

# **RINGING IN BUSINESS PROFITS FOR THE NEW YEAR**

***Follow These 9 Business Tips  
For A Successful Business Year  
by  
Howard Lewinter  
Business Management Specialist***

The New Year always brings about some degree of self-examination and resolution. But while many of us are busy looking for ways to improve ourselves personally, CEOs, company presidents and business owners need to be making the same effort to determine how to improve their business profitability and business success in the coming year.

Specifically, business people should be examining how their business operates as well as their leadership as CEO, president or owner. Smart business leaders understand that those who do not keep up with change will surely lose out to the competition and will view this time as a valuable opportunity to review each and every aspect of the business to ensure it is operating as efficiently as possible.

Instead of an all-too-predictable ‘*O! Lang Syne*’ filled with unrealistic promises and resolutions, this is a time to ask yourself some very hard, revealing questions about where you and your business are going. If you don’t ask the hard questions now to pinpoint how to improve your business, then when will you invest the time needed to ensure the company continues to prosper?

A good place to start the review is at the very heart of your role with the business. Specifically, ask yourself, “Do I really want to be more successful this year?” The answer is most likely, “yes”. After all, that’s one of the reasons you got into business for yourself anyway: to show the world that you *can* make it on your own, you *can* do it your way. But has the business brought you the success and personal lifestyle that you want and deserve?

In many cases, business people want something more out of the business he or she started. More money. More recognition. More freedom. More creativity. More control over one's destiny. If this sounds like you, and you want to get something more from your business you've got to invest more personally into your business.

Let's look at the following nine business success tips for the New Year:

- **Be open.** Never think that you have heard it all or seen it all. You haven't. For example, there is always another great business idea just around the corner. However, you must thoroughly understand your business if you are to recognize the opportunity when it arrives. The best ideas can come from your employees and customers. But if you're not in constant contact with them you will certainly miss out on the opportunity.
- **Be open to change.** Never think that there is only one way. Business is more than just a one or even a two-way street. It is a bustling intersection leading you down the road of success. If you don't stay aware then you will miss your turn when the opportunity comes. The company down the street you compete with may be very open to change. If you are not open to being progressive then you are giving your business away to the competition down the street.
- **Listen to your customers.** Customers are the heartbeat of your business. Without them, there isn't any business. Some of the best ideas for new products, services and innovation come directly from your customers. Get yourself, key management and employees in the habit of asking questions and getting feedback from your customers, both new and established. Your customers will appreciate their opinion counts. If you do implement a customer's suggestion, be sure to let them know. It will help demonstrate just how valuable they are to you.

- **Listen to your employees.** All too many business people overlook their employees, which can be an extremely costly mistake. You must listen to every single employee in your company; especially those in front line positions, like receptionists, or even those on the janitorial staff. Your employees are the eyes and ears of your company. Employees are often aware of what is going on in the business and many times know what's happening before management. As with customers, some of the best ideas can be generated from your employees, and you need to recognize and encourage them for their contribution. It will only make for a stronger, better, more productive and ultimately, stable company. In addition, be sure to continuously communicate to employees a message of stability as well as underscoring the company role as a secure work environment where employees can enjoy their work and career.
- **Review your performance.** Employees receive yearly reviews, but who reviews you? If you do not already work with a trusted business advisor, then identify and begin working with a business consultant who is objective, knowledgeable and can help you improve your performance. It is worth the investment. Certainly you can talk to peers but will they really speak candidly and objectively as they pinpoint your weaknesses and recommend alternative business strategies? Rather doubtful. They may even be hesitant to tell you what you really need to hear. Hiring the right business consultant means you get the very best advice possible to help ensure your company's future. It is imperative to review yourself consistently. You need be ready to look at yourself and be open to changing what must be changed no matter how difficult, a task that is near impossible without impartial, expert business advice. A good business consultant will help you to perform reality checks on yourself and your business.

- **Recommit yourself to the business.** You started your business with a dream, but eventually reality and life may have gotten in the way. You must be committed to constantly putting yourself back on track. You are your business, and your business is a reflection of you. Your employees and your customers look to you for inspiration and leadership. Be sure to inspire them and increase their confidence each and every day.
- **Look in the mirror with high expectations.** How can you be critical and have high expectations of others unless you expect the same of yourself? It is up to you to set the example, to be the example. Set high expectations for yourself and be sure to live up to them.
- **Evaluate the company from top to bottom.** Review each aspect of the business. Leave nothing to chance. Take the time to look particularly at sales and marketing. Make sure your sales department understands exactly what is expected and has a detailed plan for generating leads and closing sales. Look carefully too at which products or services are outdated, and take time to study the competition. What are they doing better than you and what are their weaknesses?
- **It's the little things that count.** Thank someone for a job well done. Send a note of thanks to a new customer. Then send one to a long established customer. Acknowledge birthdays and new babies. Take note of the new paint on the wall or the new office equipment. Sit in on a meeting or training session that you are not expected at to show your interest and support. Make customers, employees and yourself feel good about your company.

In today's economic times, you can no longer coast along as you may have in the past and hope to get by and make a profit. It's critical that you take the time to plan your business strategy to achieve success. You can't afford to wait any longer. Take action today so you can ring in profits in the New Year!

*Howard Lewinter, Business Management Specialist, is the business expert CEOs, company presidents and business owners throughout the United States consult to solve business problems and business issues, to lessen business stress and to achieve more company profit and growth. For more information on Howard's unique style of business consulting go to Howard's blog: <http://www.TalkBusinessWithHoward.com> or call Howard direct, toll-free at 888-738-1855. Howard offers a free weekly newsletter with business advice, ideas and business perspective. Sign up for Howard's newsletter at: <http://www.TalkBusinessWithHoward.com>.*