



BUSINESS52

52 IDEAS

an idea for every week of the year

Lessons learnt from 2020 (updated 2022)

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Let me say one thing right from the “get go”! This book, and anything else I do, is about one thing. Business growth! Its not about perfect spelling or grammar, (that was never my thing!), but it is certainly and 100% about ideas that can help any business, start, build, grow, scale and even exit, much better.

This is the first in a series, first written around 2018/2019. Many things have changed, including the name of this business, from GetSmartNow, SmartBusinessNow and onto MyBusinessNow. Many of the ways we did things back in 2018 (pre covid) are done differently, and in our case, delivered differently to then. But the concept around how to grow any business, is exactly the same. That hasn't changed.

What's the idea of a business? Make money! That's it. Yes, it could be because you're passionate about something, you've always had an interest in a particular thing, you don't want to work for anyone else, but whatever the reason, you're not doing it for nothing, otherwise you'd get a job, and spend whatever free time you have, on doing the other thing for free. So, let's get that out of the way now, it's about making money, and it's about making more money than a job alone, and because running a business takes more responsibility and drive, the objective of the end result, is a good income, if not a great income, not just an average one. So, with that clear, let's move on.

Building businesses that actually work, isn't complicated, in fact it's easy, if you do the things needed right, and all too often, that simply doesn't happen. Whether that's from simply not knowing, or not caring is irrelevant, the simple reason that 90% of all business either fail, or worse keep plodding on year after year, with below average returns, is because they've missed more things about building a business, than just creating a product or service that people might want, in fact it has less to do with the product or service than ever before, and there are five core aspects that need regular focus, so that you build a business easier, better and faster.

1. The idea
2. The brand
3. The plan
4. The profile (marketing)
5. The sales and service.

Get those parts right, or even better than your competition, and businesses grow easier, better, and faster!

Too many business owners think their product or service alone is enough and it's not. But there's other aspects of business type, that we are yet to identify.

- Not everyone wants a BIG business.
- Many want a small one
- Some want a side hustle, to support income from a job, or retirement.
- Some want a business that's built around a lifestyle. I get that.

But at the end of the day, it's about getting the best result possible, regardless of what the objective is, not just getting a mediocre result, just because we can't workout, or ask, how do I get a better one?

Regardless of whether it's a real fulltime business, a part time side hustle, or a lifestyle business so that you work 3 days a week, to travel, golf, or surf more is a good enough reason, just do it well, or better.

So where do you start? Well, that's the easy part. You start at the END! What is it that you want from the business? The income, the sales, the net income to you the owner, the time off or time in. Whatever it is, that's where the start point is, at the end. (Don't just start with the product).

Then it's all about how do we make enough sales (INCOME) that fits into the TIME that I'm working, to give me the result I need, or want. How many CUSTOMERS, how much will they SPEND and how often (FREQUENCY) will they come in and buy from you. (That's the five core aspects I spoke about earlier)!

It's also about uncomplicating and eliminating the overwhelm and sleepless nights that most business owners struggle with at some time, and often that boils around money (and just not enough of it!).

The process is simple, identify what the OBJECTIVE is, and then workout the process of attracting enough CLIENTS that buy enough STUFF (what you do) so that you get the result you want. SIMPLE right? Right!

MyBusinessNow, and Build a Better Business (ReThinkBusinessGrowth) is the simple step by step process and solution, that 99% of businesses miss, even the ones that do OK, miss it, and could get a better result, easier and quicker, by changing, improving or implementing some simple basic fundamentals of building a better business. Nothing is new, it's all been there for hundreds of years, it just gets forgotten or missed. Building a better business, is simply about not missing a single thing, structuring the things that need to be done so that the business builds easier and faster, the business can b'found, b'seen, b'heard, b'unique and b'remembered, so you end up with the result you want, the income you want, with the lifestyle around the business, you want. **So let's get started right now!**



ReThink
Business
Growth

Business52

52 ideas

An idea for every week of the year! Take an idea each week, implement something and improve some aspect every week!

Updated July 2022



**Smart People
Planning
Possibilities**



52 ideas; an idea a week, inspiration to get every week started right, do something different that might just change your business for ever!

Welcome to Mybusinessnow and uncomplicated business growth.

From the outset of developing Mybusinessnow (that originally started life as GetSmartNow, then SmartBusinessNow) the objective was to help business owners and professionals, to understand what holds businesses back, where the missed opportunities continue to be missed are and where the gaps and growth potential is in every business, because it is there!

I've been writing about business growth consistently since September 2015 and not just for the sake of blogging, but to create the content that goes into our workshops and business growth programs that form the MyBusinessNow program. (These are the first year of those posts). *(Side note, the program started out as Business360 for 5 years, but we got a cease-and-desist letter in 2022, but more about that and trade marking later!)*

You don't have to do everything at once, one step at a time and it's the little things can make a huge difference, the 1%'ers, are our business growth mantras. *(Side note 2: spelling and grammar, were never my strong suits, but business growth and strategies are, so just forgive that please, and absorb the ideas!)*

You will also come across the name GetSmartNow and SmartBusinessNow, these are now **MyBusinessNow**.

Take an idea each week (there's actually 43, and links to 9 more) but 52 sounds better, plus you get a couple of weeks off) and try and implement some new aspect into your business, and every business will grow.

ReThinkBusinessGrowth this year.

Erwin

Quick links:

- Web: www.mybusinessnow.com.au
- Email: info@mybusinessnow.com.au
- Ph: 0403 471 540
- Events: <https://www.eventbrite.com.au/o/mybusinessnow-18507118283>

Updates in this edition.

In this updated edition, we've added a couple of useful guides to help you through some aspects of business growth.

- Launch checklist
- Planning checklist
- Marketing checklist

These are basic guides that enable you to work through, identify areas that are lacking and areas that could improve.

Everything that's in these guides are proven keys that businesses use and have used for decades, to build a grow successfully. You don't need to do it all at once, work through an area, or a single section or topic per week.

If you have any questions, just email me at info@mybusinessnow.com.au

One last thing before we start! Let me know what you think. If you think the ideas in the book are great, let me know, if it's had an impact on your business then let me know. If the spelling and grammar drive you mad, then don't. Click the link or QR code below. **Tell us what you think:** <https://form.jotform.com/240486561571056>



Business365: The business start and grow checklist.

There are keys to getting business working right, so it's easy!

BeThink Business Growth

Aspect	Objective
1: Image	It's seen, it's heard, it's
2: Sales	Develop a sales pro
3: Service	Never lose a client.
4: Staff/skills	Ensure the team has the skills needed, to do the job.
5: Product	What's the why you?
6: Marketing	It's not just a facebook post monthly!
7: Planning	You have to know where you're going.
8: Management	Manage it about review, set on track as planned?
9: Data	Know the numbers, sales, of what works.
10: Cashflow	Customer acquisition cost that won't leave in your account.
11: Communication	Staff and clients have because of reputation. Start about it.
12: Client dev	Know your A, B and C client service over the best, but all
13: Innovation	Be different, standout, value.
14: Structure	Businesses need to be prope follow a plan, not reactive.
15: Systems	Develop systems and autom where possible
16: Local business	Do everything possible to p one area local made and over

Planning360 2.0: Past, present, possibilities.

Ensure everyone (even you!) is in the team, know where you are going and how we'll get there.

BeThink Business Growth

Aspect	Objec
Know where you've been	What has the business had the past few years?
Know what's possible	If everything ran at would that look like
Know where you're going.	What the objective, and 24 months goal
Historical data, sales, turnover, clients, staff	What's the results per month, trends
SWOT and competition analysis	Know where your weaknesses are.
Market share	Calculate a rough % lead and further.
Long term objectives	Where do you see need to be in 5, 10
What needs to change to move forward?	Is order to get the needs to change?
Review points, are you on track, how often do you check?	How often do we what?
Everyone on board, to know how with the plan and	The team need to with the plan and
BIG goals.	How could the bu What has to happen?
Research the competition	What do they do you do it better?
Are we on track?	Are we on track?
What went well, what needs to change	What went well, what needs to change
Monthly and quarterly	Monthly and quarterly

Marketing360: The marketing 360.

Marketing isn't for the least functioning part of business, but get those 360 and you'll be on track.

BeThink Business Growth

Aspect	Objective	Rate	Outcomes	Plan 2.0
1. Sales: Simple, measurable, realistic, single, high impact.	The objective of the sales of a business is to make money for the owner and the business.			
2. Message: Clearly and understanding to what you do.	What is your message to show, selling, make also clear people to know or to continue the			
3. The strategy, the marketing plan, (check results of what needs to be done to attract customers).	The marketing plan is the strategy of how you will achieve your marketing objectives over time.			
4. Metrics: It's part of the online profile.	Each business needs one, even a one page, additional document, ongoing business profile.			
5. Social media: It's the other part of the online profile.	Right is the different, user profiles requires you that you post and what you do to reach			
6. CRM: Keep in touch. The easiest way to grow a business, is keep every client warm.	Have a CRM follow up, use a CRM the best thing and keep it fresh.			
7. PR: Get it, headlines, follow and educate.	It's not just about, but business can do with. There's a need of the person actually in business.			
8. Sign: Be seen! It's branding opportunity, like, like them, car, uniforms, signage, banners.	Customers is about creating awareness, the more they see you, the more it will be.			
9. Network: Connect, talk, build relationships.	It's not about them, it's about what they know.			

Week 1: Welcome to (Getsmartnow)Mybusinessnow!

With almost 30 years owning two different businesses, including the last 22 years as franchisee owner of Bartercard Brisbane West, managing sales and customer services teams, recruiting hundreds of staff and working closely with tens of thousands of small to medium sized businesses I have been exposed to different ways in which businesses operate (or don't operate). I have seen first-hand what goes wrong with so many small businesses (in particular with their image, marketing, branding and training etc) and what could easily have been done differently in order for them to succeed.

Over many years I have seen far too many businesses go down for particular reasons - reasons that could have been avoided if only they knew the impact it would have at the time. Most people get into businesses because they're good at the product or service they are selling - eg. fixing cars, arranging flowers, baking cakes, painting, or whatever it may be. However, quite often these experts in their area miss many of the fundamentals of running a successful business, because they have never had any training in running a business.

At GSN we have identified the key areas that most businesses need help with and have developed training workshops focused on up skilling business owners, their staff and employees to provide everyone with additional skills which will improve their business success and profitability.

The basic philosophy behind everything at GSN is simple - we aim to ensure that every small business can:

- 1: Project the best image they can, and stand out from the rest!
- 2: Develop great sales and service skills
- 3: Ensure that every client has an awesome customer experience
- 4: Develop an ongoing marketing plan to continue attracting new clients, and
- 5: Develop staff through quality training and engagement.

All of this is paramount to running a successful business, because the objective of any business simply put is to:

- a: Attract customers
- b: Keep customers
- c: Get them coming back and spending more, and
- d: Getting them to refer others to do the same.

Sounds simple, and it is - but businesses need to develop those skills, if they don't have them.

The other aspect of GSN is the way we train. I've been training people for 22 years, and I understand what works and what doesn't in training!

Firstly: Our workshop: Whether live or online need to be short, so they are. People cannot concentrate for more than 90 minutes in a training environment. This also enables them to either go to work before or after so they don't lose

[Mybusinessnow](#), business training that's different, skills, strategies, solutions, support.

too much time away from the job and can use the new skills immediately.

Second: It's too the point, no fluff or fill, just training, but it's entertaining in multiple ways. Visual via multi format presentations, action via the trainee's involvement and importantly....

Third: Follow up! Up to 80% of training is lost, because it's never used. Follow up is key to ensure those skills are used and a benefit is achieved!

It's a fact, that 80% of the people that leave you go elsewhere for one reason only, a perceived lack of indifference! They thought you didn't care! Losing clients often has very little to do with price or product, but often everything else!

Week 1 tip: Review what's going on! There are three checklists as part of B52 book 1. The first is Planning360. Look at each aspect of the checklist and give yourself a rating out of 10 for each. Are you clear about each aspect, a little, or not at all. Some things are simple, others not, but it gets you thinking. What do we know and how much do we know about our business? Once you've done all 15, you'll end up with a score out of 150. What's yours? If its 75, you might be at 50% of the business's potential. You might be more or even less. What's your score? It won't give you the answers, but the first part of questions, and process of how to grow your business.

I would love you to stay in touch with us via our Facebook page and help us grow by sharing our posts if you can, we are still developing many of the communication and social media channels, but if your happy to stay with us don't change a thing, we will continue to update you with business tips and ideas and perhaps eventually we'll see you at one of our workshops.

If you would like to subscribe to our ReThinkBusinessGrowth e'news, just jump onto our website and contact us via the newsletter subscription link on the home page at www.mybusinessnow.com.au and you can also find me on LinkedIn, just search for Erwin Brem, and facebook at Mybusinessnow or RethinkBusinessGrowth. All the links are on the website.

I look forward to catching up soon.

Welcome to ReThinkBusinessGrowth.



Planning360 2.0: Past, present, possibilities.

Ensure everyone (even you!) in the team, knows where we are going and how we'll get there.

Less than 17% of businesses do any form of planning and maybe that's why 80% fail in the first year and 80% of the balance in the second five years according to the Australian Bureau of Statistics. If you know where you want to go and what a business is capable of, it gets there. Businesses need a structured and strategic plan, that needs to be reviewed regularly, to ensure you're on track.



Aspect	Objective	Rate	Outcomes	Plan 2.0
Know where you've been	What has the business done over the last few years, personal best.			
Know what's possible	If everything ran at 100%, what would that look like?			
Know where you're going.	What the objective, the 3, 6, 9, 12 and 24 months goals?			
Historical data, sales, turnover, clients, staff	What's the results from sales per month, products, clients.			
SWOT and competition analysis	Know where your strengths and weaknesses are.			
Market share	Calculate a rough market share, local and further.			
Long term objectives	Where do you want the business to be in 5, 10 years.			
What needs to change to move forward?	In order to get the growth, what needs to change?			
Review points, are you on track, how often do you check?	How often do we review and why?			
Everyone on board, to know how where you're going.	The team need to be on board with the plan and strategy.			
BIG goals.	How could the business double? What has to happen?			
Research the competition	What do they do and how can you do it better?			
<u>Reviewing the numbers, what?</u>	Are we on track?			
<u>Reviewing the strategies, how?</u>	What went well, what didn't, what needs to change?			
<u>Review time frames, when?</u>	Monthly and quarterly reviews.			

Business365: The business start and grow checklist.

There are keys to getting businesses working right, so its easy!

In most cases, its what businesses don't do that holds them back, not what they do, although sometimes when that's not done right or well, it has the same effect. There are basic rules of business that are common sense things that have built successful businesses for 200 years, and they still work. Technology is great, but not at the expense of a sensation service experience that a client gets. Not everything needs to be done 100% perfect, it just needs to be better than your competition.



**ReThink
Business
Growth**

Aspect	Objective	Rate	Outcomes	Plan 2.0
1: Image	B'seen, b'heard, b'found			
2: Sales	Develop a sales process.			
3: Service	Never lose a client, ever.			
4: Staff/skills	Ensure the team has the skills needed, to do the job.			
5: Product	Whats the why you?			
6: Marketing	Its not just a facebook post monthly!			
7: Planning	You have to know where you're going.			
8: Management	Manage is about review, are we on track as planned?			
9: Data	Know the numbers, sales, clients, what works.			
10: Cashflow	Cashfow and profit must be watched, don't leave it to your accountant.			
11: Communication	Staff and clients leave because of bad communication. Don't allow it.			
12: Client dev	Know you're A, B and C clients are. Service your As best, but all well.			
13: Innovation	Be different, standout, innovate.			
14: Structure	Businesses need to be proactive, follow a plan, not reactive.			
15: Systems	Develop systems and automate where possible			
16: Local business	Do everything possible to promote you are local made and owned.			

Marketing360: The marketing 9!

Marketing can be the most frustrating part of business, but get these 9 done and you're on track.

Ask 100 business owners what the most frustrating part of business is, and 99 will say marketing, but there's a reason and in most cases what needs to be done, simply isn't! Most businesses simply miss the basic must haves but also the frequency needed because they don't get around to it, haven't structured the process well and so then wonder why they don't get the result that the one Facebook post a month was supposed to get! And it never will. Marketing requires consistency, frequency and quality content to work even to some degree.

Work through the checklist, rate your business now, what are you expected outcomes, and what needs to change.



Aspect	Objective	Rate	Outcomes	Plan 2.0
1: Name: Simple, memorable, findable, design, logo, brand.	The objective of the name of a business must be to make it easy to find and get what you do, fast!			
2: Message: Clarity and understanding in what you do.	What its is you needs to be clear, quickly, confusion causes people to move on to someone else			
3: The strategy, the marketing plan. Outline exactly what needs to be done to attract customers.	The marketing plan is the strategy of lead generation, education and informing clients about you.			
4: Website: It's part of the online profile.	Every business needs one, even a one pager. Additional domains, Google my business profile.			
5: Social media: It's the other part of the online profile.	Digital is the billboard, your online magazine, proof that you exist and what you do is real!			
6: CRM: Keep in touch. The easiest way to grow a business, is keep every client ever.	Data is KING! Collect data, use a CRM like Mailchimp and keep in touch.			
7: Print: Card, brochures, inform and educate.	It may be old school, but business cards still work! The show a level of this persons actually in business.			
8: Signs: be seen! If there's branding opportunities, take them. Car, uniforms, signage, banners.	Customers is about creating awareness, the more they see and connect, the easier it will be.			
9: Network: Connect, talk, build relationships.	Its just about them, its about who they know.			

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Over many years I have seen far too many businesses go down for particular reasons - reasons that could have been avoided if only they knew the impact it would have at the time. Most people get into businesses because they're good at the product or service they are selling - eg. fixing cars, arranging flowers, baking cakes, painting, or whatever it may be. However, quite often these experts in their area miss many of the fundamentals of running a successful business, because they have never had any training in running a business.

At GSN we have identified the key areas that most businesses need help with and have developed training workshops focused on up skilling business owners, their staff and employees to provide everyone with additional skills which will improve their business success and profitability.

Get Smart Now is designed as a business training hub, located in Darra - set up now for the sole purpose of training full time and holding offsite strategy meetings for our clients if needed.

The basic philosophy behind everything at GSN is simple - we aim to ensure that every small business can:

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All of this is paramount to running a successful business, because the objective of any business simply put is to:

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Sounds simple, and it is - but businesses need to be trained.

The other aspect of GSN is the way we train. I've been training people for 22 years, and I've figured out what works and what doesn't in training!

Firstly: Our workshops are quick, three hour no more. People cannot concentrate more than that in a training environment. This also enables them to

either go to work before or after so they don't lose too much time away from the job and can use the new skills immediately.

Second: It's too the point, no fluff or fill, just training, but it's entertaining in multiple ways. Visual via multi format presentations, action via the trainees involvement and importantly....

Third: Follow up! Up to 80% of training is lost, because it's never used. We follow up every attendee over a two month period via phone and email support to ensure those skills are used and a benefit is achieved!

And lastly: Its affordable! We use our own facilities and equipment, we don't need to outsource rooms or gear, that only adds to the cost, and that is often the biggest factor stopping owners sending staff to training,

It's a fact, that 80% of the people that leave you go elsewhere for one reason only, a perceived lack of indifference! They thought you didn't care! Losing clients often has very little to do with price or product, but often everything else!

I would love you to stay with us via our Facebook page and help us grow by sharing our posts if you can, we are still developing many of the communication and social media channels, but if your happy to stay with us don't change a thing, we will continue to update you with business tips and ideas and perhaps eventually we'll see you at one of our workshops.

By the way! We are still Bartercard members and all of our services and products are available on barter naturally!

If you would like to subscribe to our ReThinkBusinessGrowth e'news, just jump onto our website and contact us via the newsletter subscription link on the landing page at www.mybusinessnow.com.au and you can also find me on Linkedin, just search for Erwin Brem, and facebook at Mybusinessnow or RethinkBusinessGrowth. All the links are on the website.

I look forward to catching up soon.

Welcome to ReThinkBusinessGrowth.



Week 2: Image, is it everything?

I was at a networking meeting last week. I have always been a fairly regular networker over the years and truly believe in the long term benefits of networking and relationship building and after 22 years in business, even if you don't belong to one single networking group, you tend to know a lot of people, even if only their face. There are always new people coming on board too, so there are always great relationship building opportunities and it got me thinking about how important networking is to just about any business, new, old, just starting out, or successfully running for twenty years.

You form an image very quickly in your head of someone. The way they look, their dress, how they act, their personality, their professionalism, their attitude, all done in under 30 seconds in most cases. So if the impression isn't a good one, you have to work really hard on all the other areas to make up for what's not going well!

So the question is, is image everything? If you accept that someone doesn't know you or your business at first glance, they are going to have a decision made on you in 30 seconds, you better look, act and sound good, if not great! Otherwise they walk!

It's no different with a person representing your business (or you) or your place of business, the same thing happens. There is simply too much competition, too many places discounting to get the business, just simply too much, you need to stand out, and that has to start with a great image!

Over the last 22 years, it's been something that I have seen far too many times, regardless of the business type, a reasonably good product or service, that presents badly, simply because of a poor image! And you don't have to wonder why things aren't going quite the way they should, because probably everything else is much the same.

You see, I believe business owners are often too close to their businesses! They can't see the wood for the trees and sometimes you need someone else to tell you what's really going on! Advice, now there's an idea! You would think that all businesses would look at each other and compare, copy, stand out, but they don't!

It all comes from a basic lack of understanding of what really needs to be done, in order to simply have the basic things going well for your business, then look at tweaking to improve.

If you know that your image is great and business isn't going well, then you could probably say that the problem is something else, but if the image, marketing, staff skills etc are lacking, you generally don't know where to start first, so more often than not, the answer is to drop the price! Discount, two for one, or other deal based solely on price!

I often ask myself the question, what comes first in business and I believe it's image before everything and it's about getting the basics going well, then continue to tweak.

Mybusinessnow, business training that's different, skills, strategies, solutions, support.

Do a little exercise, look at all the major touch points of your business. Signage, stationary, business cards, staff presentation, web site, social media, phone contact etc, how do they compare. What would make someone pick you, over someone else?

Whenever I'm out, I look at everything, it's an important aspect of understanding why businesses succeed and why they don't! It's a process of elimination! Image, sales, customer service, marketing, staff! Get the basics right first, then review and improve.

You see all too often, now and for the last 30 years, most businesses, when looking at a way of attracting more customers, simply discount! (Look at the huge number of web based daily deals on the go, what does discounting really do?) The answer to that, is generally nothing long term!

Instead of discounting, get each part of the business going right, it doesn't have to cost a fortune, it might be a few simple things, that in actual fact pay for themselves with the extra business anyway! It's imperative that the first impression is one that says, they actually want my business! And along with that is all aspects of image, branding, staff, how they look, what they say, it's all an extension of your business! You can make one quick sale, but will they come back and will they refer you to their friends?

Is image everything? Yes! It could actually be the only thing that in particular separates you from the others that discount! Get every aspect of your image together, then work on the rest one at a time!



Week 3: Sales! Everyone is a sales person!

And even if you think you're not, you're still a sales person!

Over the years, I have spoken to hundreds of business owners that simply open their door, have a product or service to offer, but have no sales skills or processes and luckily some people just end up buying anyway, but for how long that goes on, is a different matter! And the difference here is, that if they are ready to buy they will and all you want as the owner of the business, is to make sure it's from you not someone else!

All businesses need sales, it's the reason business works in the first place. But all too often, the simple process of ensuring that there is a constant flow of new customers, buying from you and not your competitors is the all important factor! Without staff that have skills in the basic aspects of sales, those prospects may walk out and never come back! (And the really bad part here is, you may not even know!) But they will buy from someone at some point!

You see, here's what's really important for any business to accept, and that is, that we are all in sales. We just don't know it, or haven't got the skills or systems in place to make sure that we can convert every enquiry or contact, into, at some point, a new client! But it all boils down to a system.

