

GYB 2015  
**02**



## GROW YOUR BUSINESS

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## Things to Consider When Taking Your Business to the Next Level

Stuck in a rut, feeling burnt out, lacking motivation? These may be early signs that it's time to take things up a notch.

Accepting these symptoms as the norm can mean falling behind and is a risk most small business owners cannot afford to take in a saturated and hypercompetitive market.

There are many strategies that have proven effective when it comes to growing your business. Take note of some of these tried and true tactics:

1. Reenergize, revitalize and reset. Apply this to all aspects of the business and allow for creativity and innovation to be reborn.
2. Mix it up, team wise. Reinvent your common collaborations, try new things, and take measured and informed risks. Without risk, there is no reward!
3. Take stock - accept failures and retackle at a new angle. Failure is simply an invitation to once again attempt success.

Once you have settled these base level issues, start the climb and begin the push upward.

At this point, reconsider your selling strategies. This is where you can sink your teeth into new directions that will actually provide tangible results, propelling you forward; result driven revamping.

Analyze your USP (unique selling proposition) in the current market. This may now be different from when you started.

*“Employ new selling techniques. Take risks.”*

Stay ahead of the curve, be innovative, again- take risks. Attend seminars and workshops, watch webinars, scour the web for new trends and be the first in your network to implement them.

In order to climb to a new level, restructuring your marketing strategy is a must. Ensure you have a budget and cash flow forecast to support your strategies.

Don't forget to alter your mindset, amidst all the other changes. It is one thing to be prepared on paper, but quite another to be mentally equipped for what is to come.

Consider growth to be like opening a second business- you will once again be strapped for cash and time and need to put your nose to the grindstone. Be ready, take those measured risks and prepare for (another) exciting ride!



## Sell. Sell. Sell...

When it comes to sales, achieving results is the goal, and when we fall short, the problem often lies in the initial strategy, or lack thereof.

Effective selling comes down to one thing - a distinct, solid and foolproof sales strategy. So what exactly is that, you ask?

A sales strategy consists of a plan that positions a company's brand or product to gain a competitive advantage.

Kick starting the sales strategy is the exhausting part, but once it's in place, you can more or less coast along (that is, until you hit the next uphill climb)!

To get started, define your target market. Maintaining your focus on a desired market segment is a lot cheaper, and more effective, than targeting 'the whole world'.

We suggest writing out a list of whom this market includes. The longer the list, the deeper your sales reach.

That takes us to the next step; reach. What is yours and how will you achieve it? Be crystal clear on

the actual ways in which you will establish this reach - networking, cold calls, email blasts, on-site visits, collaborations, etc.

Established a connection? How and when will you follow up? What questions will you ask? Concrete answers to these questions will be part of your sales strategy, and implemented each and every time creates a process.

Let's be honest here- the smaller your business, the harder it is to sell. Simply explaining who you are and what you do can take up enough time to allow a prospect to tune you out. The big guys jump straight to the sale - find a way to do this as well.

Cut your elevator pitch in half, bullet point your background or forget it altogether.

Presenting yourself as a leader in the industry and not allowing room for doubt is the only way to battle this impediment. Confidence **MUST** be part of your process.

Round up your sales strategy with a defined plan for execution and delivery. Timelines and deadlines

will streamline your process and create a smooth path, aimed directly at closing the deal.

*“Focusing on segmented market is more effective than targeting everyone.”*



# Ideas to Boost Your Brand

For small business owners, creating an identifiable brand can be a challenge. But much like a fingerprint a brand is a unique, intricate identifier attached to your business only and therefore must be handled like a very valuable asset.

Creating a logo and establishing a look is just the first step. Once the brand has been created, you must actively work to continuously boost said brand.

You may not have the large scale marketing world at your fingertips but there is plenty that can be done.

Let's start with the obvious, so that we can move on. Optimize your web presence.

The vast beasts that are search engines are your friend, embrace them. Utilize their powers and allow for some of the leg work to be efficiently completed by the computer.

Next, let's tackle the physical world. Coffee mugs, key chains, t-shirts, reusable bags, wine topper, bottle openers, coasters, pens...the list is infinite.

Pick an item and slap your logo on it. Branding 101, give away free things - people love it! Just make sure the gift reinforces what you do. There has to be a connection.

With this strategy, you are constantly reminding them of your existence - sounds profound, doesn't it? It's not - it's called repetition and recall and it is the foundation of a sound promotional campaign, directly related to boosting a brand.

