

How to Grow Your Small Business

From: About.com

7 Ways Small Business Owners Take Their Businesses to the Next Level

Many successful small business owners have at least one thing in common -- the ability to see the big picture and envision what their success will look like tomorrow. Here are some of the activities successful small business owners complete to place their focus on the future and keep moving forward:

Use Goal-Setting to Push Boundaries

Goals can be a great way to clarify your focus, measure progress and track achievements. And for the most successful among us, goals also present an opportunity to push the lines of your comfort zone and take calculated risks. The more you are willing to stretch and challenge yourself, the more you have to gain over the long term. Creating a plan for this growth in the form of long- and short-term goals, a business plan or even single targeted tasks can help your business reach new levels of success.

Put the Focus on Customer Service

Being able to retain desirable clients plays a significant role in the continued success of a small business. Not only does having regular customers mean regular income, but happy clients can also provide powerful word-of-mouth marketing. Along with providing your clients with an exceptional product or service, you can encourage repeat business by being customer service-focused. This means asking for and acting on feedback, addressing issues and complaints quickly and thoroughly, and being consistently accessible and accountable.

Commit to Continuous Learning

You should understand that no matter how much you achieve, there will always be more to be learned and applied for even greater success. Even if you don't have the time or the desire to learn in a traditional classroom setting, there are a number of ways you can advance your knowledge so your business can continue to thrive. Continuous learning can take the form of online training, self-paced programs, collaborative opportunities, mentoring, and even reading.

Learn How to Delegate

Whether you have employees, subcontractors or family pitching in, learning how to delegate effectively can be the difference between reaching new heights and burning out. Many small business owners are accustomed to doing a variety of things themselves, so it can be challenging to identify the tasks you don't need to do yourself and assign the work to someone else. Once you overcome the challenge, though, you will have more time to dedicate to what you do best -- grow your business.

Increase Your Productivity

Some of what you do as a small business owner will be routine; there are a variety of daily tasks that will need to be accomplished to keep your business running smoothly.

The more effective you are when it comes to completing the day-to-day business management tasks (the ones that you don't delegate, that is), the more potential your small business has for greater success. You can boost your productivity by developing systems to streamline these processes.

Stay Current with Technology

Technology plays a role in every business, so all small business owners can benefit from not only having an understanding of the technology that impacts them directly, but also keeping track of how it changes. Keeping up with new and changing technology can help small business owners make better decisions; and it can help save money, time and other resources.

Change Up Your Marketing

Many small business owners are discovering how online marketing can add a new dynamic to promoting their goods and services. The most successful small businesses are willing to explore new outlets of online marketing -- in combination with their offline marketing activities -- to see what produces the most interest. Consistently changing, testing, and mixing your marketing activities can be a valuable way to see what works, what doesn't and what type of result it produces.



While you do not need to do all of these activities at once, most successful small business owners find a way to work them in over time. To gain momentum, start with one or two that are already aligned with the way you run your business, and then start to make changes to incorporate the others gradually.

**Welcome,
Recently
Certified DBEs!**

Confident Women LLC

Julie Balch
Truck driver training,
consulting



**Do you know
someone who
wants to be a
DBE?**

If they are a small business owned by a minority or a woman and have less than \$1,320,000 in personal net worth and less than \$22.41 million in annual sales averaged over the last 3 years, they may qualify! Have them contact Wendy Stewart, DBE Program Manager at (406)444-6337 or westewart@mt.gov for an application packet.

INROADS

MONTANA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
MDT holds two bid lettings each month.