Here's a couple of examples:

1: Think of the last time you walked into a business to look at something and maybe even buy, but for whatever reason, you didn't! Often the result is you walk out, no one knows who you are and it ends there!

2: How about the last time you looked at a car in a car yard! You walk in , your lucky if someone even comes out to serve you, you talk about a car and more often than not walk out, no details, no follow up!

3: Can you remember a time when you walked into a shop and the only staff either ignored you, or were busy (apparently) talking on the phone, you wait and wait and eventually walk out, you're ignored and shop elsewhere! It happens often!

4: And what about a time, you walked into a shop, weren't really thinking of buying, but connected with the sales person and bought, but then left, to never be heard of again. Opportunity lost!

These examples and many more happen and the reason they do is that most businesses, regardless of size, one man band, larger stores and even franchises simply don't understand that absolutely everyone is a customer and everyone is in sales and if you think about the impact that has on your business, maybe you end up thinking about an enquiry, walk-in, prospect or someone you meet, a little different! (And by the way, everyone is a customer, means everyone, the truck delivery guy, the postman, suppliers, the person walking door to door, everyone at some point might buy!) Here are a few ideas to start!

1: Sales is a process, everyone in the team needs to be aware, of how to handle an enquiry, a walk-in or a stranger they meet, as it may lead to a sale and

ongoing client!

2: Develop a system within the business to collect data, every single person that enquires about your business, should be on a database! And then do something with it!

3: When you understand how sales growth impacts on the business, you start to understand the importance of daily, weekly and monthly focus on bringing new business into the business! Whether you have a sales team, or its you, if you know you need five new clients a month, developing a system to bring them in, isn't that hard, but a system is still what's needed.

4: Develop a sales presentation process, don't ad lib sales! Find out what works, and then develop it into a professional presentation that everyone in the team can do! (Also, make sure everyone in the team knows the elevator pitch! The 30 second pitch that tells someone you don't know, why they should use you!)

There's another aspect as well. It's also the ability to communicate well and sometimes this needs to be trained! Not everyone, has the "gift of the gab"!

Inc Magazine only this week had an article that read, some experts believed that 85% of the success of a business is not the skills or knowledge, but the ability to connect! That's sales skills!

Whether you like it, or believe it or not, we are all in sales. Every business needs a process to develop a client and prospect database, that at some point may buy from you, but, on top of that, we also need a team that knows how important that is to the business, how we collect that data and what we do with it and also how to communicate with those prospects so the prospect feels, this is the company I want to deal with, I have confidence in them and I haven't even seen the product yet!

If your business needs customers, you need sales and communication skills! And the good news is, that everyone can be trained!

ReThinkBusinessGrowth in sales!



Week 4: Everyone's a customer!

I belong to a networking group and its amazing how much business is not only generated from within the group alone, but also referred to others outside. The obvious objective of networking in the first place! Yet why isn't this done as common business practice anyway?

I have always had a belief, that everyone is a customer and at some point someone you talk to, could either use or buy from you, or their friend, neighbour, family member, associate or other connection may? But in all too many instances, those connections never get made and you don't get the business and there's a reason for it.

Simply put, not too many people think about it like this! That everyone is a potential customer! If they did, they would probably look at each person a little differently! And importantly how they deal with each person and how that could lead into another customer.

Now I know that's a lot of thinking, but surely referral based business is better and easier to get, than advertising and cold calling. They all work, they all attract and get customers, but what's got to be easier?

Here's a few thoughts.

1: Make it easy for people to refer you. Develop a system that rewards referrals for starters.

2: Introduce things that will remind people of you, to refer to others. Who remembers fridge magnets, they still work! Business cards, referral cards, stickers, giveaway pens, caps, anything to remind them, encourage your existing clients to hand them out and talk about you! But you have to encourage it!

3: Develop a database! It's all about the database these days and yet still most businesses don't do it! Establish even a simple one, a spreadsheet, and there are some great, simple and cost effective ways to keep in touch, it's all about front of mind! If they are reminded about you, they'll use you or refer you, if not someone else gets the work!

4: Great customer service and a great customer experience! No one will refer you if they don't like you, it's all about being able to connect in the first place. It actually has less to do with the product, than the service! Just be nice, friendly and give great service! Simple really! Smile!!

It's a fact, that if people like you and your business, they will tell around ten people, but if they don't like you, they end up telling around one hundred! Pretty damaging!

Everyone could be a customer, or knows someone that is a customer, prospects, suppliers, the delivery guy, the people with businesses in the same street, telemarketers that ring you, everyone! You just don't know it yet!

ReThinkBusinessGrowth, everyone is a customer!

Week 5: Marketing your business! The little things make a BIG difference!

I'm in Sydney at the moment doing some consulting for a client and today I spent some time with a city based printer of theirs. It doesn't matter where you are, Sydney, Brisbane, anywhere, business is business, it's all the same. And the fundamentals of business are the same too. Marketing is one of those fundamentals!

This small printer based in the CBD of Sydney has been established for over five years, had plenty of name brand competition around him and certainly wasn't breaking any records, yet he did very little if any marketing at all to capture some of that local business and take it away from their competition!

In the hour or so I was there, no phones rang, one person walked in to get one sheet of paper copied and that was it. They want more business, that's why I was there, but again the basics were missed.

All businesses need to do some marketing, advertising and branding, even Coke Cola still spend millions on advertising every year still now after all these years, simply because if they don't, they lose market share to their competition. It's all about front of mind.

You don't need to spend a fortune, but some basic small things can make a massive difference! Here are a couple of simple ideas.

1: Let businesses in the area know you're there. Try some direct mail, walk the streets, drop something off, hand out some promotional items (a pen, a notepad, or what about a cupcake with your name on it?)

2: What local based advertising is available? There are plenty of newsletters, magazines and local papers that aren't always expensive to be in. Print your own, and maybe hand deliver it to the local businesses.

3: Build a database. Make sure the clients you deal with, stay with you. Keep in touch with a newsletter, offer a monthly special. Send a birthday card!

4: Up sell everything you do. Most people come in for one thing, and don't realise you do other services. Printers also do promotional goods, banners, flags, signs, let them know! Whatever you do, tell your clients about it all!

5: Go back to some of the old things! Remember fridge magnets, they still work and you still see them on fridges! They stay there for years!

6: Encourage referrals. Everyone knows someone else, but you need to encourage them to refer you, so just ask them to do it! Give them a deal, that if they refer someone, they get a reward!

The bottom line is everyone needs to do something! Test and measure is still important, there's no point in doing something and spending money on something that gives you no return! But there's also plenty that can be free, or close to it or low cost.

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Something else to consider is don't rely on one type of marketing only! Try different things and measure the result of every separate part, so you know the return on investment you get from everything you do. Then when you know the results, you can spend more on those that work!

Whatever you do, do something, just get started! Even if things are going great, you still need to do some marketing and sometimes that's exactly the time you should be doing it!

Marketing, it's an important part of every business growth strategy!

ReThinkBusinessGrowth!



Business52: Ideas for every week. Review, opportunities, change, adapt, grow. Planning360

Use these review pages, to tackle something every week, or maybe just once a month. Small improvements make a huge difference to businesses over time. Look closely at what's going on now, the results you get, and where the opportunities for change, improvement and growth will be. One step at a time, you don't need to do everything all at once. A 1% change in 10 areas will give you a 110% increase in turnover, 2% is 120% Average business growth in Australia is under 9%! Small changes make a big difference.



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Business growth idea 2:				
Business growth idea 3:				
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Week 6: An unbeatable USP! Making your business really standout!

Business marketers often talk about identifying your USP, your unique selling proposition - what makes your business different from the other guy and why would someone buy from you!

In Sydney last week I saw one of the best examples of this that I've seen in some time.

In one particular trendy area of Sydney, that's lined for kilometers with restaurants, cafes and bars one after another (literally at least 2km in a straight line) you need to do something a little different from the guy next door, to get your share of the business! Different types of food, ambience, length of time open are not really a USP, it can be a reason someone goes there, but what do you have to do to stand out so much, that it actually blows the competition away?

There are at least ten good ice cream shops (plus all the others inside cafes) within a very short 500 meter walk of each other! Yet one stands out so far above the rest it's incredible. The others all sell great product (I know because as part of my research I tried them all) but one just simply shines above, and the lineup outside proves it.

Cow & the Moon in Newtown are an award winning icecreamery, that stands out in a couple of simple ways.

- a: Great product, unusual flavours, really different, high quality.
- b: Trendy place, very open, it's the place where you sit down at 8:30 at night and watch everyone go by, while they watch you!
- c: Friendly staff, branded in their trendy outfits, they do just about everything right! They are just a little different from the rest.

To top that off, its not about price, you don't go there because you can get a cheap ice cream, you can't, you get a great ice cream experience!

And watching people line up out the street, just makes you think, "I have got to see what's happening here!" And funnily enough, after experiencing it once or twice, it could be done even better!

Firstly, I was advised by a friend to try their award winning affogatto, ice cream in coffee in a glass. I ordered that, and I got a scoop of coffee in a paper cup! Where was the coffee? "oh you mean the affogatto affogatto?" People don't know what they want, they need educating! I read a while ago, that Starbucks don't ask customers what they want, because they don't know - their job is to educate them what they would like, over time! Ice cream is the same, it's the perfect opportunity to lock them into you?

Secondly, loyalty systems - with so much competition, they could have a loyalty card, a frequent icecreamers card, that guarantees to bring you back!

Thirdly, be open! This ice creamery is open seven days, but they weren't on Monday night. It was a busy night in the area, Jimmy Barnes and a number of

others were at the Enmore Theater across the road, thousands around, yet they were closed? So where does everyone go for an ice cream, when you're closed? They go to the next place along! (I have since discovered, that they are closed for two weeks doing renovations, couldn't see why they needed them, but closed anyway for two weeks, so the questions still stands, where does someone go when your closed? Somewhere else!)

It got me thinking about what does any business need to do, to develop that USP, that's the difference that your competition simply haven't got a hope in competing with? Here are a couple of thoughts. And especially if you're in an area, or in an industry with strong competition

1: Image, branding, signage, your look! What do you have to do, to seriously stand out from the rest? There are some businesses that rebrand, or refresh, every year, why? Because it makes them stand out, look different, new!

2: Staff! They are your sales people, they need to look good, they need to sound great and they need to present your business really well. Train customers and lead people into the business! Your staff can also hurt the business too!

3: Educate clients. Use every opportunity to educate customers what you have, what you do, not just the obvious, but everything. You sell ice cream, but do the customers know you have coffee and cake? (or your specialty ice cream that goes in your coffee?)

4: Loyalty systems. Once you have them, hang onto them! Why let your competition get their hands on them? Develop an in house loyalty/rewards card that locks them in, or if that's too hard, get an external program that rewards loyalty - there are heaps, some work better than others.

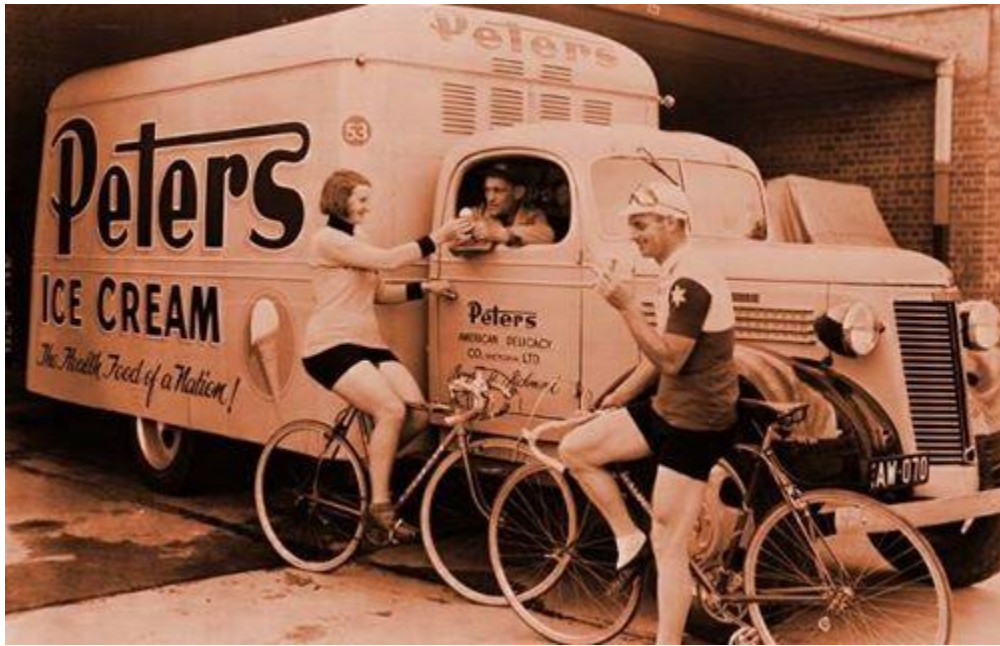
5: Make it an enjoyable, fun, entertaining experience. Too often it's dull, boring and miserable! Attitude in customer service experience is everything. Too many businesses over the years seem to think "you should be lucky you can buy from me!" It's actually the other way around!

6: And lastly, be open, be contactable, be findable! If you have an app or website and you have a retail outlet, make sure it's easy to find you. If everyone in your area, selling your type of product, are open seven days till late, so too do you need to be!

If there's no difference between you and your competition, then really all you do is sell ice cream, rather than deliver an ice cream experience! Worth thinking about!

So these are just a few ideas. It's a really interesting question when you review your business, or compare it to others - what can you do, or do you have to do, to have such a unique USP, something so different, something that stands out so much, that it simply blows your competition away completely!

ReThinkBusinessGrowth with an unbeatable USP!



Week 7: Do your potential customers, actually know what you do?

It always amazes me, when you drive or walk past a business that catches your attention for whatever reason, but you have no idea what they do and more often than not you just keep walking and never give them another thought!

I recently caught up with a stationery and printing business and was handed their business card. After looking at the card, all that was on there was their address, phone number, name of the business (XYZ Pty Ltd) and a slogan, which gave you no idea at all of what they do. No website, nothing at all that would tell you anything about them.

Too often you come across an office or business, that has a name, but not even a basic line of what we do here! Business owners assume, we, the customers, know who we are and what we do!

I tend to think, that attracting new business, let alone holding onto them, has got to be a key part of business fundamentals! Why not do everything we possibly can, to at least get interest, get people thinking about us, so that at least when they need your service next time, maybe they might consider you. But they can only do that if they know what you do!

Consider a few of these ideas:

1: Does your business card (one of the most important marketing parts of the business) say enough information about you. Not just business name, your name, address and phone number, but what you do in brief, website or USP (unique selling proposition). It can actually be a mini billboard.

2: When you look at your business, office or vehicle (if that's your office), does it also give out enough information? In many instances, it can be your billboard, why not give as much as you can! It doesn't have to be just a phone

number, it can be a web address, a QR code leading to something, photos, a short story!

3: Email, social media, newsletters. Does all your external communication also give all the information that your prospects and customers need? There's plenty of room here, put in everything you need. Look at it like advertising, what else do you do other than the obvious? And also don't forget your iPad and iPhone signatures. We all get our email everywhere on the run now, so ensure that its on your portable devices too!

4: Sponsorship! I remember going to a major NRL game a little while ago and seeing major ground signage, that only told you a name! No website, no idea of what they did, just a name! That happens often, yet others tell a story. It's not just about branding, it's about educating! If you spend money on branding or any sponsorship, make sure it's not just a sign, not just a logo, but at least leads to something or gives a brief detail of what your business offers, and why not a call to action?

5: Check your promotional giveaways. Things like pens, caps, anything that you leave behind, at the very least it should give enough information that leads to a website. A free pen is great, but let's make sure they know it's from you and what you do!

6: Message on hold phone systems. This is a great one. How many times are you on hold to a business, even for a few seconds and you get either the annoying chime music, or similar, or radio. If they have the technology to have radio, they have the ability to add a message. This is the ideal time to promote every aspect of your business. You have their attention. Tell them about everything, conduct an interview with clients, or how about educate them about your products. It may only be a few seconds, but it's enough to get a message across!

Here's an idea! Do a quick check of all of your business branding and materials, maybe get a few people to also look at it, that don't know you that well, and ask whether it gives out the complete picture. It might be time to update a few things. Don't look at the cost to improve your business branding, look at what you might be missing in business that passes you by!

Check out your competition too. Look at what they do and what they don't do. Following on from last weeks blog, in regard to a USP (unique selling proposition) and standing out so much that your competition simply doesn't have a hope. The first stage of that is getting your message out there - at every opportunity. Don't miss anything. Every prospect that doesn't know what you do, or what you could do, is a lost client, lost ongoing income, lost additional referrals.

Get smart now and ensure that everyone knows what you do, even if they just drive past every morning! Little things in branding and message, can make a huge difference over time!



Week 8: *Happy staff, happy life! 6 easy ways to help achieve better staff engagement!*

We've probably all heard that saying, (I know it's my wife's mantra) happy wife, happy life (and it's true!!!). And it also works for staff - happy staff, make your life happy also, as well as the business!

I've employed, trained, and rewarded hundreds of staff over the last 25 years and there's one thing that stands true, if your staff are happy, your clients are happy and so to then are you! But all too often you see disengaged staff, which either comes as a result of poor treatment, under rewarded and over worked, or a serious lack of basic skills training. This can also come across as lack of confidence, simply because they don't know what to do and haven't been trained! And so the vicious circle continues until they leave and you start again! Not much fun!

But it's easy to rectify if the objective is to have happy staff, happy clients etc. Here are a couple of ideas to get you started!

1: Recruit well. Recruiting is not the most enjoyable part of a business at the best of times. But too often it's done when you need to fill a position, rather than develop an ongoing recruitment process! To have people waiting in the wings certainly would make the job easier, but not always possible. Look at multiple recruitment options, advertise, clients, referrals from current staff, how about a career section on your website. But try not to take the first candidate you come across because they were the only! Don't put someone on, just to fill a vacancy! Fill it with the right person! You're sometimes better off being understaffed, than staffed with the wrong people.

2: Train well. Without a doubt, the number one reason staff leave is lack of training! They just don't know what to do! Training ideally needs to be done in three sections. 1: Foundation training - the basics, the minimum they need to know to confidently do the job. 2: On going product knowledge and selling skills. And 3: Personal development, career and advanced sales and service skills. When you know you have someone with ability, work with that skill,

don't hold them back. I recently bumped into a colleague on her way to Melbourne for a two day training course. She's in car sales. The two day course was to learn about the features of a new model coming out next year! Too often people start, are given a kit, and told to go forth and sell and serve. Sometimes they do, more often they don't!

3: Set key performance indicators (KPIs) from day one! Expectations is another word for it! If you ever see low performing staff, it usually stems from the lack of performance criteria set out from before day one! And then never fixed! Sales people in particular too often do what they want, not what they can and should in order to get the numbers a business needs. Explain that from day one. For example, your sales people may need to set three appointments a day, that becomes the standard from day one on! The KPI! Accountability is also part of that, it's not about micro management, but it is about knowing that they are accountable for what they do or don't do!

4: Find out what motivates them. Not all people are driven by money! Sure we all need basic income and security etc, but there are other things that often drive your staff better than cash alone. But you need to find out what that is. It could be a weekend away, movie tickets, additional training or as simple as a trophy to sit on their desk for winning a sales competition. If you ask, they'll tell you and often you'll be surprised!

5: Recognition and reward. Everyone wants to be recognised, for time in the job, training completed, sales milestones achieved. Recognise and reward for their results and ensure you do it in front of the entire team. It motivates everyone. If you employ sales support people and part of their role is setting appointments, make sure they get rewarded on the back of the sales persons success. It's a team effort and people will work harder when they know they are part of that success and get rewarded for it.

6: Include them in the BIG picture! All too often our staff are simply doing a job, without really understanding what the big picture is all about. The businesses objective, plans and goals. If you have a cafe, your staff don't just make coffee as a barista, their part of a team and a destination that enables your clients to catch-up with friends, have a business meeting away from the daily grind for a short time! (Or whatever it might be) it's not just the job, it's part of something much bigger!

Whenever you see staff that are totally disengaged from what they should be doing, I look at the cost to the business, lost sales, lost customers for ever and a reputation that's almost impossible to recover! It's an all too common occurrence! If you have people that spend far too much time on their phone or Facebook, that don't make the number of calls they should, that have more than their share of sick days, that don't engage in training because they can't be bothered, you've either got the wrong people or their simply disengaged! It's time for a change!

If you know that so much of your businesses success depends on how clients are treated, and that's a direct result of dealing with your staff, then make sure it's done well, done engaged, done by trained staff that actually care about what they do and who they do it for!

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It won't happen overnight, but start the process now! Poorly trained and disengaged staff are costing you money now and the good news is it can be addressed!

Get Smart Now and ensure that your team are trained well and recognised and rewarded for their results. It will make a positive difference to you and your business that reflects positively on the bottom line. Happy staff, happy clients, happy business (happy you)!



Week 9: Answer the phone, turn up, get back, followup and smile! It's not rocket science! Here's 6 simple things that will make a massive difference to your clients (and your business)!

Over the last 22 years in business I've noticed there's one thing that stands out for just about anyone that's had anything to do with another business, it's the number of times someone doesn't acknowledge you, doesn't turn up, doesn't return your call, or doesn't even answer the phone. Over and above anything else (even price and quality), it's service, or lack of! It would seem to me, that if you did just those things alone (acknowledge, turn up, return the call, and answer the phone), you would stand out from the crowd. But the reverse is the exception, not the norm! It's common to hear about tradies that don't turn up after you take half a day off work to wait for them! But why is that?

Is it that we simply have begun to accept poor service from businesses and that when we finally get good, or even great service, we can't stop talking about it for weeks! Where as it should be the standard of how all businesses act towards their customers! Regardless of whether your in retail, direct sales, hospitality, professional, manufacturing or a trade, its all the same.

Consider some of these:

1: You walk into a car yard and you go in to look at at car, with a view to buy, but don't, you probably won't get a follow up call - in 90% of cases!

2: Often sales professionals, that have booked an appointment, simply won't turn up the first time you have spoken to them and they have agreed to show up! And in some cases, they don't turn up the second time either!

3: When your out shopping, the majority of retail assistants either won't acknowledge you, or wont even smile when dealing with you!

4: When trying to contact a trades person for the first time, often the phone doesn't get answered in around 50% of the time. And if you decide to leave a voicemail, you probably won't get a returned call anyway! And if you try emailing someone requesting information, or a quote, don't hold your breath for an email or call response!

5: And along similar lines, in over half of the cases, when people apply for a position and you try to make contact with the applicant, you cant! No answered call, no returned call!

Why do we put up with it? Well simply we need what they have, so we wait, come back again, put up with someone in a bad mood and then hand over the money! We must be nuts!

I've always looked at a customer as if I'm lucky to have them, they could go any where and they picked me. So knowing that, as a business owner, we need to do everything possible to attract them and then keep them! It's not complicated! If you don't want the business, don't be in business! But the second part of this problem is your staff. You might be doing all the right

things, but what happens when you're not there! Does your team act as if the client is as important as you think they are?

If we're wanting to grow our businesses into a successful enterprise, the first thing we need after a product or service, is great customer service skills! Or even better, a great customer experience! Simple things like:

- 1: Answer the phone, or get an answering service to do it. If at all possible, have a human at the end of the phone ready to handle the call!
- 2: When someone leaves a message, return the call that day! Including emails and texts, return the enquiry. You will be amazed at the response you get!
- 3: Turn up on time! Just turn up! There simply isn't too many excuses these days, use a diary, or better your phone/ipad, to record all appointments, it will remind you when to be there!
- 4: Acknowledge customers - smile! It isn't that hard! If nothing else, fake it! Just be friendly!
- 5: Act like you want the business - attitude is everything. You might make a sale, but you won't keep the customer!
- 6: Follow up on every enquiry! If you knew how much business you lost because you didn't follow up, you would be amazed! Never stop following up! Ever!

