make it as eye-catching as possible.

There are some quick, easy and affordable ways to start making an impact:

Use a different type or color of paper. Use more illustration and less text. Incorporate humorous

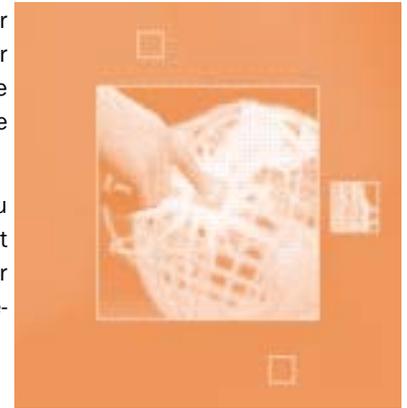
images whenever possible. *They are hard to ignore and harder to forget.*

If you feel that an artistic imagination is not one of your strengths, try and find a graphic artist or a team member who is. Tell them your idea and they will translate it onto paper for you until you are happy with its' visual impact and the message it will convey to your customers.

If you feel completely in the dark

about the varieties of paper available, speak to your printer and ask to look through sample directories to help select the most suitable one.

Think about it...the reason you throw most leaflets away is that they have failed to arrest your attention. So don't forget to create an impact!



4 Levels of Employee Motivation

Enthusiastic beginners need little motivation. But they do need specific instructions and direction. Be prepared to answer lots of questions to keep them on track.

Disillusioned learners become frustrated as excitement wanes and certain parts of their job prove more difficult than expected. Give them lots of specific

and timely feedback about their progress. Face-to-face praise works the best.

Capable but cautious contributors have done the right job once, but lack the self-confidence that comes with repeat success. They need clear, positive recognition for achieving goals, plus encouragement to repeat their winning perform-

ance.

Self-reliant achievers can manage themselves but also need recognition to avoid feeling taken advantage of.

Sincere thanks are in order, but other incentives may work better (i.e. allow them to train others, pick their assignments or become involved in decision making).

The early bird may indeed get the worm, but the second mouse gets the cheese.

What Makes Work Fun?

A recent survey revealed the following five responses:

1. **Solving problems, working on challenges.** This includes the ability to be creative, undertake large and/or new projects, and solve problems for clients and others.

2. **The people I work with.** Words

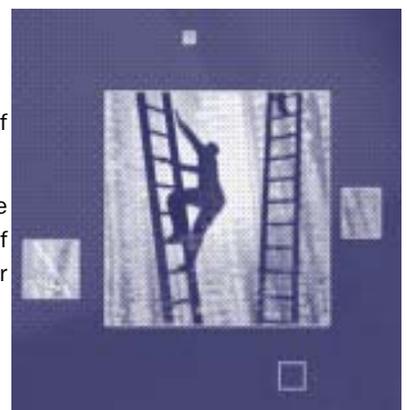
such as "rapport," "camaraderie," and "interaction" came up, including working with clients and others.

3. **A sense of accomplishment.** This included completing numerous tasks or projects, plus reaching goals with successful results.

4. **Variety.** People enjoy different

challenges and the sense of newness/excitement they bring.

5. **The work itself.** This response referred to projects, the line of business and using computer technology.



Assess Your Goals So You Can Meet Them

Meeting your goals requires discipline, endurance and a positive attitude. Regularly setting aside time and assessing how well your business is achieving its goals, whether or not you should revise your goals and where to go next will put you ahead of the pack. Here are some tips for achieving and assessing your goals.

Maintain a positive attitude. Give yourself credit for setting goals to begin with - and then extra credit for following up on them.

Do some soul searching. Are your goals still

appropriate? Changes in circumstances and shifts in priorities may call for a different game plan. Be flexible and accept that some goals may need to be replaced with more pertinent ones. If your goals are still viable, but lack of enthusiasm is the problem, try to motivate yourself by remembering what excited you about achieving them in the first place.

If you're disappointed with your progress, identify the blocks. Then, develop two or three action steps to remove the obstacles and take those steps immediately.

Give yourself credit for your progress. You

may even find that you've already met - or surpassed - a goal. Reward yourself. Then, consider raising the bar.

Schedule periodic coaching sessions - with yourself and others. Set aside a regular time to review your goals and the progress you've made.

You might also post or carry your goals in a visible place as an everyday reminder.

Setting goals provides direction and helps us make decisions.

Regularly checking progress, tailoring your objectives and monitoring your strategy will set your business above the rest.

About Our Consulting Services

We are not your 'average' accounting firm. Far from it.

We are members of the Principa Alliance, an international network of consulting accountants.

So when you work with us to improve your business you're gaining access to a global knowledgebase and a wealth of consulting experience that is much more powerful than any one firm could offer.

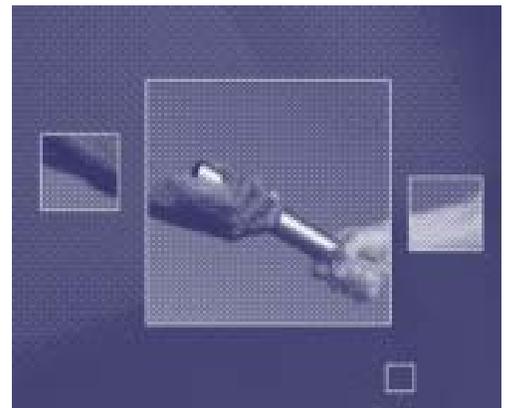
Combining our knowledge of your business, the personal relationship we share with our clients and the consulting tools, support and networking power of the Prin-

Alliance, we can help you achieve more with your business than you imagined possible.

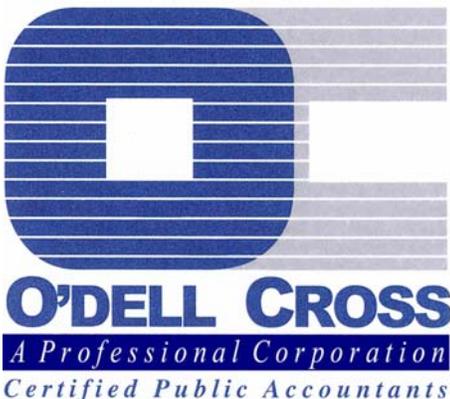
Our goal is to help you build a stronger, more profitable business and enjoy a higher quality of life as a result.

We can do so much more for you than just 'keep the score'.

Contact us today to discuss how we can help you build a business that delivers on its promise.



principa | alliance
MEMBER



200 New Stine Rd., Suite 220t
Bakersfield, CA 93309

Questions or comments:
Phone: (661) 397-2780
Fax: (661) 397-2790
Email: rblanton@odellcrsscpa.com

www.odellcrosscpa.com