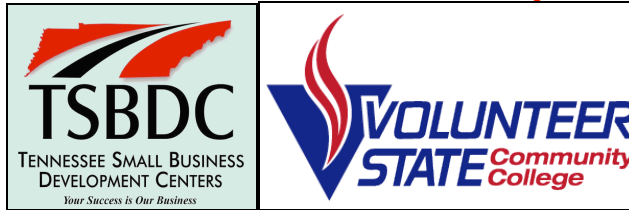


Tennessee Small Business Development Center at Volunteer State Community College



A public service program of the Division of Continuing Education & Economic Development

January's Newsletter Topic: Chaos Management

Many of the clients I work with have become amateur fire fighters -- not in the literal sense, but in their business. Many business owners spend a disproportionate amount of time redirecting employees, on the phone with vendors and customers, and running errands. In fact, most of these business owners even thrive on it. It gives them a feeling that they are managing controlled chaos, and who doesn't want to feel like a hero saving the day. Although fire fighting might be fun and make you feel important, in reality, you are spinning your wheels. This type of management usually leads to stagnant growth and disgruntled employees.

In order to avoid this type of management, you should strongly consider following a few basic rules that will allow you to run your business instead of your business running you.

- **Develop Routines**
If you find yourself handling a piece of paper or email several times before being able to make a decision, you need a new routine. Every piece of paper or email that comes into your business should be handled only once, acted upon, and filed. Paper and email should not be shuffled around until the office fairy does something with it. If your desk is covered with paper or your inbox cluttered with old emails, consider cleaning them up and creating routines to prevent this from reoccurring.
- **Create Clear Responsibilities**
Real business management means knowing who is responsible for what. If you have a business where everyone just "pitches in" to get stuff done and everyone does a little of everything, you have a real possibility for chaos. Although it is admirable to have a team atmosphere, you should have very clear job descriptions that describe in detail what everyone should be doing.
- **Delegate and/or Outsource**
This point goes hand-in-hand with the previous point. Repeat after me, "I cannot do it all". The famous last words of many strong business owners are, if you want something done right, you've got to do it yourself. That may only work for the first year or so.

After that, it can become counterproductive. Delegating and outsourcing cannot only improve your business' management, but also improve your revenue. The key to delegating and outsourcing is to find good employees, vendors, accountants, attorneys, and other professional advisors.

- **Make Business Planning Priority #1**

"I'm so busy I don't have time to plan". If this is your M.O. take another look at your work style. One of the greatest myths about planning is that it takes more time than it's worth. Many small business owners spend their time reacting to issues, rather than being proactive. They then wonder why they seem to be spinning their wheels. Successful small business owners spend time every day on business planning. Right now is a good time to take time to create plans to reach your revenue and growth goals.

Do not let chaos management be the way you continue operating your business. Once you start using some of these basic practices, you'll find yourself running your business instead of it running you.

January Small Business Workshops

Sign up for any of these workshops online at www.tsbdc.org.

How to Start a Small Business ★

Tuesday, January 13, 2009 4:00 PM to 6:00 PM

This workshop provides basic information on starting a small business. It will also discuss services provided by the TSBDC. Reservations are required.

Location: [TSBDC @ Volunteer State Community College, Gibson Hall, Gallatin, TN](#)

Developing a Business Plan ★

Tuesday, January 27, 2009 2:00 PM to 5:00 PM

This workshop provides information about sections of a business plan, information needed for each section, how to gather information, and how to compile it for your plan. Participants will complete a rough draft of the narrative portion of their business plan during the workshop. Reservations are required.

Location: [TSBDC @ Volunteer State Community College, Gibson Hall, Gallatin, TN](#)

The TSBDC also offers free and confidential one-on-one counseling for existing and start up small businesses. To register for go to www.tsbdc.org.

Other contact information - Phone (615) 230-4780 www.volstate.edu/tsbdc

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