I've always believed that running a business isn't that hard - yes you need a little common sense, be a little system focused, work a little harder than most, but the returns can be worth it. If you make that decision to go into business, or stay in business, then at least do everything you can, and most importantly focus on customer service - doing it right!

It's a documented fact that 80% of our clients that leave us, leave because of a "perceived lack of indifference" (I learned that a long time ago) a belief that we simply didn't care about them! Not about quality or price, but service! How easy is that to fix? Well maybe it's not that easy for some! But it's not that hard either!

Customer service, or better explained as customer experience, is a culture that's built into a business. Customer experience is a standard that all staff are measured by, but in most cases it needs to be trained and to not only the team, but also sometimes the owners of a business too!

When you understand the value of a client, and what they mean to you long term, not only through what they spend with you, but also what their referrals will spend, it begins to give the team an idea of how they should shift their customer service thinking! And not just first thing in the morning when we feel good, but also at 5:30pm on a Friday afternoon, when that usual client rings again wanting something! (We all have them, but they pay your wage!)

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As we hit the end of another year and are about to start all over again, this might be a perfect time to consider some key changes in your clients customer service experience! It will make a massive difference to your business this next year!

Get smart now is all about training businesses to doing things better, including customer service, and showing owners and their team that with a few small changes in customer service alone, you can have a massive effect on your business success during 2016.

ReThinkBusinessGrowth with a customer service experience that your competition simply won't do!



Business52: Ideas for every week. Review, opportunities, change, adapt, grow. Planning360

Use these review pages, to tackle something every week, or maybe just once a month. Small improvements make a huge difference to businesses over time. Look closely at what's going on now, the results you get, and where the opportunities for change, improvement and growth will be. One step at a time, you don't need to do everything all at once. A 1% change in 10 areas will give you a 110% increase in turnover, 2% is 120% Average business growth in Australia is under 9%! Small changes make a big difference.



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Week 10: Improving three things to start the new year to get a better result!

Well here we are again, the start of another year, we've all done this before. I hope we all had a great Xmas break, and now we're back into it. But is it just start again, or do something different, so we get a different (better) result?

I've always asked business associates and clients this question over the years: "What are the three most important things to your business success?". And I always get vastly different answers, depending on what people believe is the reason for their business success. But it's not until you actually sit down and review where your business and income comes from, that you actually get a clearer picture of what's actually going on and how it actually could be improved!

Take that one step further. If you had to rate your business and every part of it out of ten, based on the results, what would you score it? And further, what would it take to get to a ten?

The biggest challenges with most businesses is they simply don't know where the business comes from, what it's worth to them, the profit they make from it, the maximized potential of the business and the long term value of a particular client! If you knew that information, it would dramatically change your thinking around what you could do to grow your business in the best possible way.

So consider this example.

If you knew that you had around 50 customers a month come in to your business, and on average they spent \$200, you would know that you generated \$10,000 a month in income.

If after all expenses, overheads and your wages are paid, and you're left with \$1000, you would know that you had a \$1000 net profit. And if that continued throughout the year, you would have a net profit of \$12,000 in the year.

So let's assume that your aim is to grow, make more sales, have a bigger net profit, as well as take more drawings or wages yourself also. How do you go about doing that? What will get the better result?

Well there are a number of things you could consider as a start:

1: You could increase sales, more customers, more money!

1A: Where do your customers come from? Advertising, referrals, word of mouth, signage, other marketing?

1B: You could increase the average spend per client! If they currently spend \$200 now, how would you increase that by 20%? Add a new product line, a new service perhaps?

2: You could improve the net profit. You could look at all of your costs, and look at a better way of buying stock, reducing costs, eliminate wastage.

3: You could find a way to improve the frequency of each client coming to buy from you. How do you get them coming back more often? Is it simply a matter of asking them back? Keeping in touch more often?

The fundamental objective of business is to make a profit for the owners! That comes as a result of attracting as many customers as possible (maximizing the potential), getting them to come back more often, spending more money and then getting them to refer others to do the same.

Over the years, it has continued to amaze me, but at the some time not surprised me that much, to know how many businesses either close down for what ever reason, or even worse, simply don't make any money! And yes, that's worse! Too many owners of businesses continue to plod away, thinking that because they have a business, they do ok. But far too many barely make a wage, rarely take holidays, and work incredibly long hours (they actually just have a badly paid job). They just simply miss some of the simple things, which could make a massive difference to them and their business.

I believe business owners should do two things if they seriously want to make a difference to their business growth on a regular basis, and especially at the start of a new year.

1: Plan! Nothing will ever change if at the start of 2016, you just continue doing what you did in 2015!

2: Do something different. Three by three by three! (3 X 3 X 3) Pick three areas that you believe will have an effect on growth, profit and lifestyle and work on three aspects of each of them for three months, then continue every quarter for the year. Your business will grow!

For example:

1: Image: New signs, get the staff a polo shirt with the logo, get some new cards done and clean up the reception area so it looks professional!

2: Service: Get all the team to smile when they deal with clients, acknowledge them (say hello) and keep in touch, remind them to come back.

3: Staff: Get them on a regular training program, build in a rewards program for sales results and acknowledge a team member of the month. Recognition and engagement can make a massive difference to the team and end result in the business.

Improving the way your business operates and performs isn't that hard, but it is a matter of reviewing and tweaking little bits here and there.

If the objective is dramatically improving your business this year, don't just start doing the same things again as you were doing in December because you'll end up with exactly the same result. Growth, increased cashflow and profit, more customers, referring even more customers, requires some change. Basic fundamental things sometimes, but make a change.

Get Smart Now is all about training and helping people and the businesses they own to be better, get a better result and together build more successful stronger businesses.

ReThinkBusinessGrowth



Week 11: Constant improvement! Looking for perfection!

Over the last few months, I have looked very closely at businesses and wondered what it takes to be an industry leader and in fact, is it even possible, to become an Apple, Facebook or GoPro? (Albeit a little smaller!) And develop a strong referral, viral client base. I think it can, but in most cases, we just don't! Why?

If you look closely at "average" businesses, they simply all start to look the same. Similar product, price point, image, service, nothing different. Then along comes someone that stands out so far beyond the competition, that it simply leaves them in their dust! Price just doesn't matter.

The difference's in image, quality and customer experience simply can't be matched!

I came across this video recently and thought I'd share it. It features Eric Ripert, Executive Chef for New York restaurant LeBernerdin. (If you own a restaurant or cafe or know someone that does, tell them to watch this!)

He mentions a number of things in particular. Its not just the product, it's the ambiance and the client experience that is as important as anything else. They

[Mybusinessnow](#), business training that's different, skills, strategies, solutions, support.

have a very loyal client base that continue to come back, because of the continuous search for perfection and the experience they get as clients at his restaurant.

He and his senior team have a “zero tolerance” for anything that simply isn't good enough, they are constantly looking at ways to improve, be better and ensure that their clients experience more than just great food at Le Bernerdin's. It's all about the over all experience.

It doesn't matter whether you're one of the best restaurants in New York, a Fortune 500 or a one man band operator from Brisbane, you can still be better than your competition, stand out and develop loyal clients, that not only won't go anywhere else, but also tell everyone else about you! Competition is a good thing, it should push you as the business owner, to question, look for and want to be better than the other guy. And the good news is, they're probably not looking!

Maybe perfection cant be achieved, but maybe if we all developed a “zero tolerance” with average, our businesses may get close! It's all about the “pursuit” of perfection.

ReThinkBusinessGrowth is all about building better businesses and the objective of constant improvement and getting everything right!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZRCaK5b5V4&feature=youtu.be>

Week 12: Three things that will make a huge difference to your business.
Its all about the service experience!

It's all about the service. You can get away with a product that's not the best, an image that lacks a little, but if the service is bad that's it, it's all over! See you later! Goodbye! I won't be back!

Poor service is the single biggest killer of most businesses. Poor service includes being ignored, no follow-up, no product knowledge, bad attitude, being slow, basic fundamentals not done, just plain bad service!

How good is it when you finally get good service? But how rare is it?

I was talking to a couple of clients this week - we spoke about how not only poor service is bad because you lose clients eventually, but it's also bad from potential lost sales. You can lose potential sales through just simple follow-up, upselling and of course referrals.

Service is everything, it's the basic principle behind why someone buys from you and not the guy next door. "Good old fashioned service" - that's what it used to be called before self serve petrol, pizzas came in a box for \$5 and groceries were home delivered! But I know, times have changed! Or have they? Customers still want service, still want an experience, they still want to feel special, they want to believe they get value for money with you! And service is a big part of that.

I look at so many businesses these days and wonder "do they actually want my business?", "do they want me to come back?", or "do they simply not get it?" I think they don't get it, because if you did, you would do everything you could to attract, keep and up sell any and every client you have.

My wife and I bought a new bed around two months ago and wow beds can be expensive these days. We were served by a nice lady, bought the bed and off we went. Bed was delivered the next day, all good. I haven't heard from them, since. They are part of a large chain and no follow-up.

Since the purchase, we have bought sheets, a new bed cover, a couple of new pillows and we are about to buy another set of sheets (why not?). But we didn't buy it from them, we could have, we just weren't asked to. We also weren't asked "how's the bed?" or "are you happy with it?"

The idea here is that there are plenty of people that sell bedding, so why not ask me to come back!

It's a fact that businesses lose 80% of their customers for no other reason than a lack of perceived indifference! They thought you didn't care? And maybe you don't?

Here are three things that will make a massive difference to your business if you do nothing else:

1: Be friendly. It sounds really simple, but it is more common to get unfriendly service than friendly service. Do the staff just not want to be there, don't care, or when the boss isn't there it's not my business? Train people to be friendly! It's the really simple part.

2: Upsell! McDonalds do it at every possible point: "do you want a coke and fries to go with that?" The reason? Most people say YES. Would you like some sheets? pillows? cover? with the bed you just bought? A certain percentage will say yes. My local petrol station used to ask after I came in to pay for the petrol, are you right for milk and bread and I always bought something, they stopped, now I don't buy bread and milk there.

3: Follow-up on every single sale, even if it's small. Depending on the value of the sale, come up with a time frame. let's say \$2000, maybe two weeks. How's the bed, happy so far, we have a special on sheets this week for anyone that has bought a bed in the last month? What might happen do you think?

Putting systems in place to make a couple of changes like this will make a difference in a big way to your business. You'll keep customers, they'll spend more, and come back! But why don't people do it? Because they don't know.

You don't know what you don't know - so because of that, you don't question how to make things better, get a better result, increase average sale value, increase the frequency, get more referrals. It's all simple, but staff have to be trained, and then it needs to become systemised and structured, otherwise it's a big waste of time.

Get Smart Nows mission is to help businesses get better results, by training owners and staff to do things different, so you get a better result, but a big part of that is follow-up, ensuring that the things that have been learnt, are actually put into place, so they get a result.

Customer service, or better understood as customer experience, is absolutely everything.

What do you think your customers experience with your business, based on the three things above?

ReThinkBusinessGrowth, with the best customer service experience that your business has ever given and see the result of a bigger, better business this year!



Week 13: Does the overall experience make that big a difference? You bet!

So many businesses out there think it's all about their product or service only. They make or do something well, but sometimes it's hard to see past the poor service, untidy office or workplace, badly presented staff, to actually experience the product. When you run a small business and you don't step outside very often to have a look at what your competition is doing, you can't measure or compare how you could be better than the rest.

I'm in Western Australia at the moment (working with a client), and I have just spent a weekend at Margaret River, one of Australia's premier wine regions, so we did a little wine tasting as you do. There are over 275 different wineries in this area, we got through eight, plus a couple of other product outlets. As you can imagine, it's a competitive market here. It's amazing when you look at the really successful wineries and why they stand out and why the others...just don't. They all sell wine, but it's not just about the wine. Here's a brief example of what the successful ones do.

- 1: The ambience. It's just about everything. They have impressive locations that you just want to be at, sit around, enjoy and then even try some wine. You want to bring your friends and associates there too.
- 2: They sell other things apart from the wine. Added value, up sell, branded merchandise, produce, gift lines. It's the coke and fries that burger places use to get everyone spending more. They come in for one thing, buy it and something else as well.
- 3: Their staff are well trained and want you to have a great time. Well trained and presented staff, branded uniforms, that know their product and are happy to serve are what "service experience" is all about. You remember the good service, but you also remember the poor service too.

4: They run events to attract you there more often. Events can attract clients, prospects and get regulars coming back. It might be an educational event, it might be social, creating a "club-like" environment makes these clients feel extra special.

5: They have a club that they encourage you to be part of, keep in touch. Building a database is such a simple way to maintain contact and build your brand in their mind, simply by sending an email, posting a newsletter, or inviting you to a members only event - and it costs very little.

6: Food, restaurants and functions. The ones that get it know it's about the food that goes with wine, the functions, the corporate days, the weekend jazz day, simple things that get them thinking about your product, while they are there. It's brand association. You had a great time, while drinking their wine. And you will remember it.

7: Many have something out of the ordinary that attracts you for other reasons. For example one of the wineries has an art display, another a car collection. You go there for more than just one reason, you end up buying some wine, having some food.

8: And then there's the wine, it's not too bad either, but it's the same as the rest. They all have great wine, some better than others! Theirs is as good, if not better.

But it's all the other stuff that the others don't do, that makes a massive difference to not only attracting someone once, but coming back and happily bringing their friends (referrals) and spend and spend more when they join the club. So you keep in touch and feel as if you have to buy more again, because you're a member, an associate, a partner.

Here was an interesting idea.... A friend of mine has joined a club with an Australian whiskey producer, they only produce a limited number of bottles a year, so he bought (let's say) number 33! Every year he gets a letter that says, your bottle of number 33 is ready, if you don't take it, they sell the number 33 to someone else. You're not going to give it up are you?

Some of these wineries have spent some serious money, but the concept could be easily replicated on a smaller scale, but also with other business types.

So here's a thought, if its all about the overall experience, what could you do? The little things that make a huge difference, to attract clients, keep them coming back, spending more and referring others, it's a simple concept. So what could you do in your business to achieve the same result as these wineries?

- 1: Ambience, the look, the feel, that stands out from the competition.
- 2: Additional products, other than the core one, upsell, add value, how can you increase the average dollar spend?
- 3: Well trained and presented staff, in branded uniforms, that are engaged in what they do.
- 4: Events, that attract, educate or interest clients to keep coming back.

5: The database. Keep in touch, regular contact on a monthly basis, keeps them remembering you, not the competition.

6: Food, coffee, something. Does your business have the ability to add a side product or service?

7: Something extra, like the winery with the art gallery. Could your business have something else out of the ordinary? If you were a mechanic, could you have a car show once a month?

8: And a great product, it needs to be at least good as the best competition. Your product itself needs to be in a constant state of improvement, quality, packaging, branding. Look at the competition, what do they do? Now do it better!

The objective should be simple. If your wanting to build a truly successful business, it's more than just the product, it's the image, the experience, the service, the community around it, the other products that go with it and the events or association to it that can make a massive difference to your businesses turnover and profit.

Maximising your business is about what does your business have to do, to be better than the rest? Take any industry, you'll always find the standouts. The experience with these Margaret River wineries are a classic case of how you can easily blow your competition away, by doing a few things that the others don't do and won't ever do!

ReThinkBusinessGrowth and start the process of your business standing out this year so it becomes the place where people go to, not your competition.



Week 14: How do you get potential customers to stop in their tracks, have a second glance, or even better... walk in and then keep them there?

I mentioned last week, that I'm in Western Australia at the moment. I spent the week in Perth with my wife and daughter, walking around the city stopping here and there. We came across an interesting point of sale poster in a jewellery shop - "I have enough jewellery" said no one ever!" My wife and daughter laughed at this (no girl ever has enough jewelelry), and I thought "never heard that one before!!!" But it got me thinking, how often do we try and go out of our way to really get customers attention? We see posters of things for sale, 50% off, 2 for 1, the name of the business, but not what it does, but often not much gets you really thinking: "that's clever!"

Now the point here is that clever advertising doesn't necessarily work, or does it. I'm talking about it now aren't I? But I couldn't tell you which shop it was that joked about 'never having enough jewellery', but I remembered where I saw it!

Advertising is supposed to do one thing - Sell stuff! Either now, or sometime in the near future, and hopefully from you, not someone else. So if your advertising isn't getting people to either walk in, buy or remember who and where you were so they come back next time, is there really a point? They may like the poster, but if all it does is give them an idea for something that they could get elsewhere, you may just have given a competitor a client!

I thought the poster we all saw on the weekend was clever, I even took a picture of it, but it doesn't say who, where or why to call in! Not even a QR code.

If you don't know what a QR code is, you've probably seen them around. QR codes, or "quick response" codes, do exactly what we are talking about. If you haven't got time, you snap the code with your camera, you now you have the company's information. Sometimes people need more than a funny poster to talk about. What about a web site address, an easy to remember phone number like 1300jewel, something that gets them to remember who you are and worse case scenario find you again later, not someone else.

Advertising should be able to get people back to you easily and in the age of technology it's never been easier, but still business owners don't do it because we think being clever, or just having our name up there is enough, and it's not.

Advertising, marketing, and branding should all be about attracting clients and getting them back to you. So if your advertising, marketing and branding doesn't do that, change it.

I've used QR codes for a while now, I think they are one of those quirky things that people will click, just for the sake of clicking, but it's really amazing at what you can do with them. Everything from point you to a web site, a YouTube link, a short cut to an email back to the source, a digital card, a map of where you are, links to social media, a phone call shortcut, an event reminder and plenty more.

You can put QRs on your business window, posters, billboards, uniforms, amazingly they work just about anywhere and off anything. I have even taken a picture of one from a distance off a billboard with one camera and then scanned the picture with another and it still gets the result wanted. Now that's

Week 15: It's 6 to 7 times more expensive to find a new client than it is to keep existing ones!

You've probably heard this before, but it's a lot easier to 'keep a client' than it is to 'find a new client'. In fact statistics tell us that it's around 6 to 7 times more expensive to find a new client.

If that's the case, why is there so little focus with 99% of businesses trying to keep their current customers? It's simply a matter (in most cases) of keeping in touch isn't it?

Most businesses operate on a single sale model - you come in, buy something and go. They hope, that because of their great product, service location and price, that you'll come back. However often you don't. So it's simply a numbers game right? There's no encouragement to come back, other than price, product and place.

My very first business was owning a picture framing company around 25 years ago. It was well before email, social media and the early days of computers, so sending things like personalised letters and newsletters wasn't as easy as it is today. But we still did it and targeted our small database once a quarter. Often people would come into the business as a direct result of that personalised letter they received as a reminder to "get some more framing done". So it made me realise two things:

1: You need to keep in the front of your clients mind, so they don't think about someone else before you when they next need that service. Don't let them forget about you.

2: If you ask customers to buy something, in many instances they will.

It's called customer relationship management, and how often you talk and how you communicate is up to you. However as a rule it should be at least every two months. You should be focusing on their actual interests, not just generic, and you should do it with everyone - prospects and even the ones that have stopped buying from you, so you can ask why.

Customer relationship management, or more commonly referred to as CRM these days, has never been easier. But it's still not done with the majority of businesses and you have to wonder why. If you know that it's easier to keep customers than find new ones, if you know that simply asking people to buy and they will, and if statistics tell us that if you ask your clients for feedback they tend to spend 10% more with you, then why not? Is it just too hard?

Here are a couple of ideas that work, and every business small or large, should implement some sort of CRM system in order to keep in touch!

1: Build a database! Collect your clients details, how what they buy, know their interests, all so that you can send them targeted relevant news about you. Build a second database for your prospects too, people that have inquired about your business, but not bought. Just keep in touch with them, they will buy from you at some point - so if you keep in touch, it might just be from you.

2: Look at different ways to communicate:

Produce a newsletter, try both email and printed, so it's actually mailed.

Why not try text, you'll definitely get attention.

Old fashioned postcards and greeting cards, hand written work very well.

Don't confuse social media, Facebook etc, with CRM, it's not! It's another way to market your business, but it's certainly not CRM

Hold an event, an intro or launch to a new product, invite clients, do an educational evening about how to use your product, put on some wine and cheese, schmoozing clients always works.

Pickup the phone now and then and say hello. Talk about them, ask about their business and "how about buying some more stuff from us while I'm here?"

3: Service your clients by what and how much they do with you. Clients aren't all the same and shouldn't be treated the same. Separate your larger clients and treat them extra special. You've probably heard of the 80/20 rule (and sometimes it's 70/30) but the principal is true. 80% of your income, comes from 20% of your clients! It works with your staff too!

4: Contact past clients, why don't they buy from you and what would it take to buy from you again? Often it might be as little as they forgot about you, but what if it was a problem, and you never knew about it? If you knew what the problem was, maybe you could fix it and get them back? (90% of the people that leave you will never tell you why!)

5: Front of mind. All too often we buy from the last person, the last ad, the last contact we remember, not necessarily because of loyalty. For that reason alone, keep in touch with clients. Maybe it's worth sending a pen, a calendar, or some other gimicky thing that reminds them just of you. Remember fridge magnets, they still work today because people actually put them on their fridge!

6: Referrals. Everyone knows someone else, so why wouldn't they buy from you too? Well they probably would, if you asked them to tell you who they were. But again, in most cases businesses never do. Develop a referral program and its a lot easier when you have a relationship with a client.

Keeping in touch with customers, regardless of what you sell is easy to do, it's a fundamental of growing a business, but business owners don't do it. So there's an opportunity just there! Stand out from the crowd again. Do what other business simply don't do.

Like most people, I like a glass of wine now and then, so I often go to a local bottle shop, which is part of a very large national chain. I walked in yesterday and had one of my Get Smart Now shirts on. The checkout lady asked, "what's GSN?" (she saw the logo). I gave her a brief explanation and she responded with "could I do anything better?" and I responded "we could all do something a little better."

As I jumped into the car, my brain started clicking away again and I realised the many things that someone like that lady in the bottle shop, and that business could do to be better. Standout and keep more customers going there, rather than somewhere else. I buy my wine from a number of places, simply because no one has a relationship with me.

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If one of them asked me to buy, kept in touch with specials and new products that I liked, I'd probably be more likely to shop with that business. But they don't. It would interesting to see what would happen if they did. I think I know the answer!

Building successfull businesses doesn't have to be hard, and customer relationship management is nothing new, but no ones does it, so why don't you?

ReThinkBusinessGrowth this year and start keeping in touch with your clients, you might be amazed at the results!



Week 16: Five easy ways to get better engagement from you staff.

GSN had one of our first launch events this week, which gave us an opportunity to introduce what Get Smart Now is all about and discuss a number of additional benefits that GSN will offer.

At the event I went through the fundamentals we will be training and covered the seven core areas that we are focusing on as the most important areas that a business owner needs to work on, in order to build a really successful business.

At one point, one of our attendees made a comment that "very few businesses focus enough attention on their staff", which is exactly one of the key areas we will be training on.

It's a great point. Let's face it, staff are more often than not, the first point of contact. Staff create the first impression, and sometimes they are the only contact with a business, so it's pretty scary to know that most staff are actually

Business52: Ideas for every week. Review, opportunities, change, adapt, grow. Planning360

Use these review pages, to tackle something every week, or maybe just once a month. Small improvements make a huge difference to businesses over time. Look closely at what's going on now, the results you get, and where the opportunities for change, improvement and growth will be. One step at a time, you don't need to do everything all at once. A 1% change in 10 areas will give you a 110% increase in turnover, 2% is 120% Average business growth in Australia is under 9%! Small changes make a big difference.



This weeks/months plans to grow.	Idea	Strategy	Date to implement	Outcomes
Business growth idea 1:				
Business growth idea 2:				
Business growth idea 3:				
Business growth idea 4:				
Business growth idea 5:				

engaged in doing their job less than 60% of the time. That also doesn't mention what level of engagement that refers to, but I can only imagine it's probably not that great.