Proposed for letting April 2012:

UPN/UNIT	PROJECT ID	FINANCIAL DISTRICT	PROJECT DESIGNATION	TYPE OF CONSTRUCTION	LENGTH MILES
5831 001	IM 90-1(193)16	1	DEBORGIA-WEST	RESTORATION & REHAB-PCCP	3.1
5831 000	IM 90-1(162)6	1	SALTESE-EAST	RESTORATION & REHAB-PCCP	4.7
7749 001	IM 90-7(104)348	2	GREELEY CRK CROSSOVERS/ MT 11-1	BRIDGE REPLACEMENT WITH NO ADDED CAPACITY	
7607 000	NH 7-2(55)78	1	CARLTON CRK RD-MACLAY RD	MINOR REHAB	3.6
7648 000	NH 7-1(133)74	1	FLORENCE – NORTH	MINOR REHAB	3.7
7460 000	NH 8-2(81)44	3	11 TH AVE – HELENA	RESURFACING-ASPHALT (THIN LIFT<=60.00MM)(INC SAF IMP)(PAVE PRES)	1.2
7627 000	NH 102-1(8)4	3	RIVER DR – 25 TH TO 38 TH (GTF)	RESURFACING-ASPHALT (THIN LIFT<=60.00MM)(INC SAF IMP)(PAVE PRES)	1.1
4339 001	NH-BR 57-5(34)226	4	BIG DRY CRK-14 M E OF JORDAN	BRIDGE REPLACEMENT WITH NO ADDED CAPACITY	0.2
7304 000	STPS 354-1(21)0	1	POLSON URBAN	MINOR REHAB	0.5
7641 000	STPS 240-1(8)0	3	CHINOOK-SOUTH	RESURFACING-SEAL & COVER	6.8
7644 000	STPS 534-1(6)27	3	CONRAD-WEST	RESURFACING-SEAL & COVER	1.0
7643 000	STPS 408-1(8)0	3	FAIRFIELD-JCT US-287	RESURFACING-CRACK SEALING	19.6
7642 000	STPS 280-1(27)5	3	YORK ROAD-EAST	RESURFACING-SEAL & COVER	7.3
6859 000	STPU 5799(24)	3	BLVD AV-16 TH W-W 11 TH ST - HAVRE	MAJOR REHAB – WITHOUT ADDED CAPACITY	2.8
7237 000	UPP 5811(2)	3	SOUTH MT AVE-HLNA	RESURFACING-ASPHALT (THIN LIFT<=60.00MM)(INC SAF IMP)(PAVE PRES)	0.4
7210 000	HSIP 1-1(88)4	1	SF 099 W OF TROY JCT S-508	TRAFFIC SIGNALS & LIGHTING	
7204 000	HSIP 93-1(17)10	1	SF 099 E OF IDAHO BORDER	TRAFFIC SIGNALS & LIGHTING	
7184 000	HSIP 90-7(96)324	2	SF 099 E OF BOZEMAN	ROADWAY & ROADSIDE SAFETY IMPROVEMENTS	
7752 000	ER 81024(9)	1	SKALKAHO ROAD/MT 11-1	RECONSTRUCTION-WITHOUT ADDED CAPACITY	0.2
7817 000	ER 228-1(9)15	3	S-228 – S OF HIGHWOOD/MT 11-1	RECONSTRUCTION-WITHOUT ADDED CAPACITY	6.2

Opportunity is missed by most people because it is dressed in overalls, and looks like work. -- Thomas A. Edison

DBE participation for MDT Awarded Contracts for January and February:

Prime <i>DBE</i>	Location	Project	DBE Participation
Oftedal Construction Inc	W Roundup Rockfall Repr	STPP 14-5(32)165	0%
Pavement Maintenance Solutions <i>Wharton Asphalt Arrow Striping</i>	Three Forks – West	IM 90-5(71)274	13.76%
Riverside Contracting Inc – Msla	Lodge Grass – South	IM 90-9(110)532	1.75%
Schellinger Const Co Inc <i>Fencecrafters – Helena</i>	Townsend – South	MT-STPE 8-4(44)78	.73%
Sletten Construction Co Inc	Crooked Cr-3 KM NE Shepherd	BR 9056(63)	1.83%
Average Participation			1.68%

For Your To-Do List: DSBS Registration

*Want high-visibility for your business? Get your profile into the SBA's **Dynamic Small Business Search** online database.*

The **Central Contractor Registration (CCR)** is the electronic gateway vendor/contractor/grantee database for the federal government. All current and potential contractors must be registered in the CCR in order to receive federal contracts.