*“Print media advertisement is as effective as online, if you do it correctly.”*

Participate in charitable events and fundraisers. Donate products or services that reflect your business as prizes in silent auctions, networking events, galas, etc.

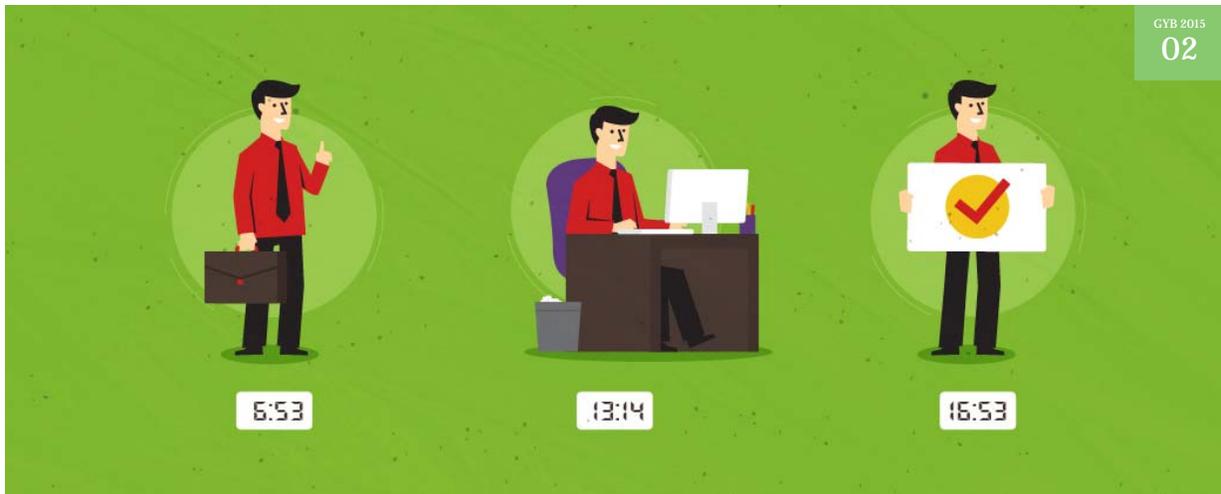
This is a low-cost, high-return strategy for brand awareness that innately allows access to both targeted markets as well as new niche markets.

Take it a step further and sponsor your own public event, using the

opportunity to put your name and brand out there, on the shoulders of a great cause that will keep people talking.

Take a walk down memory lane and revisit the nostalgia of tradition - classic advertising strategies. Contrary to popular belief, print media is not dead!

Advertising campaigns in print, on radio or in any of those traditional channels can still provide effective results when it comes to boosting your brand – when they are done right.



## Getting the Most Out Of Your Work Day

So much to do, so little time...sound familiar? If you own a small business, then of course it does!

The constraints of time will always feel like a ball and chain, dragging even the most hardworking entrepreneur along with it.

What to do? Start on a daily basis, attempting the (seemingly) daunting task of time management.

First things first - no wait, big things first! Tackle the most stressful, bearing tasks first thing and you will save yourself valuable ticks of the clock by not worrying about them all day.

This strategy also helps to boost your energy - the rush of completing a challenge can keep you and your team's motivation up for the rest of the day, increasing productivity.

Speaking of productivity, studies show most people are the most effective in the earlier hours of the morning. Test the theory by starting earlier a few days a week.

Allocate a period in the day in which you implement "Zero Distractions". Close the door, send calls to voicemail, and do not open new emails. Use this time differently each day, but make sure it is undisturbed.

*"Remember to try to manage your time, don't try to maximize it."*

Create an activity calendar that begins with smaller, daily tasks. Even the smallest of tasks need a deadline. Build up to weekly, monthly and yearly tasks, but only once the dailies have been completed.

Remember the Five D's: Do it, Delete it, Delegate it, Decide on it, Date it.

Each task can go through the process, making things move more quickly and preventing you from getting stuck.

### **BUILDING A COMMUNITY PRESENCE**

Web presence is crucial, but so is building a presence in a different kind of community - the one that you live in! Make a mark and become a brand and face that people relate to, and one that they look towards in the community to have their back. Join the local chamber of commerce or a board that supports a cause you feel passionate about. Attend community events, better yet, organize them yourself! The communities you live and work in form the backbone of a successful business.



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