When staff are disengaged (especially when the boss isn't around), these staff are doing everything else but the job their paid to do - surfing the net, Facebook, personal calls, texting, talking to work mates (stopping them from doing their job!!) or even looking for another job!

When you realise the damage that can be done from disengaged staff, from not doing their job well, to completely costing you business and customers, surely we as business owners need to focus attention on what is the most important aspect of your business - and that's staff. If your business employs staff and they deal with prospective and existing clients, we need to do everything we can to ensure they are engaged 100% of the time - and engaged at what I call a three star proactive level. Not just servicing a client, but "wowing" them. We need to get away from the 'can I help you' service model, to 'wowing'. Wowing means adding value, educating and upselling. Wowing is a bit like the "do you want coke and fries to go with that", but a bit more too!

Over the years I have recruited, trained and managed hundreds of staff and worked with many others that weren't employed by me which all identified that there are five ways that you can improve the engagement levels of staff (and that doesn't include leaving phones at home and turning the internet off). It's all about making the job a job that keeps them engaged, so they want to do it, as if it was their own business. Here are the five key areas that I have seen over years of working with staff that certainly help build better engagement:

1: Employ the right people for the right job. Don't just put someone on to fill a seat. Recruiting the right person takes time, but it will save you plenty more later on. I have made the mistake myself over the years, only to look at the person a couple of days later and ask myself "what was I thinking, did I actually interview you?" Make sure you through a proper interview process, more than one interview is a definite, try different times, different places, include other staff. Test them to make sure that they can actually do what you're hiring them to do. If they need to sell, get them to sell you something, if it's numbers, test them on that, if it's phone work, put them on a phone for 30 minutes. Get the right person from the start.

2: Train them well. Without a doubt, the overwhelming reason most staff leave, is lack of training. Basic product knowledge, selling and service skills, opportunities to grow. Confidence in doing the job right isn't there unless they're trained, and if they don't get trained, they lack in confidence to do the job well and again you're probably losing business.

3: Reward them as well as you can. Staff need to be rewarded. It's not just the basic salary or hourly rate, but also the little extras - the rewards for doing a great job, hitting target, getting the best sales results for the month, or bringing in another referral that has just become another income producing client. Little things make a big difference - movie tickets, car wash, \$50 gift voucher to a music shop, a massage. It doesn't need to be expensive, just something that means a lot to them and adds value on top of the salary. Another tip is to pay or

handout these rewards and bonuses in front of the rest of the team, it will inspire them too.

4: Recognise them and their performance. Everyone likes to be recognised for something, especially if they're doing a great job. So let them know, announce it in front of the team, present them with a certificate. Having a certificate on their desk for years of service, or sales achieved, or best service given, will inspire them to do even better next month.

5: Keep them informed. Your team want to know where the business is headed, what's new in the business, how we went last month. You don't have to tell them everything, but letting the team know what your business objectives are, and how their part of it all helps out. Having a better understanding of what the business is doing gets them understanding their part in it, but also knowing that we are all head in the same direction. A very important part of staff, leadership, management and owner buy in to the whole picture is knowing that everyone is on the same page.

Companies that are nominated for best employers year after year, often don't do things that are monetary based in order to stand out. Standing out can include simple things like team building events, fitness nights, a monthly team dinner, a masseuse that comes in to give everyone a massage once a month, supplying fruit and yogurt for everyone, a real espresso coffee machine, supplying team shirts or having an area where you can sit and get away in comfort and eat your lunch without sitting at your desk. It's the little things that make a huge difference.

When I look at what are the most important aspects of business and in particular getting sensational results, it's often very much a case of what's first, the chicken or the egg. But as a prospective client walks in the door, calls on the phone, or makes an enquiry and the enquiry is handled by your staff, not you, how confident are you that that client is serviced really well? Are they being Wowed and is it leading to a new customer? If you're not 100% confident, then you need to do something about ensuring your staff are 100% engaged, 100% of the time.

Get Smart Now wants to help you work with your staff, towards getting the most engaged staff you can have, so that you are confident that everything that can possibly be done to attract, serve and keep customers is being done by your team all of the time.



Week 17: Great place, but what about the product?

Last Sunday, my family and I, along with a couple of friends (and about 20,000 others), spent the day at a Brisbane winery for one of their "day on the green" events. Last weekend it was Natalie Imbruglia, Tina Arena and the fabulous Simply Red. It was a sensational day, perfect weather, great seat, music was fantastic all day long, but how about the wine?

At one point, a random guy sitting next to me started up conversation and said "what a day, pity about the wine, you'd never buy it outside", and we both laughed.

This is about the tenth "day on the green" event I've been to over the years. I've also eaten at the award winning restaurant at the winery a number of times, and simply come down to the winery because it's a great spot to come on a weekend with the family - music, food and wine. Couldn't get any better really, or could it?

In fact the wine is ok, but it's probably not what you would pick in a restaurant, or for that matter in a bottle shop. And over the years, I've had the same comment from many people "love going to the winery, but the wine isn't great".

Interestingly, their Pino Gris, is pretty good, but last Sunday they didn't have it. So it was Verdhelo instead! Verdhelo?!

I've spoken many times about how running a really successful business is so much more than the product and here's a classic case of exactly that. Sensational venue, awesome food, great music, friendly staff, what more could you ask for? Great tasting wine would be good?

I know that this winery is trying to build a better brand around their wine, that's why they hold the events there where you can only buy their wine. They also encourage everyone to enter a competition to win a years supply of wine, they want people to think more about buying their product in other areas not just their venue, but Verdhelo?

If everything else other than the product is enough to attract people, surely an

easy way to increase sales income is to make the product desirable as well? You want customers to leave the winery, wanting to buy their wine in a restaurant, or next time you're picking up a bottle to take to your friends!

So how do you find out that it's the venue and not the product that gets people to your business? Simple, ask them!

It has been proven that when you ask for customers feedback, they spend around 10% more. Even if you don't do anything with the information that would be worthwhile alone. Here are a couple of other ideas that might just help develop the product more so that people actually want to buy it because it's a great product too:

1. Build a database. Staying in touch with clients is the first sign that they actually might really like your product. They are prepared to stay in touch. It's a very small minority of businesses that actually build a database of their clients. They have no idea who they are!
2. Ask for feedback. Asking questions about what they think, quality, service, will give you genuine insights into what your clients like or don't like, and what might get them liking it more. Ask them if they buy your product outside of the venue, if that's relevant.
3. Get clients or prospective clients to rate your product, against others. A taste test! What would you have to do to get them to change?
4. Get them to join a club. Frequent sippers, wine club. Take note of the buying habits to see what people buy, when and how much. What would get them buying from you, not somewhere else?

This isn't just relevant to this one example, there are plenty of businesses out there that are liked for their ambience, staff, location or price, but not so much the product. How good would it be if you were aware of that so you could actually develop the product so it either attracted existing clients back more, or brought in the ones now that like everything else, but not the product!

There's an opportunity here for any business, regardless of what they do. Ask questions - what's stopping people from buying from my business? Is it the image, location, marketing, brand or is it the product? And if you know you have a great product, is it everything else that keeps people away? It's simply a matter of asking a couple of questions -what do you like? what don't you like? what would it take for you to buy more from us?

It would have been really interesting to ask that question last weekend at the winery. Do you buy our product outside of here? and if not, why not? what would we have to do to get customers to buy our wine?

Any business, regardless of how big or small can improve multiple aspects of how their business operates, so that it attracts more clients, gets them back more often, spending more and referring friends too.

Get Smart Now has identified seven key areas that businesses could focus their attention on, and only one of those seven relates to the product. The other six areas are everything else - image, service, sales, staff, marketing and planning. But, if there's a product or service involved, then why not do everything to

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improve and develop that product as well as can be, so it's the best in your field.

Get Smart Now and look closer at your product. There might just be an opportunity to increase income in the business by perfecting the product from where it is right now and all you have to do to get the ball rolling, is ask your clients and prospective clients what they think and what would it take to get you buying more from us? Go on, ask them! What might happen?



Week 18: I am pretty sure more service doesn't equal less sales! Stand out by "over" servicing your clients!

I spent many years as a franchisee owner in what would be described as a "sales based" organisation. During my time as a franchisee I was made very aware that servicing clients was the financially rewarding part, and it wasn't from not servicing clients!

Service 101 states "the more you service clients, the more your clients buy". So why is it that some businesses simply don't service a client? Or when someone that has made a purchase once, why wouldn't you bother asking them to come back?

I've just come back from a trip to Vietnam. I've been lucky enough to have visited this great country a number of times, and the Vietnamese people are the masters of getting you to come back. I don't know how they do it, but it's a skill, possibly developed from desperation and competition, but it works. There's no social security in Vietnam, you have to find a way to earn a dollar (or a dong!).

In order to earn a dong, you have to start with the attraction stage! They have to get you into their shop (if it actually is a shop), encourage you to come in - "have a look we have many styles", and always friendly and smiling. The only place I have ever seen this happen in Australia is in Lygon St, Melbourne, where a street full of predominantly Italian restaurants almost drag you into their restaurant, but you go in, you feel like you have no choice, it works! Even if you don't go in and if by some chance you say 'no thanks', they ask why? You often answer. How good an idea is that, ask someone why they aren't going to buy?

Second - they keep asking you to buy more! You barter on the price first, then it's "one more?", and then "how about this?", and "this would be good for you too" and if you don't buy anything else they follow up with "you come back tomorrow!" And when you walk past the next day, they wave to you, they remember you. (Surely we all look the same). But they way they see it - because you bought before, you might go back again - and often you do.

Thirdly - they are always friendly! No matter what happens, how much you spend or don't spend, there's a smile, a friendly face and a "have a nice day".

And lastly, you come back again! As you're leaving the shop, or more importantly the hotel, they ask, "you come back again?" They say "tell your friends how much you liked your stay here".... and you do!

The funny and weird thing about us westerners is that we believe that over servicing, is actually hounding! It's not. It's doing the job. People are going to buy, just make sure it's from you! We often compare "over servicing" to being pushy, but a wiseman once told me it's about being "pulley"- leading prospects and clients into buying, pulling them in. If you don't encourage them, they might not buy from you, but they will buy from someone else!

It's four simple things but we just don't do them most of the time here in Western society.

- 1: Ask them to come in
- 2: Encourage them to buy more
- 3: Smile
- 4: Tell your friends.

It's not complicated when you break it down is it?

Yet, for some reason, the majority of businesses in Australia are missing this easy way to improve their business and increase turnover and profit, so why wouldn't you?

I have done a little travel over the years and used many travel agents over the years, yet I've never had a travel agent call me after the trip and ask "how was the holiday?" and then ask "what's happening next, how can I help?" Or for that matter, on your next trip, what about some tours, do something different, a couple of other options and if you added a day in here, why not stay overnight here, not to mention travel insurance, visas and travel money. The options are endless.

I asked someone about this in the travel industry a few years ago and the answer was "well I'd have to get someone to ring all those people and we just don't have time!"

As I said earlier, I'm pretty sure that servicing clients really well, to the point of over servicing (not under-servicing or "no servicing") actually creates greater income opportunities, not less. So why aren't we putting in the extra effort?

It has been said, that getting clients feedback alone, whether you do something with it or not, increases the average sale by 10%. Ask them to come back, be a little friendly and ask for referrals, where could that lead?

I would like to think that even at worst case scenario, it should increase sales income by 10 to 20% and I say that assuming that every clients is followed up on and staff are trained to up-sell and ask for referrals, if not possibly even more. Its an assumption, but it should have a seriously positive effect. If you turnover \$500,000 and increase by 20%, that's a \$100,000 increase having a positive effect on the nett profit, simply by asking clients to buy again! Even if you employed someone full time, a customer service person, it would have a positive outcome. It just makes sense.

It's often quite hard to get a customer in the first place, so why not do everything you possibly can to keep them, get them spending more and when really happy with you, referring lots of other people to also do the same.

Get Smart Now about how you service your clients. It's not all about the product, it's about so many other parts of the business and servicing is probably the biggest part of all. If it keeps customers coming back and spending more, it is definitely worth the extra effort and investment. One last thing to remember. Hardly anyone does it, that includes your competition, if you really want to stand out, this is it! Super service!



Week 19: Why do we lose clients? What have we, or haven't we done?

In business, we all lose clients, or we have clients that don't come back (or don't come back often enough), but why? How good would it be if every single client that ever bought from you, kept coming back, continued to buy from you and never went anywhere else? Why do we lose clients? Why do they go somewhere else and never come back?

Well the answer to probably all of these questions and much more, could all be revealed if we knew who our clients were and then simply asked them. But we don't ask them, because we don't know them!

The topic of "loyalty" is an interesting one. Just because we have a loyalty program as part of our business, doesn't mean our clients become loyal. Clients will only be loyal if the product or service is better from you than somewhere else, and sometimes it doesn't even need to be better, the total package just needs to wow them more than the competition.

The problem for most business owners is competition. Let's face it, there's a lot out there to choose from. Having a lot to choose from means that we need to stand out. Being different and doing things that the competition doesn't do will make a difference, but it's also about finding out how we can do things better.

I'm in Adelaide at the moment. Adelaide's food and wine industry is sensational. The city is surrounded by wine regions and its streets are full of high quality restaurants, which means competition a plenty. The interesting thing is I haven't come across anyone yet that does anything to develop any form of loyalty. It's as if there's an understanding that everyone is in the same boat, customers come in, customers buy, then they go somewhere else! Well that's just not smart business.

I have seen generic loyalty programs sitting on restaurant counters and not even being promoted. They just don't care. Yet I've also seen restaurants in busy precincts that are empty while the place next door is packed! It's a pretty simple process really - selling something once is easy, the objective is getting them back again and again, and that's where the effort is needed.

Keeping clients just takes a bit more effort - effort that your competitor isn't putting in.

Here are a couple of ideas on how to develop a loyalty program that will keep clients coming back, and also identify why you have lost clients and what to do about it:

1: Develop a database loyalty program. First step is knowing who all of your clients and prospects are. And it's not just about them, it's about their potential referrals. There are some simple generic programs but it's not that complicated building your own. However, there's no point having the cards just sit on a counter. Make sure all of your staff do everything possible to encourage every client to get on board with the program. Get their details.

2: Databases and loyalty programs have no value unless you use them! Once you have people on it, keep in touch, educate them, ask them questions. It's also about the information, buying history, what they buy and when they buy it. I love the flybuys program - you buy a loaf of bread and next week there it is in an email to you, bread is a special price next visit. Genius.

3: It's about developing loyalty. Getting clients back more often than they currently do is the objective. It's also about asking how we can do things better? Why haven't you been around for while? What do you want? Asking your clients feedback is one way of increasing loyalty and spending. Statistics tell us that simply asking for feedback, increases the average spend by 10%.

4: How often do you keep in touch. It's all about value. If every contact adds value to the client, it could be as often as daily. Again it's all about educating, informing and letting your loyal clients know about special offers just for them. Being loyal makes a difference.

5: Fix the problems! If something has gone wrong or you've lost a client, fix it. It's not just about the client you lose, it's about the 100 they also tell.

It doesn't matter whether your a picture framer, a printer, a hairdresser, or a restaurant owner - competition is everywhere, which means you need to stand out.

Feedback is an important part of growing a business. Knowing what's going well, what's not and what could be done better is critical to continuous improvement of our businesses. Recently I was asked for some feedback following a stay in a hotel. It was a short 30 second online questionnaire, no reward for it, but they just wanted to know what we thought of our stay! Whether anything is done with the feedback or not, feedback potentially increases income by 10%. It's only the second time I've had that in the last couple of years. Most businesses regardless of how big, just don't care! If you want to build your business smarter than the rest, start caring!

The process is easy but simply needs to be part of the structure and system of how we deal with every client.

A: Collect every client and prospects data.

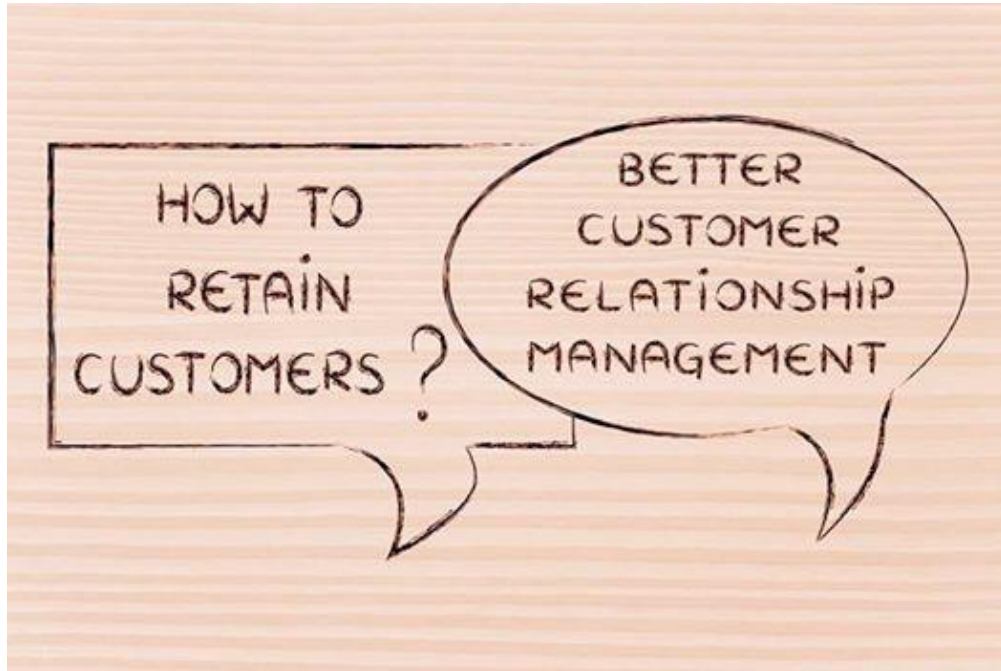
B: Keep in touch, educate, inform, invite, get them back, special offers. At least monthly.

C: Monitor spending habits, what do they buy and when, what else could they buy.

D: Fix problems, find out why they aren't coming back as often and what needs to change to get them back.

If you know how to get a client in once, then it should be fairly simply to get them back again and often it's as simple as asking them to return.

Get Smart Now about your clients. Build that relationship that turns clients from a "one off customer" to an "ongoing loyal client" that only buys from you and then refers other do exactly the same. Try it today. It just starts by keeping in touch and you can only do that if you know who your clients are.



Week 20: Reward programs need to be worked, to make them work!

I don't know about you, but my wallet would be half the thickness if it didn't have all the "reward cards" in there! I have coffee cards, grocery cards, a couple of airline cards, a Mexican takeaway card and one or two generic multi business rewards cards, plus another that I'm not even sure what it rewards?

Rewards programs can be a great idea and certainly have a positive impact on your business, but they can also have virtually no benefit at all if not implemented properly.

The basic problem with most rewards programs is this - people are usually encouraged to join, but then customers aren't typically asked to use the card every time they spend so they don't really experience any real benefit of the program. Then the business owner doesn't usually do anything with the customers loyalty to maintain contact - to educate, inform and offer "member only" specials so that they actually understand what the program benefits are!

I recently met a florist who has been in business for close to 40 years! She mentioned that business is very quiet and competition is strong - not just from other local florists, but the many online ways to buy flowers these days. But at the same time she is missing many opportunities that others have taken hold of. This florist admitted to having virtually no computer skills, so she doesn't have a website and is not using social media, which means she only relies on existing clients, that are getting fewer and fewer.

Literally around the corner is another florist. This other florist looks quite new. It stands out, its brightly branded and has a series of A frame boards out the front promoting different flower ideas.....including a flower rewards program! It's a program that involves a number of florists in different areas. They have a

"frequent flower program" - buy five bunches get a sixth free, discount vouchers that you can print off and redeem at the shops, an online membership that send out specials, and tips about looking after flowers and more.

It's all about standing out, and doing something different that the others don't do that make it easier, or give people more ideas on how they can use your product and why.

The concept of a loyalty program, regardless of the business type, has massive opportunity to attract new customers, keep them coming back, but also buying more often.

I have a coffee card with a fast food burger chain. The coffee is OK, but the fact that I get a FREE coffee every five visits makes it worth my while (and the fact that I can use it with any of the stores is even easier!)

In this day of price conscious buyers, it's never been more important to have something that makes you stand out from your competitors - whether that be an edge, a service, a unique product, an image, your location - and rewards programs are one way that can work. But they need to be worked well!

Regardless if it's a generic rewards program and there are a number of them, or its your own unique rewards program, here are a few ideas that can make them work.

1: All staff need to be trained on how to get clients into the program - it needs to be offered to everyone and make it simple. Getting customers to sign up in the store then and there is a lot more effective than asking them to go online and register later.

2: Make the benefit worthwhile - If you can't see a reason to use the card, you'll eventually throw it out. I have a card to a bottle shop chain, I get asked to use the card every time I make a purchase there, but the reward benefits are so limited that there really isn't really any benefit at all, so I shop anywhere.

3: Keep in touch - A large part of getting customers to continue to buy from you is simply asking them! Reward programs should have some kind of email, mail, text or social media contact system, that can educate, inform and offer special deals that are only offered to members that encourage them to come back again and again.

4: Rewards programs are also a great referral tool as well. Loyal clients and existing members could be given "rewards cards" to give to their friends and associates so they too can become members and enjoy the benefitsand the referrer is further rewarded.

5: If its a rewards program that can be used with multiple business, ensure that members can easily find out where those other business are located. If every one of the businesses were able to promote each other, that attracts extra clients that may have otherwise gone elsewhere.

Business52: Ideas for every week. Review, opportunities, change, adapt, grow. Planning360

Use these review pages, to tackle something every week, or maybe just once a month. Small improvements make a huge difference to businesses over time. Look closely at what's going on now, the results you get, and where the opportunities for change, improvement and growth will be. One step at a time, you don't need to do everything all at once. A 1% change in 10 areas will give you a 110% increase in turnover, 2% is 120% Average business growth in Australia is under 9%! Small changes make a big difference.



This weeks/months plans to grow.	Idea	Strategy	Date to implement	Outcomes
Business growth idea 1:				
Business growth idea 2:				
Business growth idea 3:				
Business growth idea 4:				
Business growth idea 5:				

6: Promote the rewards program. It's not just about staff promoting the program, but make sure that your customers know that a rewards program exists. The A Frame sign is a good idea, but why not include a QR code so that someone can scan and register then and there!

There are many things you can do to make your business stand out, rewards programs are just one idea and for very little cost. By implementing an effective rewards program you could actually attract, keep and encourage your clients to become loyal to your business, simply because of the rewards they get from the program.

ReThinkBusinessGrowth about the things that you do to encourage loyalty and introduce a loyalty program this year.



Week 21: Just do more

Activity is the answer to just about anything!

If you want more customers, then call more people. If you want more enquires, then do more advertising. If you want more existing clients to buy from you again and again, then contact them more often.

I wrote an article a few weeks ago about high service levels never equating to less sales, and I received quite a bit of feedback from readers who were in agreement.

I've worked with many sales people and teams over the years, and I've said the same thing to them as I had to other business owners that run sales teams. It's all about activity. Of course having the right skills, follow-up, image, presentation and the product itself are all part of the process, but at the end of the day if your business relies on some form of sales process, then simply get out and see more people. Interestingly, the opposite is the case with most

people. Whether it is a case of just not wanting to do it, they don't have the skills, or simply wasting time, it's seems to be easy for many sales related people to have no minimum performance standard put on them. People typically have no accountability or review process, but they also don't tend to hold themselves responsible either.

I had a call from a client last week and he told me that he recently had a great month, but then the next month he struggled. I asked what he did differently in his "great month", and it was simple - he saw more people and the result was that he made more sales, which ultimately brought new business into the company.