Among its many uses, the CCR serves as a search engine for contracting officers who are looking for specific types of businesses or just performing business market research.

This isn't limited to government contracting officers – prime contractors use the CCR to locate subcontractors or potential teaming partners, too.

Obviously, visibility on the CCR is a valuable tool for making yourself - known to the international purchasing community.

However, if you go a step further, there's an even better (and more detailed) way to market your capabilities to prospective buyers: the **Dynamic Small Business Search (DSBS)**.

The DSBS, a spin-off function of the CCR, is maintained by the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA). Businesses profiled on the DSBS can be searched by North American Industrial Classification System (NAICS) codes, business type, location, ownership, types of certification, bonding level and keywords. References for government contract performance history can be posted too.

How do you get registered on the DSBS? By first being registered on the CCR. You may or may not have noticed, but the conclusion of your initial CCR registration – assuming you're a small business – you were given the option of going on to fill out the "SBA Supplemental Page."

If you didn't see it, don't worry, you can always go back in and update your CCR profile, thereby getting another opportunity for DSBS registration.

Much of the information on the DSBS will be populated by your CCR profile; other fields you must take the time to fill in yourself. Make sure your Capabilities Narrative and the Keywords under your DSBS profile contain all the applicable products and services your company provides.

Don't forget to keep all your information current in both your CCR and DSBS profiles, especially your email and website addresses. It's no use registering if no one can contact you!

The SBA takes care of other updates, like 8(a) Business Development and HUBZone program certification status.

Ready to get started? Visit www.ccr.gov to download a User's Guide in the "Help" section.

MDT Civil Rights Bureau Directory

Wendy Stewart DBE Program Manager/Certifications	westewart@mt.gov	(406)444-6337
Shannon Hahn DBE Supportive Services Coordinator	shahn@mt.gov	(406)444-7287
Andy Hyatt-Marcucci Compliance Technician	ahyattmarcucci@mt.gov	(406)444-6331
Alice Flesch ADA Coordinator	aflesch@mt.gov	(406)444-9229
Bill Anderson Title VI & EEO Compliance Specialist	bianderson@mt.gov	(406)444-6334
Kathy Terrio EEO & Labor Compliance Specialist	kterrio@mt.gov	(406)444-9270
Patti McCubbins Civil Rights Bureau Chief	pmcubbins@mt.gov	(406)444-6042

Montana Department of Transportation

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Take a class anywhere, anytime with the Small Business Training Network (SBTN). The SBTN is a virtual campus offering online courses, publications, and other forms of technical assistance. Courses are self-paced and take about 30 minutes to complete.

Available classes include:

- Strategies for Growth
- Construction Safety & OSHA Compliance
- IRS Resources for Small Business Owners
- Recordkeeping

Access the full listing at:

<http://www.sba.gov/category/navigation-structure/counseling-training>

April

- 4/3 – 4/4 Montana Energy Conference
Billings, Metrapark
Two-day comprehensive energy conference and tradeshow that will uncover opportunities for energy development throughout Montana.
Contact: (406)899-2099
- 4/13 U S General Counsel for Alberta, Canada and the Northwest Territories
Missoula
Lunch discussion on trade opportunities in Canada for Montana companies
11:30 am
Contact: (406)243-6982
\$10 per person
- 4/16 - 20 Intermountain GIS Conference
Red Lion Hotel, Kalispell
Local Solutions to Global Issues
Contact:
<http://magjp.org/Intermountain>

4/23 - 24

Invest In Success Business Conference
Holiday Inn in downtown Missoula
The conference will provide essential business training on financing, human resources, marketing and management
Contact: Patty Cox at pattyc@mtcdc.org



Don't be fooled, it's that time of year again and scammers are out for your money and anything else they can get their hands on. Do NOT give out your private information to anyone, EVER! Know your source and who is asking for your info. You should never get a fax or a phone call asking for your information, YOU should initiate the call if someone needs that kind of information.