



Consider your business a living breathing entity. Make sure it has all it needs to thrive. That may be capital, education, infrastructure, the right internal personnel, the best outside support.

Have a **WRITTEN** Business Plan and a Marketing Plan in place. If you need help with this, contact the folks at SBDC or SCORE for assistance. They can help you for free. Sea Star can also help you develop these (just not for free!).

Review your Business Plan and Marketing Plan at least once a quarter. Make sure you are doing what you said you would. You will also want to evolve this plan over time. If there's one thing the Covid Pandemic taught us it is that **CHANGE** is the one constant in our world. Learn to embrace change and to adapt quickly to the world around us.

Don't be afraid to invest in training and education for yourself or your team. There is also plenty of free training to be had. SBDC has great seminars on a wide range of business topics. SCORE offers mentorship from experienced business people. Many networking groups offer seminars and conferences that can help with business and personal development. Never stop learning!

Don't treat your employees like "employees". Develop a team that is well-trained, enjoys their job, takes ownership of their job, and is proud of the company they work for. A happy team results in happy customers.

Understand your customers. Communicate with them and **listen** to their concerns. Develop products and services that meet those needs. Learn from your customers. Don't seek to **tell** them what they need, ask them. One of the easiest ways to do this is by meeting with them routinely one-on-one. If that's not always possible, utilize brief surveys so your customers can anonymously tell you what they think of your products, services, and people. You can learn volumes from this.

Go above and beyond for your clients/customers. **WOW** them at every opportunity!

Make sure your clients know all you have to offer, don't assume they know. Utilize rack cards, newsletters, displays, and samples to clearly lay out your product or service offering.

Events. Networking, seminars, trade shows. Join, attend, exhibit, speak. Get in front of people frequently and let them get to know you and experience your expertise.

Community. Give before you seek to take. Business Karma is strong! Do good for others and it will come back to you. Refer other businesses, ask them to refer you.

Establish a concrete referral program. Everyone likes to be thanked. A thank you note and small gift is always a welcome surprise. The beauty of a referral program is that it is one of the most cost-effective ways of marketing. *****Always send the thank you based on the act of referral and not contingent on a sale.**

Make sure your website is current, easy to navigate, lists all your products and services, and clearly educates people on what you are all about. A website does not need to be expensive to fill all those needs. Remember, most people who are considering doing business with you will check you out first on your website.

Social Media. All social media takes is your time. While it is not a great "sales tool" for most businesses, it is an inexpensive way of "branding" and familiarizing people with you, your business, and your products/services. Don't be "all business, all the time". Let people get to know you and your team on a deeper, more personal level. Remember, people want to do business with people they know, like, and trust.

Track. Track where all prospects are coming from. Analyze this monthly. Some of your marketing initiatives may need tweaking or changing out entirely.

Keep in touch. Acquiring a new customer can cost five times more than retaining an existing customer. And that does not include your effort expended in bringing in new customers or the value existing customers offer by referring you to others.

Communicate with your customers at every opportunity. Call them, send them a card, invite them to events, send newsletters. Remind them what you have to offer.

Remind them that you care!



We market, promote, enlighten, entertain, educate, & intrigue on your behalf