Here are four ideas, basic tips, that every sales person, team or manager should use to absolutely guarantee sales success: (and by the way, you can change the word sales for customer service)

1: Skills. All sales people need training. Selling skills, communication skills, closing skills, product knowledge, presentation skills, professionalism and more. If they don't have these set skills, yes they will still make sales, but they will make more if they know more.

2: Performance standards. Appointments per week, number of calls, number of leads, general activity standards. If they don't know what the expectations are, then the sales person dictates what they do, not the business.

3: Weekly and monthly reviews - its all about accountability. Use a checklist system of reviewing what they have done every week, this is all about ratios. Understanding what they do and the result of what they did, gives all involved an exact idea of what's being done, so they can plan on what's possible. A daily, weekly, monthly and yearly activity analysis is important. If you'd like to see an activity analysis just send me an email.

4: Every lead should be followed up! Every lead! They may not buy that day, but maybe they will later...if its followed up. There is a sales statistic that says that "most people will buy after the fifth time they're asked". It's no coincidence that the average sales person only goes back twice and no sale is made. Develop a lead and sales follow-up system, that keeps every project in a database so you can send them regular e-news and other product or business related information. (Don't forget to get the permission to do this first, and most people will say yes, but they can always opt out). I call this PRM (not CRM) prospect relationship management. At some point, they might just buy!

As I said earlier, activity is just about the answer to everything in business - do more, but do it better. If you're not getting customers back as often as you'd like, call them more often. If you're not getting enough referrals from clients, ask them more often. If you're not getting enough sales from your sales team, get them to simply make more calls!

Sales and business in general is a numbers game. Increase the number and you will attract and keep more customers!

ReThinkBusinessGrowth is all about understanding that numbers drive our business. There is simply no point sticking a goal under our teams nose, if they don't know how to get there. Focusing on activity is a great start.



Week 22: Start following up and watch sales increase!

No one follows up! Ever! A little extreme you say? But it's true.

I've been in sales for over 20 years, and I know that the majority of sales people I have worked with don't follow up. I have recently spent four weeks with a client, and their team wasn't following up. I have spent some time with my daughter recently looking at real estate and not one agent followed up with her. I have come back from a holiday and the travel agent I used asked me for details on my next trip, but they didn't follow-up. I have bought furniture, including a bed recently, no follow-up. It just goes on and on. No one follows up!

Is it because they all have so much business walking in the door that they haven't got the time to follow up? Or is it that they can't be bothered, and actually think it's easier to wait for the next client to walk in, because that's what I get paid for?

In two of my workshops (Service and Sales), we discuss the importance of follow-up. It's a fact, that the average sales person (maybe (and that's a BIG maybe)), follows up once or twice after an initial inquiry. However, it's also a fact that the average person will say yes on the fifth attempt!

Here's something to think about - an average full-time sales person should do around 3 appointments a day, which is 15 per week, and convert maybe 1 in 5 (this number will vary by industry). It may take around 10 leads to get one appointment. So therefore 150 leads might equal 3 sales, which leaves 147 leads that have gone no where! What happens to them? Lets take this further. Over a 48 week year, that's a total of 7056 leads that have gone "no where" for one sales person. If you have a sales team of 4, that's 28,224 leads that have at one point said no, but could say yes! Are you wondering where all your

customers are? I'm wondering why people aren't following up?

So what this means in simple terms is just about everyone, is missing business and sales opportunities for no other reason than simply not getting back, not returning a call, not answering an email, or not following up on an inquiry or sales presentation! Whats going on?

If there's one simple way to improve your business (even without doing anything else) - follow up. It could double your business and/or your sales.

I remember one particular group of people from a company that I would interview for sales roles, (obviously weren't happy in their current role) many times over the years, had a company policy that stated if the prospective buyer didn't make a decision today, they weren't coming back! Ever! Wouldn't you love to just follow their sales guys around?

Here's a couple of ideas that will improve sales and business opportunities like there's no tomorrow:

1: First and foremost, return every call, inquiry, complaint, and request for information. These people want to buy, you just haven't asked them enough yet.

2: If your presenting something, or they walk in then walk out - get their details to follow up. If they were interested in the first place, they probably want to buy at some point - maybe not today, but why not next month? But you can't follow up without their information.

3: Put every lead and inquiry into a simple database. The more information the better. By just keeping in touch, sending them an email now and then, will remind them of you (rather than the other guy).

4: If someone says no, keep following up until they say stop! And they'll only say stop if you don't give them value. Don't just call for the sake of calling, give them information that will be of interest, a benefit.

5: And lastly, if they have bought now, get them to keep buying. Just because they have bought once, doesn't mean they are now loyal for life. Otherwise the next person they think about will get their next business! Every time a client buys something they will probably buy something else - an accessory, a second one or may even refer you to a friend. Its called "front of mind!"

Ask yourself a question - "If I bought something and I was happy with it, would I buy it again, or tell a friend, or would I just go somewhere else?"

Following up with leads, prospects, inquiries, customers, clients and referrals is a basic fundamental of business. It costs a lot more to get a new client, than it does to keep an existing one, so why not hold onto them if you can?

Get Smart Now and follow up on every single contact in your business. And note, you may need to develop a couple of systems first. Get a database and find a way that every staff member understands the importance of following up with every client, customer or prospect.

Get Smart Now works with businesses in developing follow up systems so that you never miss a single sales opportunity ever!



Week 23: First impressions are “everything”

A couple of years ago I had an appointment with a small business. Looking back I can't even remember what it was, mainly because it was so unmemorable, in everyway. This was a business that really would never go anywhere - the owner didn't care, there was no branding at all, however the one thing I remember the owner being proud of was his "FREE" business cards.

I remember him saying "hey have a look at these, they cost me nothing!" He had free business cards....and they looked it. The business was a law mowing service, and we met in the middle of the day, at his home, he had no work. There was no sign on his car, no shirt that said what he did, nothing except the worst, cheapest looking business cards you could get!

First impressions count. If you're trying to impress people with the cheapness of a bland, generic, flimsy paper card, printed on your mono printer, then you will end up getting that exact type of client...a cheap one.

I believe that the first impression made by a business has a lasting effect on a potential customer. Even though these days we have the advantage of online brochures, digital cards, websites, social media and more, the humble business card is actually not as humble as what most people think. In fact, it's often the very first thing someone sees about your business. Another important point here is this - not everyone is a tech head in 2016. There are still a lot of people, including myself, that hang onto business cards for years.

But the first impression isn't just about the card, it's about everything that creates that first impression about your business, your staff and you. The sign above your business, or lack of, the signs on the cars and truck, the uniforms your team wears, they way they speak and act, and of course the business card.

I came out of a commercial area last week and looked at a couple of businesses in front of me - not one had a sign. The shop fronts were either so faded you couldn't read the writing on them, or the signs had recently fallen off and not replaced. An impression is made right there. If they don't care about their own image, do you think they care about how they deal with their clients, their product, their service? First impressions make a difference.

The business card is a powerful tool that keeps your contact details with a prospect or client for a long time. It tells people about you, what you do, and where you are. I've seen cards from businesses that have the sales guys name crossed out, and a new one hand written underneath. Are their staff not hanging around too long? I've also seen cards that have the phone numbers whited out and rewritten with a new number, with a business that's had that number for many years.

Business cards can be picked up for around \$99 for a thousand, there just isn't any excuse, unless you simply don't care? However, if you don't care about your impression or the look of your own business, then how much do you care about your clients?

Here is a simple checklist that can make a massive difference to the first impressions made about your business:

1: Walk out the front door of your business, what do you see? Signs that look professional and up-to-date, or do they need replacing?

2: How about your vehicle. If your car is on the road, the work ute or truck used to see clients, is it branded?

3: What about your team. Are they all wearing some kind of uniform? A shirt that has the name, what you do, a phone number, or website?

4: And speaking of website, how easy is it to remember yours? Or don't you have one. For around \$100 you can have your business domain and a simple website that you can build yourself - www.johnsmecahnical.com.au sounds a lot better and permanent than johnsafungi123@bigpond.com!

5: And what about your business card. What does it look like? Your logo, brand, quality, all make a difference. Do you have your business cards around so people can pick them up? So many businesses don't even attempt to hand them out, or encourage people to take one, why not? Ensure your business cards not only have contact details, but also what you do. Business cards are like a mini billboard for your business. Also, if you want to find a way to get a little more engagement and ownership of the business from your team, give them all business cards. It's another, very inexpensive way, to get your name out there even more. Is it worth \$100 per team member?

If you had two businesses side by side, one made no attempt in doing anything to grab your attention, and the other simply did everything to stand out (ie. great signage, smart team uniforms, well spoken staff, that handed their business cards out to everyone that walked past), who would you deal with?

There are seven key fundamentals to running a successful business that continues to grow - image is just one of them.

Get Smart Now about the way you run your business. First impressions are everything and I mean everything! Don't lose an opportunity to attract a new customer because you think the sign that's faded out the front will do. It won't. The guy up the road just picked up that client.

GSN Creative is one division of Get Smart Now that is here to help you and your business make an unbelievable first impression, don't miss out!



Week 24: How to encourage loyalty and repeat business. Do something that surprises them!

I've done a little travel within Australia recently and every time I travel I rent a car. I used one of the well-known car rental companies on my last trip, and was told I had been upgraded to a bigger car. I said that's nice, thanks very much.

After I jumped in the car and got on my way, I started to think about what had just happened. Why did I get an upgrade? Was it that they just happened to be quiet and I was the lucky one today? Or was it because I have rented cars from these guys for seven weeks over the last four months?

I didn't ask the question and I probably should have, because it would have been nice to know that if I did get upgrades as a frequent renter, then I'd probably not consider using anyone else? (and so too would most people). However, as they didn't offer the information, I didn't ask for it either.

This event got me thinking about loyalty and the rewards that you probably should get for supporting a business. I'm not loyal to any one of our two main domestic airline carriers, yet I've flown a lot over the past few years. I'm a frequent flyer member of both, however I've never had an upgrade in all my

years of flying, but if I had of been given an upgrade at some point then maybe I would have changed the way I book my flights?

So what's the point of rewarding someone that's loyal to your business? Well simply, it encourages even more loyalty than you would think.

In business, the fundamental basic concept is all about attracting customers - if you attract them, they spend, and you will ultimately make a profit. So if you can keep those clients, get them back frequently, and spending more, why wouldn't you reward them by an upgrade, something free (that costs you very little), but makes them feel very special? The result is a client that will tell other people, refer others to you and continue spending until the day they don't need your product anymore.

Here's something to think about: how could you create loyal clients by rewarding frequent spending, over and above others.

-McDonalds and other coffee businesses use a frequent coffee card for every four, you get another free. It's an incentive that certainly works.

-The airlines use a frequent flyer program, you earn points and then use that towards your next flight.

-Flyboys use a points system that encourages customers to shop with their outlets, earn points, and then use those points to buy something else.

But do those loyalty programs really reward loyalty, or do we simply just use them and the other programs, whenever we buy, fly or have a coffee? The truth is these are not really "loyalty programs", they're discount programs - they don't reward loyalty, they give you a discount or something for free.

To really be a loyalty program now, simply because there are so many loyalty type programs around that don't really create loyalty, we need to look at something different - something we weren't asking for in the first place, a surprise, a wow factor, something that gets us looking forward to being treated as a special client. An unexpected upgrade does just that. Does it become an expectation? Who knows, I'll tell you after my next trip when I hire a car. But in the meantime, even though it wasn't delivered as it should have been, it did the trick, I'm sold on this one particular car rental company now going forward.

So what could you do to really make loyal customers feel truly loyal?

- 1: As a restaurant, you could give regular customers a free bottle of wine.
- 2: As a mechanic, you could have one of the guys wash and detail their car.
- 3: As a coffee shop, throw in a cake.
- 4: As a hairdresser, give away some hair products.
- 5: As a magazine publisher, you could feature the regular advertisers on the cover.

Upgrades are something for the special clients, and they are quite different to discounts or frequent sipper style cards. They are the unexpected things that reward the important clients and as the rewards get to be known, hopefully encourage some of the smaller clients, to become bigger ones.

The important part here is knowing your clients. If you don't know who they are and what they spend on, your most loyal client could one day go to your nearest competitor simply because they thought you didn't care enough.

But what's also important, is when rewarding clients, let them know why. Yes, some clients will just expect more and more, but if they are seriously loyal clients, and they keep coming back, spending more and encouraging their friends to spend with you two, isn't it worth it? It's probably the cheapest form of marketing there is.

Get Smart Now is all about working with clients to identify ways to not just attract more clients, but also how to hang onto them. It's the little things that make a huge difference and it's those little things that far too many businesses (small, medium, large and franchise groups) miss every day and you lose the client forever.

ReThinkBusinessGrowth about how building a loyal client base and one that won't even consider going anywhere else. It's actually easier than you think, and will have a big impact on your bottom line.



Business52: Ideas for every week. Review, opportunities, change, adapt, grow. Planning360

Use these review pages, to tackle something every week, or maybe just once a month. Small improvements make a huge difference to businesses over time. Look closely at what's going on now, the results you get, and where the opportunities for change, improvement and growth will be. One step at a time, you don't need to do everything all at once. A 1% change in 10 areas will give you a 110% increase in turnover, 2% is 120% Average business growth in Australia is under 9%! Small changes make a big difference.



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Business growth idea 3:				
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Week 25: Confidence and clarity in your team gets you a much better result. However, without confidence and clarity, you just get confusion.

If you look at how we do a job, whether it's repairing cars, framing pictures, hospitality, retail, direct sales, or customer service, if you're not confident about how you do what you do, there is a very good chance it won't get done well.

Confidence in business owners, managers and our team, is everything. Poor training, turns into poor skill levels, and that simply comes as a result of lack of confidence in knowing what to do, what to say and how to say it. Therefore building confidence through great training, will get you a much better result. Observing people that haven't got confidence skills is interesting - they still do the job, after all, it's a job. They'll just do it badly, which results in losing clients and costing the business money.

I'm very observant of what goes on in businesses, I've always been like this (much to my wife's annoyance). I don't complain about things to her, but I always point things out. I notice signs that need replacing, slow service, lack of follow-up, or simply noticing people doing a job badly because they probably have never been trained any different. So to me, so many of the things that revolve around clarity and confidence, stand out like a neon sign. So why can't the business owners see the same thing? The answer is simple - most of the time the owners themselves don't know there's a problem. The questions needs to be asked: "could we do things better?", "could we do things differently?" and "would these changes that get us a better result, or a happier client?" (Which often results in the same thing by the way: happier client = better result).

The key with everything to do with running a successful business is systems, structure, processes, performance standards, accountability and management. If you don't have them, then the team do whatever they think is ok and it may not be. If there's no standard, then there's also no management. If you have a standard, then you train that standard, and then measure the outcome.

Here's a quick example: If you have a sales person and their job is to sell and if all you do is say "go out there and sell", then they probably will. But how many sales will that be? Is five a week a good number? How about 10? Or are we asking for as many as we can get? Developing a system and understanding (ie. how much activity it takes to make one sale) then enables you to look closer at the sales process and look at what's possible for an average person. Now as a manager with processes for that sales person, you have an expectation and can manage the result. From then on, your training continues, ensuring that the sales person has the confidence in what they do and the clarity of knowing what's expected. The result is more sales and no confusion.

This principle works everywhere - servicing clients, marketing, image, sales, product development, lead generation, referral systems and even complaints. When you have confidence and clarity in how every aspect of the business should be managed, you understand what the expectation and result of the business is. This means that you're going to demand better performance from your team and because you know they have been trained well and you get that result from them.

Here are a couple of quick ideas to obtaining more confidence and clarity within your business:

1: Training. Make sure that your team are skilled in every aspect of their job. If they're in sales, make sure they get regular sales training. If you have customer service people, give them skills in communication, follow-up and handling complaints the right way. Make sure your staff acknowledge people when they deal with them and smile!

2: Ask your team and clients what they think of everything. What do we do well? What could we improve? What would you like to see? And from a staff perspective, what would you like to be trained on?

3: Clarity. Make sure your team knows what's going on. Are they sure of what their expectation in their role is and how to do it?

4: Develop performance standards and then manage them. If your service people are supposed to contact 20 people a day, are they doing that? If not why, and what training is needed to get to that point?

5: Structure. Every business, regardless of what it is or what it does, needs to make sure that no aspect of the business is done by chance - everything has a structured process. How we do things, what we say, how we greet clients, how we follow-up and more. Far too many problems in businesses occur in differences in how different people handle the same role and it's avoidable. If people are trained well and they are clear as to the expectations and the system followed, then the result every single time is a customer that has had an awesome experience. Can you truly say that with your business now?

At the end of the day, it all boils down to what you want from your business. Are you happy just plodding along, or do you want to build your business into an incredibly successful business that grows year by year and whose customers simply will never deal with anyone else? It's possible, but not without confidence and clarity.

Get Smart Now about your training in your business, so that it develops a culture of confidence and clarity in your team. Knowing what to do and how to do it is not only better for the business, but it's also means you'll have more engaged staff.

ReThinkBusinessGrowth is all about building better people, that build better businesses.



Week 26: How long does it take to make a first impression?

You have seven seconds, that's it, and more often than not, no second chance. Seven seconds is what we are told we have when dealing with people in a face to face situation. So when there's no speaking (i.e. spotting a business as you drive by), how little time do you have then? Probably even less.

A business's image is an interesting thing. How often do you drive past a business with poor signage, a carpenter's place with just about everything falling down around it, or any business and feel a little uneasy about the lack of ambience, organisation, professionalism and want to walk out?

The truth is that most people actually do care, and it does make a difference. People want to deal with a business, whether it's a café, accountant, dress shop, or carpet cleaner, that actually looks like they take pride in their business. People want to do business with people who care about their customers and what they do, but not everyone does. It's not always important to every business owner, but their image reflects the success of their business.

This is an interesting part of trying to stand out from your competition - ensuring that your business has an edge over the guy next door.

So what should you include when looking at all of the aspects associated with image in your business?

- Signage - the look of the business as people drive by.
- Inside the business - professionalism, organisation, the ambience, pride in their appearance.
- Stationary - business cards, point of sale material.
- Staff and their look - uniforms
- Vehicles, signage, cleanliness.
- Contactable - does someone answer the phone, reply to emails?
- Staff - what they say, how they act.

Everything makes a difference, and when you compare businesses you can easily see the difference. Now the big question is, does it make enough of a difference to make someone choose you or someone else? Well here's a thought, why give them that opportunity?

I look at a business from a very simple point of view. Do whatever it takes (within reason), to make your business portray an image to someone that you currently don't deal with, want to deal with you from an image perspective alone. Once they're in the door, then stage two kicks in.

It's the little things that make a big difference, but they don't have to cost a fortune, so here are a few things to look at.

-Make sure your signs look good, make sure they can be seen. If you're not on a main road, see what can be done to get a sign out on the main road to direct people to your business. Too many businesses are really hard to find.

-If you're relying on your website and social media to do some part of client attraction, make sure it does. Make sure there's something on the website that captures prospect data, so that you can follow up.

-When someone walks in, are they greeted by staff that look professional and know how to talk to customers or do staff ignore customers until they are ready to serve them?

-When prospective customers call, what happens? Are their calls answered promptly, does someone call back if needed, is there a way that all the information is captured and you can keep in touch, even if they don't buy?

-When customers are inside your business, does your business exude a level of professionalism, or an ambience that stands out from others in the same field? Is there something that's different about your business - great coffee, a comfortable place to wait, information about what you do?

-Does the material that clients pickup, like cards, brochures and product flyers, continue the professional look of the business? How often do you walk into a business and they don't even have business cards there to take?

-What about the vehicles - are they signed well, and is the phone number correct?

You have less than seven seconds. Why not do everything possible to "standout" from the competition. Too many customers are basing decisions on price or location simply because they drove past or couldn't see you. Or they walked in and walked out again without any intention to spend or worse, left a message and no one bothered to call back. It's all of the things based around first impressions. At least give yourself the chance to attract the client in the first place.

Get Smart Now is all about understanding that first impressions, that seven seconds or less, so that you can take advantage of every opportunity to attract

new customers, get them walking in rather than walking past, notice you rather miss you, and then once in want to do business with you.

ReThinkBusinessGrowth about your image and make sure the seven seconds you have with your prospective clients is seven seconds your competitor won't have!



Week 27: Get the marketing basics right from day one!

We could all walk into any business and come up with a couple of things just about everywhere that a business could do better, the branding, their image, the way their staff greets the customers and more. When you look at the marketing of a business, it's often one of those things that get overlooked simply because we're plodding along anyway.

The object of the exercise in business is simple, attract customers, then keep customers coming back.

You need to think about the entire process and often it helps to get others from outside the business involved so they see and experience what you don't. Sometimes the owner is just too close, it's your business, but once you know, you wonder why you didn't notice that before.

So let's have a look at some of the aspects of this part of business marketing that attracts and keeps more customers. The objective we are trying to achieve should include:

- * Getting potential customers to your place or product
- * Getting them to buy
- * Getting them to stay with you and keep buying more
- * And then getting them to refer you to others

The basic idea doesn't change ever, find them, keep them, and get them to promote you to their friends. It's a really good business model. The truth is we need to be shown, to understand that those things make a difference and

because the majority of most small to medium sized businesses simply choose not to do them, there is a huge opportunity for your business, because your competitors don't know them!

There are a couple of stages that all businesses go through in the client process, here are a couple of them to get you thinking.

1: Attraction stage. Regardless of whether you have a shopfront, or sell from markets, you still need to get people to stop at your place. What does that look like now, how does your business differ from your competitor. Good signage, directions to get there, easy parking, all make a difference. If you can't find it, or can't stop there, you'll keep going to the next guy. Maintain the branding across the board, throughout the business, throughout the product.

2: Introduction stage. So they've walked in, or stopped at your stand at an expo. Now what. Most people don't say a thing. So develop a presentation, the elevator pitch as it's often known, what you say to people when you have to describe you, your business or product in 30 seconds to grab their attention. How does your team look, are they in uniforms, look smart or look shabby. Do they greet you as you walk past and acknowledge you the second you walk in or do they leave you hanging? Most leave you hanging!

3: Engagement stage. Now we are getting to the information or even buying stage. How do they find out about your product, is there point of sale material around, business cards, even samples and things they can take away. Are your staff skilled in product knowledge to tell anyone about what you do and even if they don't buy, what happens, can we keep in touch?

From there we move across various contact points until we finally reach the relationship stage. The point at which our clients are now more than just clients, we have built strong associations, we are more than just a supplier of a product or service and they comfortably refer others. Each part of the client process should build a better-educated client with a stronger bond to you. Anyone can get someone to buy once, but getting them to keep coming back requires a little more effort. They are referred to as advocates, not clients anymore, they do the marketing for you, they can help build a virally marketed brand around you and your product. But it takes more than just selling them something.

Putting this into a stage by stage guide to me, makes the process look a little clearer, knowing what you would try and achieve at each stage of a clients life. It hopefully gets you thinking differently about the processes of attracting, keeping and ongoing sales opportunities with clients and the referrals from clients. It's all part of the marketing mix!

Get Smart Now helps businesses understand where the opportunities in businesses are, train the owners and staff to get there and get a better result, then identify how to do it. It's easy, just not always simple.

Look at your business now, this week, don't delay, get others to do it with you and identify the different stages of the client process in your business, what happens and what could be improved and Get Smart Now is here to help you

do every part of that, identify the potential, train your team and help grow your business.



Week 28: I like a coffee now and then. I'm not a coffee aficionado, but I know what I like. Most of the time the coffee itself isn't that important, it's more about the place I'm having the coffee at that matters!

I think I've told this story before, but it's worth an update. There's a coffee shop I go to in Adelaide, and I go there for one reason- the lady at the counter remembers my name! This coffee shop has a franchised reward system, so my name comes up in the electronic card and she sees it when it's swiped, but no one at any other franchised store uses my name. Usually you get a "thanks mate!".

