



## What are some of the problems facing business? What solutions are there?

### There is so much uncertainty in our world today...

Businesses continue to be impacted today by many external factors, including the lack of credit, continued increase in raw materials, rising energy prices, unstable markets, consumer spending changes, continued employment fluctuations, imbalanced import and export policy, increased professionals worldwide work for less, increased global competition, industry disruptions, technology and AI advancements, and more goods and services flooding global markets.

### What does this mean to you and business?

**The rules of business have changed.** More people are willing to work for less, top notch executives have been downsized before retirement and are looking for ways to continue their income, companies have shown that they are not hiring for the long run because they are uncertain about all the hurdles being faced, and consumers are spending less. There are certain larger organizations and niche industries doing well, with many organizations not doing as well.

### As a Business Owner / Leader in Your Organization, What can You Do?

Do you lay people off like many other companies have done? As can be seen, this has affected their core competencies, and they are no longer the caliber of company they used to be. Their services, their company culture, their mission and vision, and their bottom line have suffered.

### There are many things that can be done!

Below are a few ideas about productive and initiative-taking ideas and steps you can take:

- Do not be led by fear but involve the asset you have – YOUR PEOPLE.
- Set-up regular meetings with the purpose of identifying challenges, communicating, and providing purposeful solutions, communication (feedback which means back and forth communication, listening, and documentation of what has been stated).
- Review what other businesses did during the Great Depression to see how employees produced ideas in “THEIR” company.
- Initiate a culture where the employees have a stake – Not only financially, also emotionally – Provide a sense of pride that they work and participate in their company – in other words, THEY MEAN SOMETHING / THEY COUNT.
- Have leadership / upper management set the example and commit themselves to being behind the start, change, and continued support of the change.
- Review what is working and keep it.
- Review what is not working – look at ways to bring solution, action, and change to fix it.
- Look at ways to reduce costs in goods and services your company purchases (many companies THINK they are getting the best price, but they are not).



- Review the sales and marketing – Is the message targeted to your identified and specified client? Are you gaining the type of client you desire? Are you penetrating new markets at sales Return on Investment (ROI) that is unreasonable? Look at having someone who can think out of the box and see the forest (not just the tree in front) work with you.
- Be humble, open, and candid with your internal and external team – there is a lot more to know in business now than there was a few years ago – utilize those who know their area for your benefit!

### **Economic Uncertainty Poses Biggest Challenge to Small Businesses**

According to an International Federation of Accountants (IFAC) poll (an organization that is comprised of 164 members and associates in 125 countries and jurisdictions, representing 2.5 million accountants in public practice, education, government service, industry, and commerce) **the biggest challenge facing small and medium sized entities (businesses) is economic uncertainty with the regulatory burden being a close second.** (IFAC)

Employment, industry, technology, cyber, competitive, global, political, compliance, and lack of leadership and experts are all other challenges facing organizations as never before in the last 40 years!

### **The Internet / Online Business**

The Internet, Smart Phones, and Social Engagement have grown immensely over the years and has become an especially important and integral part of communication, social media, sales, and information. For a company, it can be an impactful and results oriented tool image, marketing, sales processes, communications, and overall growth.

There are hurdles and challenges, but if the Internet and technology is used right, with a long-term plan, which mirrors the core of a company and what they stand for, the results can be a great part of your solutions during these times and over the next several years to come in global business. Wade Rimbach points out some areas that companies need to be aware of as it relates to their online strategy and solution.

### **What is Your Long-Term Strategic Plan?**

- **Failing to recognize the opportunities and the benefits that can be derived from exploiting them** – For an online marketing plan to be effective, it is important to thoroughly assess the market and know what tools are available. For many small



businesses, the powers of Facebook and Twitter are not apparent without digging deeper with some research.

- **Lacking technical knowledge** – For a small business owner who is not web savvy, playing with innovative technologies can be daunting. It is often easier to avoid the unfamiliar, but the best advice is for small businesses to dive in headfirst and get their hands dirty. Many online marketing tools are easy to learn to use, with a steady learning curve allowing for more advanced use of the tool as small business owners become more technically literate.
- **Lacking time** – It does take time to learn how to use different tools and to explore the world of online marketing. However, it is time well spent for small businesses investing in the future of their business. Once online accounts have been set up, maintenance takes far less time.
- **Lacking money** – Like most things, online marketing is easier when there is plenty of money available to use on it. Lack of funds is an easy excuse for small businesses wanting to avoid dipping their toes into the world of online marketing. Fortunately, there are many tools and services online that are completely free. The lack of funds is a potential opportunity to get creative with what is available.
- **Seeing marketing as a quick fix** – Online marketing takes time to see results. It is a slow process to begin with. However, momentum can pick up quickly once the ball starts rolling. It is the same situation with content marketing which involves creating, curating, and sharing high quality content.
- **Failing to clearly establish goals** – Goals need to be specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, and timely. It is common for small businesses to be too vague when defining what they want their return on investment to be.
- **Failing to identify what is unique** – For small businesses, knowing their unique selling point and using it to differentiate who they are in the marketplace is crucial. Avoiding the temptation of being too general can be the difference between success and failure when marketing online.
- **Misunderstanding the art of two-way conversation** – The nature of online marketing is quite different to traditional offline marketing. It involves creating conversation and engaging with customers. This shifted paradigm is often difficult for small businesses to comprehend at first. The online community is receptive to people, not robots.
- **Failing to establish consistency** – Setting up social networking accounts and then leaving them inactive is a recipe for doom. All the efforts that small business may put in will be lost if they are not regularly updating. Keeping customers engaged is always the key.



