

Top 10 Strategies to Grow Your Small Business

Are you stumped on ways to grow your business? Check out these 10 ideas to give your business the growth spurt it needs.

1) Organize and Focus Your Energy

You have 4 types of energy-time, physical energy, mental energy, money energy. The first 3 are finite, meaning you can't increase the amount that you have; only the way you use them. The 4th, money, increases as a result of your use of the other 3. If you use the majority of your work time, mental and physical energy to focus on your top, income generating activities your business will boom. Stop wasting time on administrative tasks, answering phone calls that are not important (get caller ID), constantly checking e-mail (this is tendency I'm working on), and other non-priority tasks. Monitor and rate yourself on your time use everyday for a week and you'll be amazed at what you find.

2) Improve your website

Your website is your portal to the world. It needs to look clean, well designed and professional. It needs to have content that answers the visitor's question, "what's in it for me?" It needs to provide valuable information and resources, not just be an online brochure. And it needs to be improved and updated regularly.

3) Expand your online marketing

It's becoming harder to get people to your website as the number of competitors increases. So you need to have a multi-pronged strategy to get people there. You can publish and distribute articles online, use social network marketing by setting up pages at Facebook, My Space, submitting online press releases, blogging. Make a video and post it on YouTube and on your site. This is easy and very powerful-it's like having a virtual sales person. Pick three activities that could drive traffic to your website and do them every week. Your web traffic will significantly increase meaning more leads and clients.

4) Build an online subscriber list

Have a sign up form on your website and send regular e-newsletters to your subscribers with valuable information. When you're networking or speaking to a group, ask everyone to sign up for your list as well. This gives you an opportunity to market to them and build a value-added relationship that establish trust and increase your sales. Your subscriber/prospect list is very valuable.

5) Do smart networking

Lots of new business owners waste time networking randomly with little positive result. Network where you find your target client, or where you can meet others who already have the clients you want. They could become gatekeepers who introduce you to their client list.

6) Educate, don't sell

Many small and solo business owners don't like to sell and it keeps them from growing. Always educate prospects. If you are a good speaker, offer to speak to relevant groups and educate them about your area of expertise. Spark curiosity; make them want to know more and they will approach you. When you meet a prospect individually, ask them lots of questions about their

business and goals. Then educate them a bit. They will really respond if you focus on them and not on what you do.

7) Build relationships through giveaways

Whether you want to entice someone to sign up for your list, respond to an advertisement or purchase a product, offer a valuable giveaway to establish your value as an expert. This could be an e-book, white paper, audio, video, workbook, case study or report. If people feel you only want to sell them something, but they don't yet have a relationship with you, they're unlikely to buy. Make sure what you're offering is unique and provides information your target client would appreciate.

8) Outsource and automate

Make a wish list of what you would like to be able to automate in your business. Chances are there is a simple way to do it. Do some research online or ask a tech savvy friend and then overcome any technophobia you have and automate. Organize your e-mail, master use of an autoresponder, learn how to make simple changes to your website, learn to make a simple audio or video (I'm working on this now). In the end, it will save you precious time and will enhance your ability to easily manage and market your business.

Then make a plan to outsource those daily tasks that are not profit generating, like routine admin tasks, online marketing like article and press release submissions, web maintenance and bookkeeping (everyone's most disliked task!). Most outsourcing can be done inexpensively and easily. Save your time for running your business and servicing your clients.

9) Pick three marketing streams and measure them for ROI

It's unrealistic to think that you can do every marketing activity at the same time. To get a really great return on investment for the time and money you devote to marketing, pick three activities or "marketing streams" that you feel will yield the best results and tightly focus your energy there. For example, if public speaking and blogging has worked well for you, focus on getting more speaking engagements and posting to and publicizing your blog. Otherwise it's too easy to get overwhelmed.

10) Locate and form relationships and strategic alliances with joint venture partners.

You can spend time and money finding and selling to one client at a time or you can find partners who have already spent time and money acquiring these clients and offer them a percentage of sales to endorse your service to their clients. After all their clients already trust them and will be more likely to buy what they recommend. This can be done online or off. Form key relationships with people in your vertical industry or in other industries whose clients or subscribers could benefit from your services, nurture those relationships, and create a win-win alliance that will dramatically increase profits for both of you.

More than 20% of the revenue generated by the top 2000 US and European companies were the result of strategic alliances. Small and solo business owners can see even more dramatic results.

Janis Pettit is a small business growth and marketing expert, author and veteran entrepreneur. She has coached hundreds of business owners, helping them explode their sales and build a six figure income from their small or solo business. If you want to learn How to Promote and Market Your Small Business Website Online and Sell More Products and Services with Little or No Money go to <http://MaximizeYourWebsiteNow.com>