The point here is that relationships are still one of the most important aspects of why someone does business with you, it's not just the product. The product is often way down the list. But if all you have is the product, then it better be good. But why can't the service and relationship still be there too.

I was at a marketing workshop earlier this week and at one point we had to do a little role play exercise with the small group we were in. The exercise was all about asking the others in the group "what would make you deal with your business or product?". One of the ladies in the group owned a café and another said "if you remembered my name, I'd come back!"

The presenter of the workshop in sheer coincidence mentioned an example of the guy that does his dry cleaning. He remembers his name and uses it the moment he walks in. He travels a lot, but makes sure he keeps his dry cleaning until he gets back just to deal with the guy that knows his name! He likes to feel special - "they know me here".

I caught up with an associate of mine today, we were talking about the small things that make a big difference to businesses. The relationship being one. He deals with a coffee franchise chain that has won the best performing franchisee the last couple of years. One of the things this coffee franchisee does is 'remembers peoples names'. It does make a difference!

Whether you're in the coffee game or not, it's a very competitive world out there. I walked three blocks this week in the city and must have passed thirty cafes, coffee shops, or kiosks that sold coffee. Most of the time, coffee is coffee, but if there's something else attached, like a relationship, you will probably go there and by pass the rest.

Is creating a customer relationship hard to do? No! It's easy, but it's a conscious decision to make this part of the way we deal with our clients. Here's another way to look at it. The customer can be a \$4.50 coffee, or a \$10,000 plus client (based on two coffees a day over four years!) (\$2340 a year, that's near enough to \$10,000 in four!)

I'm not really that fussy about my coffee. I drink a skinny latte with caramel, so I'm no connoisseur, but the relationship means a lot. If I'm greeted, or farewelled with my name, and if there's a reward system in place, it's easy and there's no excuse. I feel like it's my place!

Regardless of what you do, sell or make, knowing your clients name and using it, is probably the single easiest and most cost effective way to keep a client coming back again and again and again!

So how do you do that? How do you build a relationship? Well here's a couple of simple ideas:

- 1: Make it part of the culture. Ensure that every staff member goes out of their way to know a clients name and then uses it. It's not hard to do.
- 2: Use a rewards system. The rewards system makes it easy to know someone, as long as that's built into the system. A simple database will do.
- 3: Have a plan B to collect data, not everyone wants to be a rewards member, so ask their name anyway, find a way to record it. Why not use the old fashioned business card draw, it actually still works. Go into the draw to win a free coffee a day! They will still buy another anyway!

Developing relationships is far more than just using a clients name, but it's a great start. And it's big enough to be the point of difference between you and the other thirty cafes, florist shops, copy businesses, or whatever. In this day of social media and being bombarded by thousands of messages a day online, the relationship, the use of our name could possibly be the one thing that stops that client from going somewhere else.

I remember a statistic from quite a few years ago, which said around 78% of all businesses that leave you to go somewhere else, do it for no other reason than perceived indifference. They thought you didn't care! No communication, no

follow-up, no relationship. Regardless of the actual number, it's high and the reason is still the same. No relationship.

Get Smart Now is about one thing. Building better people, that in turn build better businesses. It's simple fundamentals that many businesses, business owners and their team have forgotten. Get Smart Now is about ensuring you stand out from your competition by doing all of the things needed better. It's about lifting our game! Being the best!

ReThinkBusinessGrowth, from today, start building relationships with your customers so they turn into clients, advocates and partners. Just start by using their name!



Week 29: Like the solution to better staff? Try managing them!

Staffing could be the single biggest frustration that most business owners go through. Recruiting staff, training staff and then getting the best out of their staff takes time and can still result in underperformance and disengaged people. Does that sound familiar?

I've had my share of working with staff over the last 28 years. Recruiting and training people in sales, service and administration roles. I've had some sensational successes and some heartbreaking failures. I have also worked closely with hundreds of other businesses and helped them out in the area of staff training, motivation, engagement and reward, and without a doubt there is still one thing that just about every business is guilty of - and that's not managing their people better and doing it from day one.

Knowing how to get the best out of our team and laying down minimum performance standards in all aspects of their role, from the day they walk in the door, is the most important thing you can do.

Here's an interesting statistic - it's been said that the average staff member is engaged in what they're actually doing at work, around 60% of the time! That means they're not doing their job for at least 40% of the time. So more

importantly, what are they doing during that 40% and when they are engaged, how effective are they in their role?

Management of our people is one of the most important aspects of getting the best out of our people, and that doesn't mean standing over them with a whip, but it does mean having an understanding of what's done, how it's done, accountability and regular reviews. They have a job to do, so let's do it!

Recently I've seen far too many people in roles that get little training, so they don't know what to do. When someone doesn't know what to do, they do what they can and then don't get reviewed or managed in what they have or haven't done, so they keep doing what they aren't doing! It doesn't make sense! It's even hard to say. If you're ever going to have a staff issue that could get a little ugly, it's more often than not about performance standards that were never outlined or regularly measured and reviewed and then when it comes to a discussion about performance, there's little or no performance history.

Here's a quick guide of just a few things that will definitely get a better result out of your team:

1: Train them well. Far too many staff start a job just doing it, without any basic training. The owners or other staff are busy, so we give them a brief run through and then leave them to it. It doesn't work, clients get frustrated, staff get frustrated and eventually leave. So you blame the staff and you start again. The single biggest reason staff leave, and it's not always money, is lack of training!

2: Performance standards - what we do, how many, objectives and outcomes (even professionalism and how we dress). This is missed so many times. Whatever you do, there's a process. Outline these from day one, then review weekly and daily if needed. If you're not getting the result, do some extra training.

3: Reward and recognition. If you want to get better performance out of staff, recognise the great job they do, then reward it. It doesn't need to be cash, it could be something small, an extra bonus for going above and beyond. If you have a referral process in your business, and this gets new clients into the business, why not reward them for the extra business. If a new client is worth a \$1000 a year, why not give a \$100 gift card per new sale?

4: Regular review, the good and the bad! Regular reviews are important, they not only want to know we pay attention, they also want to know they are doing the job well, or where do we need to improve. Do they require some additional training?

Without management and setting performance standards, you have anarchy. Might sound a little over the top, but without performance standards you have no control, your staff are in control of what they do and what they don't do.

The idea of building a successful business that continues to grow, produce a great profit and cash flow is all about developing the systems within the

Mybusinessnow, business training that's different, skills, strategies, solutions, support.

business that actually work towards getting the result you want. Not just hoping it will happen!

Managing people starts with outlining what the activity, accountability, strategy and structure of everything we do is and what's actually done. From there we then develop the training, then reward and recognition that follows.

Managing people well, also forces us to ask questions, why we get the result we do and how could we get a better result? It makes everything clearer. As I heard just recently, clarity creates questions, now you just need to work out the answer.

Get Smart Now works with businesses to improve all aspects of their business, that then result in better cash flow, improved profit, more engaged staff and happier clients, that then in turn refer even more clients. That then makes your life better, by eliminating many of the business frustrations like cash flow, staff challenges and lack of customers and part of the solution is managing our people better.

Get Smart Now by deciding today to start managing your business and your people better. Our team don't automatically know what to do all of the time, they like to be told and performance standards do that. Happy, engaged staff, result in happy engaged clients, that in turn builds happy engaged business owners!



Week 30: Service is the key to keeping clients for ever.

There seems to be a lot of talk about service lately, or more importantly about the lack of it. Both large and small businesses are cutting back in areas of service for reasons of cost cutting and higher profits, but what they don't seem

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to realise is that cutting "service quality" is the quickest way to reducing sales, reducing income and reducing profit.

In this age of internet, businesses are starting to think that the concept of servicing clients can be achieved the same way with little or no contact and turning to text, email or click here for an answer? However, myself and a lot of others don't agree.

If you'd like to know the easiest way to attract more clients, keep them for much longer if not forever, then listen closely.... service is the answer.

Everyone I ask likes good service and dislikes bad service - its as simple as that. No service or little service, doesn't increase customer loyalty or sales. However I'm pretty sure, from what I've done over the last 22 years, that more service quality, better relationships and face to face contact, does result in long term clients dealing with you much more and subsequently spending more.

Over the last couple of weeks I've had instances of businesses not calling me back, preferring for me to contact them if you want us to supply to you. Professionals not picking up the phone, preferring instead email as the preferred option. Even a bank told me I'm not big enough, so I don't warrant personal attention in one aspect of my account even though my business and all my accounts had been with this bank for over 20 years? Are we losing the plot?

Rather than pickup a phone, we are using cloud based services to engage professionals and get agreement on services. If you want to make an appointment, you can't ring, you have to go onto a website and look at where their vacant times are. Let's not get started with medical insurance, if you can't do it online, then you just can't do it! Is that service?

I remember once when you actually dealt with the manager in your local bank when you needed something, now it's an email via an interstate head office that may get returned by email a few days later.

Are we becoming immune to personal service, do we actually think that email and text are ok and regarded as service, or do we deep down inside hate it and just don't want to appear like the only one complaining? Well this isn't a complaint, but it probably should be - everyone wants service. If you actually really want to stand out, stand apart from your competition and leave them behind in your dust, simply take a proactive service WOW mentality in your business, the guy next door won't know what's going on. Here are a couple of ideas and reasons why.

1: Remember people's name. It makes people feel special, they believe you care (even though they know it's a system in the business). You do it, the others don't! Regardless if you buy a coffee once a week from a pop up coffee shop, or you get your car serviced every six months, deal with clients the right way.

2: Build the database. If someone comes in, makes an enquiry, or buys from you, the only way you can get them back, is if you know who they are. Get their details, give them a loyalty card, ask them to put their business card in a

draw, or get them to fill in their details to go into a draw to win a weeks free coffee, just do it. You now have some of the control.

3: Follow-up. If they've bought once, they'll probably buy again, and if they don't, then you would probably want to ask why right? It doesn't matter what you sell, or do, follow up every person that ever buys, ask them are they happy with the purchase, inform them of new stock, invite them in again for a special deal, or bring a friend and get 20% off. They'll come back.

4: Build a relationship. We all want to feel special. Walk into a restaurant and they greet you by name and ask would you like your usual table, the usual bottle of wine? My wife and I go to a Chinese restaurant locally and the girl their doesn't know our name, but knows the wine we drink, and the dishes we like. Imagine what would happen if she knew our name and used it.

5: KIT! Keep in touch. Ask them to come back, buy again, refer others and guess what? They will. Every business should have some kind of information system, a newsletter, an app, a loyalty program. Something that educates you what and how to use it, or invite you to a special event. Email, websites and apps make it so easy, why not post something out, a letter, a card, a printed newsletter. The cost of a dollar for postage is a small cost for the ongoing lifetime value of a customer and their repeat business.

It's a fact, that around 80% of people that leave to go to another supplier, do so for no other reason than a perceived lack of indifference - they thought you didn't care. Or in other words, there was no service.

The easiest way to grow a business, is to keep an existing client, get them coming back more often and asking them to refer others to do the same. In fact it's six times more expensive to find a new one in comparison to holding onto an established one.

Get Smart Now is all about working with our clients and helping them identify the areas that make a huge difference in getting a better result, improved sales, greater profit and happier staff and clients that keep coming back.

Get Smart Now about the way you service your clients, change 2 to 3 things about how you deal with them, so that the objective is building a relationship, keeping them coming back and referring others. This is the single easiest way to build a business.



Week 31: If you own a business, greater success, is all about management!

Every problem I've ever seen in either a small, medium or large business, can be relayed back to management, or rather lack of. Poor management practices is the single most common reason behind poor growth, low sales, bad customer service,

and the image the business is portraying.

Management isn't easy either, it takes practice to get good at it. However, the basic issue is, it never gets practiced with most businesses, so the result is high staff turnover, poor performance and it simply continues to go on like that. Yes staff leave because of bad management, lack of direction, no training.its one of the most common reason for staff turnover.

To build a business that continues to grow even if you don't have any staff, you still need to manage yourself and the business, but if you have staff, they certainly need managing and they need it from day one. Good management practices will get a much better result than not managing and see your business improve, increase sales secure clients longer and develop a business that enables you to rely more on your team, than on you.

Management is simply about outlining the expectations of every part of the business and every role that staff perform, then reviewing it and managing it. Ensuring that the expectations are met and exceeded and if not addressing it before it becomes a problem.

Far too many people employed in a particular role, end up doing that role in their way, not necessarily in the way that it was intended by the owner. It may have started out that way, but through lack of management and regular review, this changes over time. Let's face it, if you had good management practices in every business, staff would smile, business would grow because of meeting and exceeding sales targets, and clients would come back more often.

Here's a guide that should be implemented in every business and especially with new staff, to ensure your team and the business are doing what you want them to do.

1: All staff want and need to know what to do, from day one. It's the performance expectation. This needs to be monitored and reviewed with them regularly. This can include how they deal with staff, upselling, daily call rate anything that can be measured - and by the way, if it can't be monitored, it can't be measured.

2: All performance whether it's good or bad revolves around two key areas - skill or will. Either they don't have the skills, so they need training, or they don't have the will, no motivation, engagement, or maybe they're in the wrong job!

3: Regular review and reporting. I've always been a fan of weekly, monthly and quarterly reviews, but maybe daily is what it needs. If the expectation on a certain performance level isn't met, you may need to review more often.

4: Performance reviews and dismissals are hard if you don't set expectations and have regular reviews. If no standard performance levels are set, you have nothing to compare it to when it comes time to review poor performance. Any

business I've ever seen with staff issues revolve around low or no management, allowing the staff to do what they want, setting their own performance levels, with the answer "that's how I've always done it".

The fundamentals behind management are actually pretty simple. Know what you want to achieve, what can be achieved based on historical information, then set performance standards with all staff and simply manage them regularly.

The management and performance standards isn't just about sales either. It's also about image, how our team look, how they act, what they say, and how they say it. Management is also about the way we market ourselves - networking, client contact and every other aspect of running a successful business.

It's all about management. Far too many business owners fail to set minimum performance standards from day one, then fail to manage them if they do. Small, medium and large businesses, including corporate and franchise are often even more guilty than smaller business because simple management of the day to day basic operations can actually be overlooked when all your focusing attention on is sales results or profits and it's always easy to blame the economy!

ReThinkBusinessGrowth is all about working with our clients to develop skill levels for the entire team, that can then be managed easily to ensure a better result and a better business.

ReThinkBusinessGrowth with your business, start managing your team or at least ask the question "how do I manage my team?" MBN can help you develop those management processes simply and work with you to get a much better result.



Week 32: How you can keep customers for ever (or for at least longer than you do now!)

One of the things that confuses me more than anything else is businesses who don't seem to care about keeping a customer or not. I understand it from an employee perspective - they don't care, it's a job to them. However, as a business owner, surely you would want to do anything possible to keep every prospect or client that ever walked in? Wouldn't you?

Businesses lose customers for the simplest of reasons - they are unhappy with the product, the price is too high, or maybe it's all to do with convenience (or lack of). But overwhelmingly, statistics tell us that almost 80% of people go somewhere else to shop, once they have bought from you, for no other reason than service. The service they experienced just wasn't good enough, or what they expected or wanted.

Wouldn't you like to know how easy it is to turn that one aspect of your business around? Forget everything else just for a second, but if someone walks in, makes an enquiry, or even buys from you... how can you hold onto that client, for ever? It's really easy and the good news is your competitor just isn't smart enough to do it.

I had to get my daughters car repaired this week. I dropped into a mechanic to enquire about what was probably going to be an expensive electric window repair, and I'm greeted by an assistant that I'm not convinced has NEVER smiled in her life (well not at work anyway). This is an attitude that you get from far too many businesses at the first contact point, whether face to face, or over the phone. This lack of "smile" then starts the downward first impression which makes you immediately ask "do they actually want my business?"

How hard is it to smile? How important is it to act as if you actually want that customer? Don't you think its a good thing to let the customer think you appreciate their business? Especially when a first impression is made and either won or lost in around seven seconds!

Far too many businesses act as if the customer is an inconvenience, as if the customer should be grateful that they are there to supply a product or service. But let's not forget something, there's plenty of competition out there, and this is the reason that the service mentality needs to change - competition.

Business owners, need to be doing everything possible to standout, to be different from the rest, and your customer service experience is a big one. First impressions count, but so to do ongoing impressions. Keeping in touch, following up, and maintaining a relationship.

The fundamental problem with almost 95% of people in businesses, is they don't care whether a customer comes back or not. It's a lot easier and cheaper to keep a client, than find a new one. Therefore, we should be doing everything possible to get that result.

Here are a couple of ideas to start the process.

1: Smile. Greet every client like you are actually happy to see them and appreciate them walking in to your business, not the other guys.

2: Collect data. Once someone walks in, get their details. Build a database so that you can keep in touch. Once you have that, all you need to do is give them a reason to come back to you - remind them of you, before they need you, so they don't think of the other guy first. It's all about front of mind!.

3: Follow up. If there's one thing that's going to be the biggest difference anyone can make its this. Just follow up. Ask them if they were happy with their purchase, what else do they need, what do you need to do to get their business?

There's a number of things businesses need to do to grow their businesses (but smiling has got to be the easiest right?). This has to be a performance standard that is part of the way we deal with customers and everyone else here too.

ReThinkBusinessGrowth about the way you deal with your customers. Start the process of delivering a customer service experience that your customers will talk about and be confident in referring others to you. If you'd like more information about how Get Smart Now can help you and your team develop a customer service experience system that makes your business stand out, contact us today at info@mybusinessnow.com.au



Week 33: It's what you don't do, that makes all the difference!

Every business does something right - the product, the location, the price - but it's the things that a business does wrong that determines the long term success it's going to have. You can have the greatest mouse trap in the world, but if know body knows you have it, you won't sell any.

The same can be said for your image, your sales and service systems, the way you handle staff, marketing, product development and managing the entire process. A business is only as good as its weakest links and because of that, most businesses continue to suffer, get poor results and often close. But there is a solution.

It's a simple process. All you need to do is find out what you do well, what you need to improve on, compare yourself to others better and what they do, ask the question "why would someone buy from me?", then make the changes needed. It might take some training to develop the skills needed in the leaders and the entire team.

Generally everyone requires basic skills and the will to do the job, so if you have that, you're probably half way there. But what if you actually believe that what you're doing is the best way? What if you think the way you do something works best, even if it doesn't? What if you don't compare yourself or how your business performs compared to others? If this is the case, then all the training and motivation in the universe won't make one bit of difference.

So step one is questioning everything about your business. The way you do things, what your clients think, what makes one person buy and others not, but also what you want to get out of it. Do you actually want to get a better result?

There are eight aspects of any business that make a difference, and even if you get some of them right a business will grow. However imagine if you actually attempted to get everything right, as opposed to doing a lot of things wrong.

I spent time with a business a little while ago (a motor mechanic), that believed that his business marketing campaign was working. He had a Facebook page, and posts were going out every couple of days, occasionally people would like or share. Yet his business had no customers. He felt that everything was going well, and by the way, his marketing was free! He believed that all he needed to do was Facebook and clients would be queuing up at the door. Well they weren't.

I worked with a travel agent about a year ago and identified a number of things, including their follow-up, that would have made a massive difference to their monthly result. Someone makes an enquiry, picks up a brochure, asks for a price to wherever they wish, then never comes back. If they do get the odd travel job, the person has their holiday, comes back, but they don't follow-up - not even to ask how the trip went, nor to ask where are we off to next. So why not? The answer was we don't have time. Guess what, they now have plenty - the travel agent isn't operating anymore.

It's a fact, that most people go into a business because they have experience in the field - they were a mechanic for someone, they worked in a travel agency, they have just finished their plumbing apprenticeship.... if he can do it surely I can?

But the truth is that they might know what the product or service is, but they have no training or knowledge about how to run a business. It's not just about the product, but all about everything else that makes someone walk in, keep coming back, spending more and referring others.

Because business owners and their teams tend to do so much wrong, they then have to make up for it by spending more on advertising, staff, sponsorship and more, all in the hope that it makes up for the deficiencies in the key areas.

Here's just a couple of ideas that will make a difference:

1: Get staff doing the job. Whether they're in sales or service, train them to do the job the right way.

2: Standout. What makes you different from the guy next door. How can you not only compete, but be the preferred supplier. People want to buy from suppliers that look good, go out of their way to attract customers, rather than just pile up boxes in the front of the shop. It makes a difference. If you're a sign writer and your signs are faded that much that you can't read them, maybe it's time to upgrade.

3: Everyone knows someone, so get referrals, and there's two parts to this. First, if you don't ask you won't get. If your business has a great product, why wouldn't someone refer them to you. But you've also got to make it easy, give them referral cards to hand out. Secondly, develop a rewards system. If you're a café and someone refers a new customer, you get a free coffee, earn points, or give away something big. If every client is worth a certain figure a year, what could you offer to encourage a referral?

I look at businesses and what they need to do to get a better result in very simple terms. Do the things that your currently not and do them better than your competition. But, it needs to be simple, it needs to not take too much time for the owner or staff.

Here's how I look at business potential in this very simple example:

If you have 100 clients and they come in and buy from you twice a month and spend \$50 each time, that will give you a gross income of \$120,000 a year. Now let's tweak things, improve the image, get the sales performing a little better, improve our customer service levels and increase each factor by only 10%. Our new business looks like this - 110 clients, that come in 2.2 times a month and spend \$55 each time. That's now a gross income of \$159,720 a year. That's a 33% increase and note that the overheads probably wouldn't have changed.

How can you not consider the cost of looking at doing things better to get a better result. What if you actually got everything right, what if you worked on

Mybusinessnow, business training that's different, skills, strategies, solutions, support.

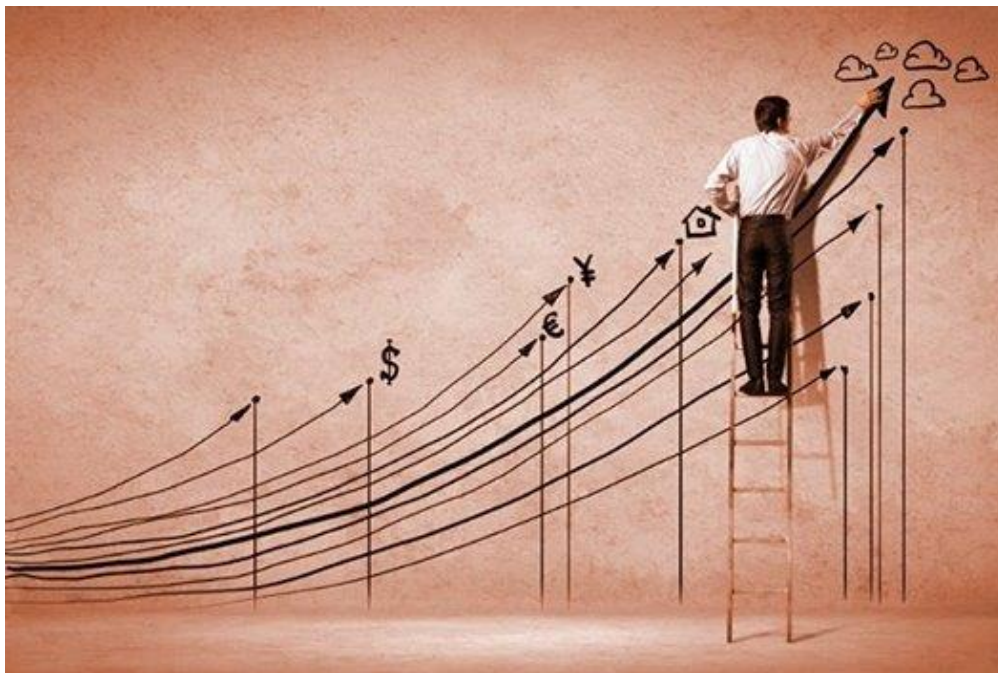
all eight of the key elements that effect the result of a business? What could that be worth?

Get Smart Now is a program that goes through everything a business needs in order to improve the key aspects of the business that currently hold it back - sales processes, better service, client management, product development and more. It's simple, it just needs to be trained.