- **Not finding the killer marketing combo straight away** – Online marketing requires some trial and error. Sometimes small businesses find that a certain tool is not useful for their business needs. At other times, they may need to adjust and tweak how they are using an online marketing tool. Many small businesses lose heart when they see their social media campaigns not giving them the results that they initially expected. The key is in experimenting and discovering what works best.
- **Selling before offering any value** – Online marketing requires providing value to customers, not just bombarding them with sales pitches. Small businesses often make the mistake of using their Twitter Feed solely for sales and promotions. It is important for small businesses to create valuable content on their blog, share interesting articles on Facebook, create conversation on Twitter and so forth. The human element of online conversations should never be overlooked.

### What Can You Do to Reduce Costs without Laying People Off?

You can conduct other measures like Boeing did years ago. They implemented a desk sharing program for many of their engineers and other professionals. Each employee would come into the office only so many times per month and work the remainder of the time from a home office that Boeing set up for them. This reduced the amount of space that Boeing had to lease for staff. They created an environment that was not hourly / time driven, but project driven. The result of this was reduced costs for lease space and productivity went up!

You can implement something like this or similar telecommute models that will not only boost employee morale but will also increase your productivity.

One of the best methods you can do is to reduce the costs with what you are already spending money on. This involves any of your goods and services in all spend categories. For example: Office Supplies; Electricity; Natural Gas; Propane; Lease; Benefits; Insurance; Janitorial Supplies; Travel; Fuel; Technology; IT; Human Resources; and many other areas. To find out all the areas, review your budget and identify each area. From this, prioritize top to lowest spend, create your game plan, and start with your “Cost Reduction Program.”

ATS has been reducing costs for more than 30 years. We have been involved in hundreds of different spend categories, hundreds of different industries, reduced costs in the tens of billions of dollars, while increasing productivity and the top line, with an average cost reduction of 28% per project. The wonderful thing about ATS in most cases is, “We do not get paid, unless we reduce your costs”! And, we have always reduced costs with every procurement cost reduction project we have been involved with.



### ATS's 10 Steps to Cost Reduction for Goods and Services

- Step 1. An ATS Certified Cost Reduction Specialist visits your office and gathers the information we need to provide you with a FREE, No-Cost No Obligation Assessment.
- Step 2. The results from your NO COST Assessment are submitted for your review.
- Step 3. You elect to retain ATS to negotiate improved pricing, quality, delivery times, and payment terms on your behalf.
- Step 4. A contract containing a Scope of Work is agreed upon for a pilot engagement based on using ATS to reduce costs on one or more goods and/or services.
- Step 5. ATS writes a detailed RFP for the selected good(s) and/or service(s) and submits it for your approval.
- Step 6. Once approved, we perform research and submit the RFP to a concise list of prospective suppliers (including the current suppliers you utilize) who will compete for your business.
- Step 7. ATS evaluates the bids we receive and submit them to you along with our recommendations.
- Step 8. The winning vendor is selected and notified, a contract is signed, and your company begins paying the new lower price for the selected goods and/or services.
- Step 9. ATS conducts an audit summary of your old versus new pricing with the selected winning bidder.
- Step 10. ATS is paid the agreed upon percentage of the money you are saving in the new contract.

Once ATS has proven the value of our valued procurement cost reduction services to your company, we explore other areas where you may wish to engage in our services to reduce what you pay for other goods and services.

### What Can You Expect As You Partner with ATS?

ATS does not conduct expense reduction. We work in the details which is critical for maintaining **cost reduction that is quantifiable for a contract term**. To illustrate the detail, we practice with all procurement cost reduction Request for Proposals (RFPs) / Bids, below is a procurement cost reduction office supplies RFP for one of our clients. There were 1,000 items gathered in office supplies from the vendors they were purchasing these items from. We assembled this master list, thus creating a benchmark of items, a history, current pricing, trends, etc. We then utilized this in our RFP package (contains multiple documents for a step-by-step, easy to follow process). From this, we not only could compare pricing for each item,



but were able to automate ordering online with these items, and lock in these items for a contract term.

### **ATS Procurement Areas and Industries**

**We have more than 30 years' experience working in all industries with tens of billions of dollars of results in the bottom line through the top line.**

**Our bottom line is your bottom line.**

If you do not have a plan, know where you are at, where you have been, and where you are going, your organization will be tossed back and forth in the global economic ocean. At best, surviving ... at worst, sinking.

### **Whatever You Do, Do Something!**

Do not wait for markets to improve, for lenders to increase your credit, for your innovative marketing and sales campaign to increase sales. It will be a combination of several areas, but most importantly, involving your most asset – YOUR PEOPLE!

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**30+ years growing people, procurement, and projects!**