Get Smart Now wants to develop smarter businesses, that get a better result, better retail, better hospitality that provide better service, better tradies that result in a better job and a better business, that gives the owner a better life.

If you'd like more information on how Get Smart Now can help, would like to join our GSN network and subscribe to our Smart Business enews, or would like to know more about when our next live workshop or webinar will be on, just email info@getsmartnow.com.au

Business should be a lot easier than it is and it can be. When you ask the right questions, you'll finally get the right answers. ReThinkBusinessGrowth in business.



Week 34: It's the little things that can make a big difference.

What comes first, the chicken or the egg? In business, it's a little clearer than that old joke. The starting point is "image" - image always comes first. Your image is what makes someone stop and look at your business, make the first call, click on your website or even walk in. If your image doesn't reflect what you do or sell, then there's a pretty good chance they'll keep walking.

It amazes me how often you walk past a business that obviously doesn't care about their image, even if their image does such a bad job of promoting what they do. I saw a sign writer recently whose signs were so badly faded you could hardly make out the phone number. Wouldn't you think it was time to renew, especially if that's what you do?

It's the little things that can make a huge difference, and if you know what they are then get them right first.

You could spend an absolute fortune on marketing, advertising, local area sponsorship and more, and have potential customers turn around the minute they look at you, your staff, or your business. It's all about first impressions. So why not get them right?

The objective here is simple, if we have a product, a location, a store front, whatever, let's at least do everything we possibly can to attract every potential customer. Then when they walk in, hold onto them so there's no chance they will go elsewhere. It's one of the most important aspects of business, and yet it's the one that so many business get wrong. They miss it totally. Here are a couple of simple things that will make a difference in that first stage of client attraction:

(By the way, whether you actually have a shop front, or are web based, everything below is the same. A poor website front, or a hard to find website, is no different to a business that simply can't be seen or found because there's no sign or street number).

1: Shop front. What does it look like? Does it stand out, does it look like the owners want the business? Is there an effort made to look professional - great signage, smart look, neat, tidy, a place that someone would be happy to walk into? I know people say you can't judge a book by its cover, but people do! Your product alone, is often not enough.

2: Staff, how do they greet clients (if at all) when they walk in? I don't know about you, but when I'm standing in a shop, being totally ignored, even if the staff are doing something else, I get a little impatient. Just say hello! Staff including the owners, should be trained how to greet clients and potential clients the right way - with a smile, be friendly, and do it quickly. Ensure they are presented well, in a business shirt or uniform makes a massive difference, and try using name badges. People love referring to someone by their name, the relationship is already being built.

3: Takeaway and leave behind information. How often do you look for a business card, a brochure, or even a takeaway menu at a cafe and they have none,

they've run out? Sorry I've just run out! No you haven't, you haven't had them for ages. Business cards, brochures, fridge magnets, all help to keep you in the prospective clients mind, if you don't have them, they forget you. Business cards are the single cheapest marketing tool available. Every staff member should have them, everyone! And by the way, don't get them done online just because they're cheap. Get a quality printed and designed card made for all staff, it will cost you less than \$100 but what it could cost you in lost sales is the important part.

4: Keep in touch. Don't let anyone walk away without getting their details. If they walked in they're interested. So get their details. If you don't have some kind of database that they can opt into, then have a fishbowl competition to collect their card, or have a pile of blank cards there to add their details and go into the draw to win something. No one ever says no to the chance of winning something.

First impressions are everything. So make sure you do everything you possibly can to attract, keep that client and then get them back even if they didn't buy the first time - this is the critical first part of building a better business.

It's the things that most businesses don't do that make all the difference in a more successful business. The image, signs, making it easy to find you, and keeping in touch. It's all simple, you just have to do it.

Get Smart Now and the Build a better business program is all about identifying what the things are that a business doesn't do now and train the owners and staff how to get them right. Once the fundamentals are right, then you can focus on constant improvement and doing more.

If you would like to know more about how Get Smart Now can help your business and your team get a better result, just drop us an email info@getsmartnow.com.au or if you'd like more information about our next events, we can help you with that too.

ReThinkBusinessGrowth and get everything right about your image, it's the little things that you don't do, that have a big impact on the success of your business.



Week 35: What would make someone walk into your business?

Whatever type of business you have, you will always come across a list of things that the certain type of business does wrong because of the industries reputation.

For example - you organise a tradie to come over, and they don't usually arrive on time. A plumber does some work for you, and they don't usually clean up after themselves. You order a pizza, and they are skimpy on the toppings. I'm not saying that's the case with every single business in that industry, but if you ask someone "what frustrates you most about a type of business?", they'll usually come up with an answer that others will agree with.

If you knew what it was that annoyed most people about your industry, you'd do everything you could to fix this wouldn't you? This rectified "common frustration" would become your standout feature, your unique selling point. Well if that was the case, why doesn't it happen? Companies like Virgin, enter established industries simply by marketing themselves to say that they do the things that the others get wrong, and succeed because of it.

There's a new pizza shop that's recently opened in my area. Its been there a few weeks now. It has no sign and the only reason we know its there is that our next door neighbours told us. So my wife and I thought we would give it a try over the weekend. I like a good pizza. However, unfortunately it was a major disappointment. The service was bad, there was no attempt at doing anything different, and it wasn't a very exciting pizza either. Therefore, nothing really that made me want to come back in a hurry (when it comes to pizza, there are simply too many other options out there).

When you enter an industry and tackle a niche market (like pizzas - when there is Pizza Hut, Eagle Boys and Dominos), you need to have something that really sets you apart from anyone else.

Regardless of your own personal background (ie. Italians opening up a pizza joint), when entering a market, you need to do some research. Find out what

your competition isn't doing. Find out what frustrates the customers, and what you could do to stand out and make a difference.

There are three crucial areas to pay attention to when entering an industry surrounded by similar competition:

1: Your image. Your ability to attract a customer in the first place - your signage, your location, is there anything about your business that stands out and would make someone walk in, in the first place? What do the others do, and how can you do it better?

2: Service. Bad service lets people down. Train your staff better, ensure they are always friendly, greet every potential customer, wear smart uniforms that look better than the rest, remember names, develop loyalty, and keep in touch. Far too often you buy something from somewhere, and because the business doesn't have your details, they may never hear from you again. Change the way you think about hanging onto every potential client.

3: Product. It's not good enough just to be "another" of anything. You have to be better. In an established market, unless you have some real genuine point of difference, you will always compete on price and a tough position to be in. Do the research, find out what frustrates customers about the others and turn it around to make it your point of difference for your product. Better toppings, more topping, better packaging, add value with other things the others don't do. Mamma's home made Tiramisu for example.

Too many business owners are too quick to just get into a business, believing that whatever they do, people will want it. Unfortunately, it simply doesn't work like that and especially when you're not in high traffic areas (and you don't have a sign so no one knows you're even there). However, doing your research and focusing on key areas will help you succeed.

ReThinkBusinessGrowth helps businesses get everything right. We identify where you're at now, review every aspect of your business via our Orangeprint, and then train all your key people. We will help you make the minor changes needed that attract and keep customers coming back and then continue to fine tune so you can start to back away and rely on your team to run your business without you there.

If you'd like to know how Get Smart Now can work with your business, simply email us at info@getsmartnow.com.au for one of our information kits on getting started towards building a better business, that gets a better result.

Business52: Ideas for every week. Review, opportunities, change, adapt, grow. Planning360

Use these review pages, to tackle something every week, or maybe just once a month. Small improvements make a huge difference to businesses over time. Look closely at what's going on now, the results you get, and where the opportunities for change, improvement and growth will be. One step at a time, you don't need to do everything all at once. A 1% change in 10 areas will give you a 110% increase in turnover, 2% is 120% Average business growth in Australia is under 9%! Small changes make a big difference.



This weeks/months plans to grow.	Idea	Strategy	Date to implement	Outcomes
Business growth idea 1:				
Business growth idea 2:				
Business growth idea 3:				
Business growth idea 4:				
Business growth idea 5:				



Week 36: Expanding a business to fast can have its challenges!

Operating a business isn't usually the tricky part. Getting a business operating well, making a profit and growing it is another story all together. If you understand the concept of what is suppose to happen in business (by attracting as many clients as possible and then having them come back more often, spend more and refer their friends, while making sure more money comes in than goes out), some fundamentals in systems, structures, training and management are definitely needed.

Business owners often want their business to grow, so expansion into additional locations is likely to be thought about - especially if the current business is chugging along nicely. But having one location going reasonably well can be quite different to operating and managing two, three or more - especially if it's all done to quickly.

I've recently seen a couple of examples of businesses expanding too quickly, without having the basic systems and structure of the business right from the word go. What happens all too often, is the owners time is stretched between multi locations, you have the added costs of more staff, more rent, and what happens if something goes wrong, staff don't turn up, equipment breaks down and more?

Just because you have one business in one location working well, doesn't always mean that simply multiplying everything by two or three will work as successfully.

The fundamentals of running one location still need to be set up and the owner is usually still very hands on with that business. Adding locations obviously splits your time with all the locations, which can result in none of them performing like they once did.

Here are a few ideas of what should be covered when considering opening up another store, or planning multiple locations:

1: What happens when you're not there? Does it run without you? If it doesn't, then there's problem number one. Staff training, systems regarding sales and service, product quality, and management all need to be brought up to a standard that ensures the business performs as well without you, if not better. If it doesn't, don't even think about it.

2: Branding and image. Before you arrive at your next location, get everything right first - develop a matched brand, marketing material, staff image and uniforms, POS material, CRM systems, ensure your clients are on a database and you know who your clients are and what they're worth.

3: Cash flow and profit and loss. Understand the basics of money in and out. In one location it's easy to lose control and start to lose money, but regain it quickly. (Do more and do it better) With multiple locations, it's almost a certainty it will happen because of the additional set of challenges that can occur - staff don't show up, someone forgets to put an advertisement in the newspaper like they were supposed to, someone other than the owner handles a complaint badly and you lose a major client. All sorts of reasons can cause problems that can have an effect on cash flow, which can then affect the cash flow of the group.

4: Management and systems. Even a single operation, that employs staff and even if it's just you, still need to operate with systems and when there's staff involved, absolutely. Ensure that all staff are well trained, know what to say and do, know how to look and what to do in how to handle a problem. Establish performance standards that includes things like dress standards, upselling standards (coke and fries to go with that?) lead and sales number standards, anything that has anything to do with the business day to day operation.

Do some worst-case scenarios- what happens if we have no power, what happens if one location has no income for a week, what happens if we have no staff and we have to work somewhere else, who takes your place? Look at the effect on cash flow and profit not only if everything's going well, but if sales go down 10%, 20% or 50%. What happens to cash flow and profit to the entire group? How long can you sustain an ongoing loss?

No one ever goes into business to be small, and expansion and multiple location expansion is something that should be considered carefully with guidance from business and financial advisors first. But above all, get everything right first and performing well, without you. If you can do that, then it might just work.

Get Smart Now works with businesses to do one thing - get a better result from your business, identify what needs improving, train everyone in the team to operate the systems to ensure our image, sales and service processes, marketing and product development are all done right. Management then simply runs the business, so that your business relies less on you and more on the team, so that hopefully they get a better result, than you would.

[Mybusinessnow](#), business training that's different, skills, strategies, solutions, support.

Thinking about expansion? Then get the fundamentals right first. If you'd like more information about how Get Smart Now can help you do that, or would like one of our free information kits, send us an email at info@mybusinessnow.com.au

A better business is easy, it's just not simple! ReThinkBusinessGrowth can help.



Week 37: Overcoming today only thinking and moving forward!

Here we are into another year again.

I've run my own businesses for the last thirty years, and I've spent the last twelve months working very closely with a number of clients in a consulting role with both large franchise and small business owners. No matter who I deal with, I see the same thing everywhere and with almost everyone. All everyone seems to do is think about the result we will get right now, and what we should do right now, as opposed to the result we will get in a year, three years or ten years. And it's all because we don't think of the outcome of what we do long term. If we did, we would definitely think differently about every aspect of our business, how we run it, and from an employee perspective, how we do our job.

Let's face it, if we thought long term about our job, would we do it the way we do it right now? If our job was dependant on how we did our job and the result we got, would we do it differently?

What about business owners - if we thought about a ten year result rather than this weeks result, would we do anything differently? For instance, would we:

- 1: Put more effort into the businesses image and brand and how our clients perceive it?
- 2: What about our sales and lead generation processes - would we do anything different if we thought long term?
- 3: And how about service standards - if we thought about where we would be in ten years, would we service clients better or differently?
- 4: Then there's the marketing and advertising, our staff recruitment decisions and systems, development and constant improvement of our product or service, planning, systems and management.

Should we think about all of these things long term, or do we just get back to work in January and start doing exactly what we did last year, the year before and the year before that and wonder at the end of it why we got the same result or even worse?

90% of all businesses fail, and that probably means that 90% of people that work in businesses fail. People start jobs, they don't get trained well enough, they aren't managed, then they fail and move onto another job and probably do it all again. Whose fault is it? It's everyone's, the employer and the employee. Everyone has a role to play.

But the question is, what's the result your wanting out of the job, or the business? Im guessing like most people, you want the best possible result, but just aren't prepared to put the extra work in to get that result and that's that bit that has to change. From both a business and an employee perspective, we need to start thinking that it's not about doing the bare minimum to get a result, but its about maximising performance and activity in 2017 to get a better result.

I find this a really interesting topic. I've worked with hundreds of sales people over the last few decades and I can honestly say I've never come across one (not a single one) that's not capable of earning in excess of \$100,000 plus a year, but they don't. The old 80/20 rule is true, and that is that only around 20% will actually get the result they want and even they could do so much more and easier, if they thought a little differently about how they did what they did.

It's exactly the same for businesses and their owners. Most people will just get back to work in January and start doing the same thing again and will get to the end of the year and wonder why they didn't do better. They may blame the economy, talk about the annoying competition out there this year, or anything and everything else...but they wont mention the way they do what they do.

It doesn't matter what you do, what business you're in, what franchise you're a part of, whether you're a tradie, in retail, a professional, in hospitality or manufacturing. Every industry is the same, and unfortunately everyone makes the same mistakes. It all boils down to eight key elements that don't change, but these eight things will get you a much better result:

1. Image: How do you or your business look or compare to the competition, how do you look, act or present yourself in your role?

2. Sales: What do you do to have a consistent sales funnel operating so that there is a constant flow of new enquiries and new customers walking in?
3. Service: What are the service levels in your business like, is it enough to keep every client coming back, spending more and referring others, or do you lose more clients than you bring in to the competition?
4. Staff: Are the staff in your business doing exactly what you want every day - representing your brand, are they trained well, or is it just left to chance?
5. Marketing: Is there an ongoing marketing and advertising program to ensure your name is out there and is it relevant, or do you just use social media because it's free in a hope that it will attract you new clients?
6. Product: Why would someone buy from you? What makes you stand out, what's your unique selling proposition? And if there isn't one then your simply competing on price! Is your product the best it can be and do you do everything to keep existing clients interested through continuous development?
7. Planning: When was the last time you wrote out a business plan (have you ever?). If you don't have even the simplest business plan, you have no idea of where you're going.
8. Management: And lastly, do you manage the entire process? Whether you own a business, or you're a sales consultant, do you manage your team or yourself? Every aspect of the business needs to be managed, so that you know you're going where you want to go, otherwise change something.

The truth is that the majority of people simply aren't prepared to do what they need to do to get the result they really want. People just seem to continue doing the bare minimum needed and hope to get a big result. But unfortunately.... that just doesn't happen.

When I'm out dealing with a business, it doesn't matter if it's with a professional, a tradie, a barrista, a retailer or a waiter, we continue to get the same things that cause clients to question why they buy from you? The image is poor, the seating is falling apart at a restaurant, the toilets are filthy, the retail staff have no basic retail skills and wouldn't know how to smile if you drew them a picture, hotels have things that are wrong and haven't been replaced, the service levels in professionals are often so poor that getting a call returned doesn't happen.

Now short term that may appear ok, but at every point someone asked the question "why buy from you?" or "why buy from you again?" - maybe I'll go somewhere else.

Don't give anyone the reason not to deal with you, get it all right.

Is 2017 the year of getting serious? Getting serious about how we run our businesses and about how we do our job, whatever its - sales, customer service, retail, hospitality or management. Get smart and get serious now.

Mybusinessnow, business training that's different, skills, strategies, solutions, support.

No one wants to repeat a year that didn't get them the result they wanted. So don't let it happen again - do something different. Start with a review, look at what you did, the result you got, and then work out what you need to do this year to get the result you want.

Get serious about it:

Get serious about skills and training

Get serious about the image

Get serious about sales processes

Get serious about customer service levels

Get serious about staff, marketing, product development, planning

And get serious about management!

If you're looking for ways to grow your business, grow your career and just move forward, then maybe Get Smart Now can help you do that.

We work closely with businesses of all sizes, franchises, retail, professional, tradies and individuals that are looking at getting a better result from what they do. We have developed a series of training resources to help businesses, owners and their teams simply get a better result by incorporating our eight key element strategy through our Build a Better Business program, the Orangeprint process and our business Ezyplan.

If you like more information about how we can help, checkout our website at www.mybusinessnow.com.au or email info@mybusinessnow.com.au

If you want to get a better result in 2017 it's really simple, get serious and get smart now!



Week 38: Why is it that businesses forget the simple art of “follow-up”?

Every business, regardless of what you do, could service their clients better. I'm not talking about simply doing the job well, I'm talking about what happens when the job is done. Here's an example:

Every business generally has an accountant, or maybe you use a bookkeeper/accountant to look after and handle all your financial reporting needs. How often do you hear from your accountant just to see how it's all going or if you need anything? Probably never right?

I heard about an accountancy firm in Perth recently that does just that. They have a totally separate customer service department that simply builds the relationship between the customer and the accountant, gets to know them, builds the relationship, helps with whatever they can, and probably upsells by adding value. What a unique idea!

The basic concept behind building a great business, isn't just the product, and often it's far from it. Often the difference between just one sale and a lifetime of not only ongoing sales but referrals to friends, family and associates, is all about the service system.

Here are a few examples, where you never receive “follow-up”:

Mechanics: You have your car serviced regularly - at least yearly. But other than booking your vehicle in for the next service, mechanics don't ring you. Why not call quarterly, find out how the cars going, and book them in early? Why not call and offer some special deal or inclusions to the next service or repair?

Travel agents: If you travel once, you're likely to do it again. But again, how often do travel agents call you? They don't. Why not get into a regular habit of calling clients monthly, get to know what travel plans they have upcoming, weekends away, and maybe you can help with all their plans. It's all about front of mind.

Businesses usually think that “follow up” wouldn't work for their business...but why wouldn't it to some degree? If someone comes in weekly to buy, as in fruit and veg, why can't you still contact your clients every couple of months and let them know what's new? If you have a cafe and your customers come in daily, can you still encourage them to come back more often, or bring friends? Of course you could.

The objective is simple. Build the relationship to you and your business. 80% of people change and go somewhere else for one reason and that's a perceived lack of indifference - they thought you didn't care and simply selling them your product just isn't enough! More and more businesses are doing more and more, not to talk to their customers – introducing the internet and social media.

Here's another way of looking at this idea...

Over the last couple of years, I've dealt with a number of suppliers in regards to design, websites, printing. After making initial enquiries, or even buying from

them, how many keep in contact with me do you think? None! Some of them might send me a generic email... but everyone sends generic emails these days (and most people just delete them the moment they land in their inbox).

I've also dealt with a couple of graphic design and printing businesses and was having some regular work done, but now that's stopped and so too has the communication from them. Do people simply think keeping in touch has no value, that you're never going to get anything done again? Or do they just assume that they have your business for life? Well they don't have your business for life and of course you will get other work done and so to do your associates...just not with these suppliers right?

I have dealt with training and support people, used them for a while, stopped and never heard from them again! Do they just have too much business?

Now by the way, a good way to get rid of some clients you don't want is to never contact them again, that'll work. Now I completely understand that some clients just aren't worth the effort, so don't, but spend the time on the ones that are and build the long term relationships with those clients.

The simple act of fundamental customer service is far more than just being friendly when someone walks in to your business, serving them well and delivering a great product, it's also about the ongoing contact. Follow-up after the sale and make effort on building long term relationships that trust you and then encourage those customers to refer others as well. Here are a couple of last thoughts on why this is so important and why every business must establish an ongoing customer service system.

Everyone is a potential customer. Everyone! Every single person that makes an enquiry, walks in to your business, contacts you in some way, could either be a potential client or knows someone that will. Keep in touch.

If someone has bought from you once, they'll buy again, and if not them, they know someone else that will at some point. Keep in touch.

If someone makes an enquiry, gets a quote, asks for a price, wants a test drive, then don't come back... Keep in touch.

Encourage more than just email contact. Email is becoming what faxes once were, we don't even bother looking at half of them. Look at alternatives. But remember it's all about the relationship - voice or even better, face to face. Be different. Keep in touch!

Develop a customer relationship management system, but it needs to be different, it needs to be better. Everyone is on everyone else's email newsletter, Facebook, Twitter. It needs to be personal, it needs to stand out. Consider going back to the old fashioned printed and mailed newsletters? Invite clients personally to events, and education nights. It's all about being different, but above all keep in touch.

Return calls. This is the single biggest frustration experienced by just about everyone - calls or enquiries are simply not returned. It's not just about that one contact, or lack of, it's about the lack of trust, lack of reliability that you don't get back, along with the call. It stops people trying again and also stops them referring others to you, simply because they don't have 100% confidence or trust in you. So, keep in touch.

It's at least seven times cheaper to keep an existing client, than spending money on finding a new one. With that in mind, why aren't the majority of businesses doing something that actually keeps every single enquiry, walk-in, contact and past, present and future potential client so that no one will ever find out about them? I don't know! But I do know that there's an opportunity here for any smart operator to grow their business from no other reason, than servicing your current clients and enquiries better than you do now.

There are only seven basic aspects of running a business better, getting a better result and enjoying the fruits of your labour more. Service is one of them, there is so much more that can be done to deliver an incredible service experience, but just these few minor changes and you'll see a dramatic change.

For more ideas on how to build a better business and grow beyond where you currently are now, contact Get Smart Now at our website at getsmartnow.com.au email erwin@mybusinessnow.com.au



Week 39: How to get a better result from your sales, or your team!

Over the years I have trained hundreds of sales professionals and the one thing that I really believe is that anyone can sell. If you're able to communicate reasonably well, be likeable, and present yourself well... you can sell. Then of course if you have some fundamental product knowledge in your chosen field, you'll probably get even better results. But the one thing that seems to get missed over and over again is that you still need to get in front of people - and the more people you get in front of, the more sales you make. In fact, I'd rather have hard working sales people with average skills, than great sales people that don't push themselves very hard any day.

Sales is a numbers game, it doesn't matter what industry you're in. Sure, you can minimise those numbers and improve the results, but it still starts out as

numbers. The more appointments you make, the more people you see, the more sales you'll make. There's nothing too complicated about it.

There are three key elements behind successful sales and running a successful sales team:

1: Training: Sales (and customer service people) need a skill set, product knowledge and the ability to communicate at a level that's at least equal to that of the client. They also need the ability to handle any challenge or objection that might stop that sale from going ahead.

2: Activity: The ability to maximise their time in front of potential clients, the prospects and present their product, build some rapport and successfully demonstrate how our product can fix the problem they've got.

3: Management: Sales professionals need to be managed from the day they start. Understanding exactly what the expectations are from the word go, eliminates any misunderstanding of performance standards.

Whether you run a sales team yourself or in fact are a sales professional, there are a few simple things that you can do to get much better results:

A: Train your team well

Make sure that everyone in the team is capable of having a conversation with a client, if not, keep training until they can (or replace them if they can't).

Ensure they have the product knowledge. Running back and forth to get more information won't build confidence in the prospect.

Get support from other successful sales professionals. Either within the company or outside. What do they do? If something works for them, there's a good chance it will work for you.

B: Activity standards.

Ensure that everyone is aware of what the minimum performance standards are. If it's five appointments a day, then make sure they do it.

Develop a reporting system that holds them and their managers accountable. If you want to know how to make more sales, start by looking at what they do all day long.

C: Manage regularly, stay in touch daily if needed.

Sales people need support, but they also need regular reviews.

At the end of the week or month, review what happened - what went well and what didn't? And then work out what's needed to get to where you want them to go.

...and one extra point:

D: Cut the cord!

If it's not working out, if they aren't getting the results and both them and the managers are getting frustrated, cut the cord. Sales people generally work in sales for one reason - the income potential. If they're not getting the results both you as the manager or they want, someone gets frustrated. 95% of the time it boils down to one thing - Activity. Just about anyone can sell, but if they don't make the effort to get in front of people, no matter how good their closing skills are, they won't make enough sales to make budget, let alone get the sales number and growth you want.

Business52: Ideas for every week. Review, opportunities, change, adapt, grow. Planning360

Use these review pages, to tackle something every week, or maybe just once a month. Small improvements make a huge difference to businesses over time. Look closely at what's going on now, the results you get, and where the opportunities for change, improvement and growth will be. One step at a time, you don't need to do everything all at once. A 1% change in 10 areas will give you a 110% increase in turnover, 2% is 120% Average business growth in Australia is under 9%! Small changes make a big difference.



This weeks/months plans to grow.	Idea	Strategy	Date to implement	Outcomes
Business growth idea 1:				
Business growth idea 2:				
Business growth idea 3:				
Business growth idea 4:				
Business growth idea 5:				

Successful growth through more sales isn't hard to do.. More often than not its either a 'skill' or 'will' issue, rarely anything else. Then once you have those new clients on board, there's more to be done to keep them, this is just the beginning.

For more information about building a successful sales team, or getting a better sales result yourself email info@mybusinessnow.com.au We have put together an easy to understand, simple yet effective guide for anyone or any size sales team on how to get a better result than you are now!



Week 40: Why is service in business, so bad?

Now that's a really good question! Because if business owners actually understood what it's probably costing them, something might actually change!

This past month, I've done a little bit of seminar attending, and spent a couple of days listening to one group talk about marketing all day and another talk about a number of other things, but not one addressed possibly the simplest way to build a business and without having to do any additional marketing, move into a better location, or spend a fortune on a business coach. The answer is simple! Just service the clients you have better, or in fact so well, that they tell others. It's all about service!

Here's just a couple of examples to give you a clearer idea of what I'm talking about.

- My wife walked into a local fruit and veg shop recently, normally she would go into one of the bigger chains, but thought she would give him a go. She asked a young guy, what's the best pumpkin for a soup. He didn't look at her, just said butternut and kept doing what he was doing! Didn't even look up or stop what he was doing. Another young girl had seen what had happened, walked over and realised that my wife was unhappy with that, and started to talk about what she does for her pumpkin soup.
- We are planning an overseas trip soon, we have now walked into three of the

larger travel groups, spent time there giving details and not one has got back to us, without me having to chase them up! Not one!

You seriously could go on all day, poor service, poor attitude, no followup in either service or sales, and much more all service related! How hard can this be!

So the question is why? Is there a belief that it's easier to just wait for the next customer to walk in, or who cares if they don't.

Let's take the fruit and veg guy.

- Let's say you spend \$50 per week on fruit and veg, but like many people, you split your shopping. Maybe the local guy, but maybe anyone of the big chains, Coles, Woolies, or Aldi. \$50 per week is \$2500 per year plus.
- Someone walks in once to buy a pumpkin, but never comes back, or gets great service and continues to spend \$2500 there every year and refers her friends, neighbours and everyone else!
- What if you actually kept in touch, and email this weeks specials, and what to do with that butternut pumpkin, maybe even a recipe?

Let's take the trip and I'm about to walk into yet another agent to book it this week!

- The trip will be worth at least \$7500, but we travel regularly, it won't be the last trip.
- What's it worth to build even a basic relationship, and keep in touch with a prospective customer. Even get back to them?

It's seven times easier to hang onto a client, than it is to find a new one. That alone would make you realise I need to work harder on keeping my existing clients, and keeping them happy!

But there's more to service than just being nice! It fits around a number of key aspects of how building a business successfully all work together.

If all you did, was improve one aspect of your business, consider service. It's the part that lets just about every business down to some degree. Understand that and you are miles ahead. Here are just three simple things you could do, to make a massive difference to where your business is now:

1. Acknowledge clients when they walk in within seven seconds. That's all the time you have for an average person to get frustrated with the lack of contact. Smile, look at them, get into a little dialogue and if your busy with another customer, tell them you won't be too long.
2. Add value, even look for simple opportunities to up sell. Would you like a cake to go with that coffee? Know your product, be able to give ideas and suggestions of what and how they can use it. (Like what pumpkin goes well in soup and maybe even an idea of where to get a recipe!)
3. And followup. Everyone can do this. It could be the difference between a client, or their friend coming back, or going to the competition instead. It's about you staying in their front of mind, not your competition.

To many people are looking for the complicated answer to getting their business really booming, more marketing, better signage or maybe discount, when in fact, it's probably about many of the things that you don't do, that stops your business from the growth and success you want.

[Mybusinessnow](#), business training that's different, skills, strategies, solutions, support.

Mybusinessnow and the Business180 program are all about training, upskilling and reinstalling many of the things that may have once been there, support with integrated solutions to make everything work easier and less complicated.

For more information, contact us at erwin@mybusinessnow.com.au or just go to our website at www.mybusinessnow.com.au

It's the simple things that can make a BIG difference in business, it's time to uncomplicated your business and grow!



Week 41: The secret to business growth and overcoming the one sale business model problem.

Why don't businesses have the success, growth and profit that their owners want and expected in the first place?

Owners of businesses have all good intentions. They employ staff, do some advertising, put up a sign and have a product or service that they believe will attract customers and make them successful. But in 80% of cases it just doesn't happen often enough. Far too many don't even last 5 years and many last even less. We all know of a business that opened one day and closed only a few months later. (What happened to them, where did they go?)

Business is much more than just a great product or service and in fact it often has little to do with that at all and just about everything else that most businesses just don't do.

Here's an example let's take a cafe. Unless it's really bad coffee is coffee. You order a flat white, latte or a soy cappuccino and as long as it doesn't taste bad you're ok. You might order a cake as well, enjoy the experience pay the person at the register then go. What gets you to go back there again? Let's face it

there's just too many cafes to choose from and if the coffees all the same the chance is you'll go to the nearest most convenient one the next time you want a coffee. Not return to that one again.

Here's the problem. When you know that regardless of the product or service, most businesses are based on the one sale model, meaning you go in, buy and leave possibly not to return. You have a business that's totally based around one sale only. That business needs a great location or number of locations and ongoing marketing and advertising to keep customers thinking of you, rather than going elsewhere in order for it to grow and profit.

Business shouldn't be about a one sales model but virtually no business I know of other than a few large chains, attempt to get a customer back, even by using a reward loyalty program. No one seems to care. Let's just keep spending more money on advertising to attract more customers again and again and start from scratch every single time.

The real success to business growth naturally should be about attracting customers and also attracting as many as possible, that's the main aim but it should also be about -

- Keeping those customers coming back (rather than going elsewhere)
- Spending more each time
- And referring others to do the same.

A one sales mentality will never do that!

Most businesses have some basic concept of how they'll run their business.

- They have a product or service
- Setup a shop, put a sign up
- Do a little advertising in local news, maybe a sign on the road.
- A customer walks in, buys, they go
- And that's pretty much it!

Instead of thinking a little differently about the process that then makes the business far more sustainable.

- Attracting customers
- Doing everything possible to develop long term repeat business, rather than a one off sale
- And then finding a way to get them to refer others, that in turn do the same thing.

There's a new cafe that's recently opened in our neighbourhood and in fact part of a chain. It's a nice enough place, coffee and food is ok, staff are ok, the ambience is ok, but is it enough to get me to go back? Why wouldn't you do everything possible to use that opportunity to establish a relationship.

- Have a loyalty rewards program, promote repeat business, especially in a small neighbourhood scenario.
- Use the "just opened" situation, to offer a deal for our first customers
- And please hand out one of these free coffee cards to a few of your friends.

And there is so much more you could do but businesses don't? Why not.

Simple they've been doing business for years and years on the one sales model and so has the competition and that's all they know, so that's all they do and everyone competes around the same concept and then offers stage two, a

discount. Two for one coffee or meal deals or even better, discount Tuesday. There is a better more effective and much more profitable way.

Common sense would tell you, that developing a relationship with a client that comes back regularly is a much easier sale and more profitable than having to go about finding or marketing to attract new customers every day, week or month. That's a no brainer but very few people do it. So there's the opportunity. But how do you tell a business owner that the way they've been doing it for so long is actually wrong and you could get a much better result by just changing a few simple things. Fundamentals that will make a huge difference to the result any business gets.

Let's take the cafe again. The difference between buying one coffee every couple of months or a coffee a week is a huge difference to the income and profit of that business. There's no rocket science here but you seriously want to know why it doesn't get thought of. Take just one customer.

- \$4.50 for a coffee once every three months, \$18 per year or \$1.50 a month. I understand why someone wouldn't waste time on a customer that spends \$1.50 a month.(but should you, who do they know?)
- What if they spent \$4.50 a day and brought in a friend now and again and even had a cake or lunch now and then and breakfast on a weekend. ($\$4.50 \times 5 \times 4.3$ plus occasional breakfast and lunch, plus a friend for coffee) So now we have a customer worth close to \$175 a month, rather than just \$1.50.

This is an example only but it shows the difference between a one off sale or developing that customer into a regular frequent client. What if you developed a loyalty program that in fact stopped them from having coffee elsewhere they started coming for lunch now and then and breakfast on a Sunday morning. You now have a regular client that could be worth close to \$250 ($\4.50×5 plus breakfast for two $\$35 \times 4.3$ weeks)

That client has referred a friend or two that now also comes in regularly and you have one customer responsible for upwards of \$1000 a month in business or simply that original one off sale worth \$1.50 a month.

Next time anyone let's a client go out the door with just a coffee and no idea of who they are and where that customer could go next, probably shouldn't work for you but maybe it's you, the owner.

The secret behind real business growth is no secret, it just isn't done. Again common sense tells us that if,

- I build a relationship with a customer there's a chance they might come back.
 - If I develop that relationship, encourage, educate and inform I have an even better chance of increased frequency and spending.
 - If I develop the relationship even further there's a good chance they'll tell others about my business, so they now become clients too and do the same.
- And once again, common sense also tells us that if I do nothing to encourage a client to come back, they probably won't!

Regardless of what the business does, makes or sells and regardless of the size, small, medium or even large and franchised the same rules apply. The one sales model is what 90% of all businesses work on and get right but it's not building their business.

[Mybusinessnow](#), business training that's different, skills, strategies, solutions, support.

Every business regardless of whether it's a local cafe or a national chain of travel agents, can all do something to turn every enquiry, prospect, customer into a long term repeat and frequent client. But things need to change from the way things are done now, otherwise it stays as a one sales model business relying on advertising and hope that another customer will walk in and they often don't.

Business360 is a program that changes the way business owners, their managers and staff think about their business, the way their teams act and perform and how you get the consistent growing results you want.

Businesses including the product or service you sell stays the same but we help train you and your team, develop skills, develop the integrated solutions needed to build relationships and add in ongoing support to ensure it gets the results you want.

Business shouldn't be complicated and in fact it's not, its easy just not simple if you don't know how. Business360 knows exactly how to build a more sustainable and consistently growing business by getting all the other things right that 99% of other businesses currently miss.

Uncomplicate your business now and grow. For more information on how Business360 can help grow your business by uncomplicating it checkout our website at www.mybusinessnow.com.au or email info@mybusinessnow.com.au

Uncomplicate your business now and grow.



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Week 42: Great sales results, regardless of the business type, is simply a matter of seeing more people and never stop following up. Ever!

I've just returned from a short trip to Asia and every time I go there I'm constantly amazed at their sales skills and the simplicity of those skills and especially how well they work. I know it's different there, competition is huge, there's little support if you don't work, so you make it work. But why is that so different to here? They just don't take no for an answer and in many cases it gets the sale.

There are two great examples of how this works there and how it could and should work here, but sometimes because most people here aren't paid for what they do, or how they perform, they are often paid regardless, there's less incentive, whereas over there, if you don't make a sale, you don't get paid and just because you say no the first time, doesn't mean your going to say no the second, third, fourth or fifth time. What's it going to take to do a deal. Here's a couple of examples.

1: Markets are everywhere, but shop style retail isn't that much different. If your going to look at something, ask a question, or show interest in something, they are going to help you do anything to buy it.

They always smile, their attitude is always great.

The first word is often yes and the second how many. Not "can I help you?" If you show interest in something, they assume your going to buy, not just inquire.

If you say no the first time, they'll negotiate (on price, quantity or quality, something cheaper) and keep going, even walking after you until you say yes. Then they'll smile when the deal is done and paid, "thank you, bye bye, come back again".

And if by some chance you do "pass by" again, they'll call out, your back again, more of this or that?

This simply doesn't happen here, but should. Statistics tell us that:

48% of sales people never follow up with a prospect

25% of sales people make only a second contact then stop

12% of sales people make three contacts and then stop and yet,

80% of all sales are made on the fifth contact or more.

No wonder most sales people don't get the results that either they or the business wants and eventually leave, hence the high turnover of sales so called professionals. But is it training, management or both that's the issue?

2: Encourage prospects to walk in.

We were walking past a restaurant, it looked pretty busy and this little old lady walks up and just asks table for two, shows you the menu, gently guides you to a table and you take a seat. The food was good, so we came back again. Not everyone says yes, but a lot do. If this little old lady wasn't there, us and other people would have just walked past.

Now this does happen here, but not a lot. Lygon St Melbourne is one example (and coincidentally a couple of Italian restaurants on opposite sides of the street in Perth do it), with its wall to wall Italian restaurants doing the same thing, the ones that have someone out the front, talking to people in great Italian accents that you can't walk past, you stop, look at the menu, the question is table for two? And you sit down, they get the customer. But why would people rather have an empty restaurant or cafe than get someone out the front encouraging people to come in? Get a staff member to take a tray of small slices of pizza, (or whatever you do) show a menu and encourage them to come in and if they don't, hand them a special card for next time.

You can learn some really simple business fundamentals from watching other people do what they do, (especially in other countries) simple things that any business could do to some degree. Why not try some of these.

If you have a cafe or restaurant, get someone to stand out the front, show people the menu, handout a free sample, or maybe a card so they remember you next time. (Some businesses have a saying with their staff, if you have time to lean, you have time to clean, maybe staff have time to sell, promote, or stand out the front and talk to potential customers)

If you're a service based business, working somewhere and people are walking past, why not handout cards to people that might just need you at sometime, or handout cards or brochures to the houses or businesses nearby and let them know what your doing.

If someone's walked into your business, interested in something, find out what it will take to do a deal, is it the price, or something else, if they don't buy, get their details to keep in touch, then,

If you've presented to someone, never stop following up, if they're interested, it's just a matter of when or how much, often there's a deal to be done somehow, but don't give up. Ever!

Far too many business owners attempt to build their businesses by waiting for a customer to walk in and buy, rather than attempting to sell to everyone. They do nothing if you don't buy and just let you, the customer walk away. They are focused on what I call the one sales model. Someone walks in, maybe buys and then walks out, never to be seen again.

These businesses also believe that because of the way they deal with prospects and customers, that they just need to constantly attract more, so they continuously spend a fortune on advertising, marketing and social media in a hope to attract more customers and if they don't, then they just wait for the next walk in.

The trouble is that, if the service, delivery and followup doesn't meet the expectations of the customer, even if they buy once, they probably won't be back and definitely won't refer someone else.

Business360 is about helping businesses get the fundamentals of running a business right, so you don't have to rely on marketing, advertising and social media alone, to attract more business.

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Building a strong, sustainable business, that continues to grow, isn't just about the product or service, in fact often little to do with it and it isn't about having the best marketing and advertising campaign that you have to constantly spend more money on, it's the little things that make a huge difference to the way your business attracts and keeps customers coming back again and again and then referring others to do the same. It's called Business360grow. It's about getting all the little things right.

If you'd like more information on how Business360 can help grow your business massively from where it is now, click on our website at www.mybusinessnow.com.au or email info@business360now.com.au

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Week 43: You have less than seven seconds to make a first impression that will either make or break a client! The experience is everything. So why do so many blow it?

Experience is everything, whether it's flying, eating at a restaurant, listening to a band, watching a movie, or the service experience you go through dealing with any business. That first moment that someone walks into a business (your business) often for the first time and then what happens next. The first contact is going to have a huge impact on whether that client comes back or not. In fact you have around seven seconds to make a big enough impact to keep that customer or maybe just make that one off sale and then they're gone again. Forever.

Whether you like it or not, customers (all of us) like to be dealt with professionally, served quickly, efficiently and with a smile at the very least. All too often we're waiting far too long before we're even acknowledged and already our internal customer experience meter is below the yellow line. That product better be really good and the service better get better from here on.

We all too often experience really poor customer service, that has a huge effect on whether we intend to return including things like:

- Being ignored completely. (Big mistake, huge!)
- Staff on a phone call (regardless of who they're talking too)
- Staff that would rather be anywhere other than serve you.
- Staff that refuse to smile and ask, "can I help" or "you right mate?"
- Staff that just can't answer the questions, no training or product knowledge.

If business owners and their staff actually understood how hard it is to attract a new customer and how easy it is to lose one, you'd think that the service experience would be a priority but it's just not with most businesses.

The great news here though is this. For the smart operators out there, you only have to change a very small part of your business processes to have a huge impact on your competition. Let's face it, most products and services being sold by one supplier to another are pretty much the same and often the only standout factor is the price. So the cheapest gets the business! But what if there actually was something else that actually made that customer want to deal with you and you only.

Interestingly enough it was service years ago (20 to 30 years ago) that was expected and you got it. There was less competition, less massive shopping malls and certainly no internet shopping. You dealt with in most cases a local supplier and built a relationship with them.

Now though doing business is quite different but in fact it's the same too. Customers still want that service level and expect it, just don't always get it. Here are a few interesting statistics about customer service and results from it.

- 78% of customers will cancel a transaction because of a poor service experience.
- You'll typically hear from only 4% of dissatisfied customers, the rest just leave and go elsewhere.
- Over 80% of the customers that leave to go elsewhere, do so because of a perceived lack of indifference. They just thought you didn't care enough.
- 70% of buyers say they are willing to spend more with businesses that provide excellent service
- According to buyers, sales or service reps failed to answer questions 50% of the time. Training, product knowledge gaps.
- 80% of companies think they deliver great service yet when their customers are asked, it's 8% of those companies that actually deliver superior service.
- 91% of unhappy customers will not deal with a business again, but if the problems resolved in the clients favour, there's a 70% possibility of doing business with them again.
- Customers remember the customer service a lot longer than they remember the price.
- A 5% increase in customer retention can increase profit by 25 to 95%.

The fundamental mistake that's being made by businesses though is referring to it as customer service. It's not, it's customer experience. Or in fact lack of that causes the majority of client attrition problems (losing clients) every business has.

Most business in fact don't neglect the importance of the customer experience, if in fact they neglected it you would assume they knew about it. They either don't know or don't care and believe that ongoing attraction of a single new customer keeps their business plodding along. It doesn't and it won't for long. Too many businesses fail because of focusing on the wrong things and only on ongoing client attraction and not spending enough time on client retention. Hanging onto them.

I learnt a long time ago, that clients wanted to be dealt with quickly, with a smile (even on a phone because they can tell) professionally and with a caring attitude that proved we will do everything possible to hang onto you as a customer. It's not complicated:

- Answer the phone within 2 to 3 rings.
- Acknowledge a customer as soon as they walk in, "thanks for coming in, I'll be right with you"
- Smile. An old Chinese proverb says, man without smiling face shouldn't open shop. Staff shouldn't work there either.
- Staff need training. If you run a bottle shop, make sure your staff know what colour the Sauvignon Blanc is (do you want the red or white one? Yes it happens!)
- Staff need basic conversation skills. If you can't talk to people, you shouldn't be in any area of customer service.
- Don't let customers down. If your team is supposed to contact clients regularly and it's expected, then do it. If you said you would followup, contact the customer the next day, do it. Everything you do and don't do effects the customer service experience meter and letting people down, not following up or returning calls is the number one killer!

I could go on for days, add value, upsell, professionalism, presentation, hygiene, standing out, it all has an effect. Or you could just keep believing that as long as enough customers keep walking in, you'll be ok. You won't. What appears as a good business and good product or service from the outside, all too often will close down within a short period of time, simply because there was no customer service experience process or structure.

What's the objective, how do our team deal with customers, what skill levels do they need and how are they managed.

It costs seven times as much to attract a new customer than it does to keep an existing one. If you knew that and understood what it meant to the businesses bottom line, wouldn't you do everything possible to keep every single prospect and client that ever walked in.

Here's a quick example of what that could mean. Let's say a cafe has a customer walk in and buy a takeaway coffee at \$5, then walks out and never comes back. (I've done that plenty of times). Let's just assume now that through changing a few basic aspects of the customer experience, that customer decides from now on, I'll get my coffee here. Rather just anywhere because I like dealing with these guys.

That \$5 one off coffee turns into a coffee a day, that they also tell two others about that they also tell others about. Even if it's only a work day coffee and a

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couple of referrals that do the same, that's now \$3,600 a year, rather than just \$5! That concept works with whatever you sell, make or do.

Changing the customer experience, making them only want to deal with you and no one else, can dramatically change any business and have a huge impact on your businesses growth and profit.

Business360 is all about training businesses how the fundamentals of their businesses can easily be changed to get a much better result, attract more customers but more importantly keep those customers. It's not complicated, in fact it's simple. Just not easy if you don't know how or what to focus on first.

If you'd like to know more about Business180 or any of our upcoming training programs or events, just jump on our website at www.mybusinessnow.com.au

[Just click on the links for the last 9 business growth tips, or go to any of our post locations \(Linkedin\) and you'll find the post there.](#)

Week 44: **[Clarity is the key to others understanding what you do!](#)**

Week 45: **[How many times do you keep following up a prospective new enquiry or customer? How about until they buy!](#)**

Week 46: **[It's all about service and relationship. Isn't it? It's going to be the next BIG thing.](#)**

Week 47: **[What's the differentiator with 99% of businesses? Price! But it shouldn't be!](#)**

Week48: **[Image is everything. Standout!](#)**

Week49: **[Six easy steps to better sales success.](#)**

Week 50: **[The difference between a business worth nothing and one worth millions is closer than most think!](#)**

Week 51: **[Planning is key but reviewing it is even more important to business success.](#)**

Week 52: **[Thinking a little more strategically, not just business planning is the real solution to business growth.](#)**

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Smart People
Planning
Possibilities



Business52: Ideas for every week. Review, opportunities, change, adapt, grow. Planning360

Use these review pages, to tackle something every week, or maybe just once a month. Small improvements make a huge difference to businesses over time. Look closely at what's going on now, the results you get, and where the opportunities for change, improvement and growth will be. One step at a time, you don't need to do everything all at once. A 1% change in 10 areas will give you a 110% increase in turnover, 2% is 120% Average business growth in Australia is under 9%! Small changes make a big difference.



This weeks/months plans to grow.	Idea	Strategy	Date to implement	Outcomes
Business growth idea 1:				
Business growth idea 2:				
Business growth idea 3:				
Business growth idea 4:				
Business growth idea 5:				



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It's not just about what you do, make or sell, or how well you market it alone, it's everything. Everything has an effect and it's often the little things that make a huge difference to your business and its success.

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