

# TOP TEN WAYS TO SABOTAGE YOUR OWN BUSINESS

Based on Local Feedback

# IGNORE YOUR CUSTOMERS

- Don't acknowledgment when they come in the door
- Don't return phone calls
- Don't respond to emails

# Recommendations

- Set universal standards for employees
- Greet people promptly with a smile and eye contact
- If helping others, let them know you or someone else will help them as soon as possible
- Auto response for emails to acknowledge commitment to responding if you are not able to get back to them promptly
- Outgoing voicemail acknowledge commitment to responding ASAP
- Watch out for placing priority on answering phone calls when a walk in customer has been waiting and not been helped. Hint: If call is related to follow up with a person you are helping, let the waiting customer know.

# Poor Signage, Curb Appeal

- Outdated signage
- Poor signage condition, visibility
- Lack of available parking
- Lack of directional signage
- Hazardous path to front entrance
- Lack of good line of sight to watch for customers or lack of adequate visitor alert system
- Poor nighttime lighting

# Recommendations

- Ask others for feedback on what could be improved – preferably “fresh eyes”
- Have bell or alarm to alert when visitor comes in
- Check for accessibility
- Clear directional signage
- Dedicate premium parking for customers!

# Be Vague About Hours/Contact Info

- Not updating seasonal hours of operation or temporary closure
- Not being clear about appointment basis and how to make an appointment
- Not adhering to posted hours of operation

# Recommendations

- Keep all public posting of hours and contact info updated
- Update as needed
- Set up remote access to changing voicemail as needed
- Be aware that outdated information leads to assumptions such as you no longer being in business.

# Not Dealing with Local Accounts Payable Obligations

- Ignore requests for payment
- Impact- people start talking!
- May lead to COD payment arrangements

# Recommendations

- COMMUNICATE WITH YOUR VENDORS!!
- Make payment arrangements as needed
- Keep your vendors informed, particularly when you receive past due notices
- Consider in kind exchanges (Bartering)

# Not Being Prepared For Promotional Opportunities

- Submitting poor quality images
- Expecting others to do your work
- Not having updated artwork, website address, facebook page available
- Not having “elevator pitch” ready
- Not responding in a timely manner
- Can lead to reluctance for others to offer opportunities to your business

# Recommendations

- Own your own artwork and have it accessible in a variety of formats
- Keep promotional blurbs updated
- Know your most important current message at all times
- Understand the basics of graphic arts
- Understand media basics
- Have appropriate photos ready at all times
- Keep personal/business bio updated and ready for use

# Publicize Controversial View

- Be very vocal about issues that are divisive
- Be aggressive about promoting your views at your place of business, on your website or Facebook page
- Insult people who have opposing views

# Recommendations

- Remember that your views are your businesses' views in the eyes of many customers or potential customers
- Helping “Kids and Puppies” are safe topics
- Avoid targeting social welfare programs
- Showcase your “safe” community contributions to offset folks finding out about more controversial involvement

# Blame Others For Your Failures

- Expect supportive public resources to unreasonably do your promotional work or address your weakness, then blame them when it doesn't work out
- Being very vocal about it being someone else's fault
- Not acknowledging mistakes and making commitment to doing better in the future

# Recommendations

- It is simple....
  - Apologize to those who were affected
  - take responsibility
  - fix what you can
- Clear commitment to doing better in the future

# High Employee Turnover/Unhappy Employees

- Ignoring poor morale
- Not being clear with standards
- Not leading by example
- Micromanaging
- Being absent
- Not showing pride in business
- Can lead to poor quality staff support and difficulty in recruiting good employees

# Recommendations

- Set clear standards
- Be consistent with your example
- Have good personnel policies in place and review as needed
- Look for non-monetary ways to support staff
  - Flexible schedule
  - Comp for services or goods you sell
  - Support your employees during their difficult times
  - Establish trust

# Not Paying Attention to Website/FB Page

- Outdated info on website or Facebook Page
- Broken links
- Not having directions or hours posted
- Not responding to FB messages
- Not responding to contacts through website
- Not keeping up with current events
- Both are resources that are heavily used by your current and potential customers – today's equivalent of the phonebook for many

# Recommendations

- Set a schedule for updates
- Assign to a online-savvy employee
- Schedule your Facebook posts in advance
- Set up website for easy updating by you or one of your employees without relying on your website designer
  - Blog pages are an easy way to do this

# Ignore The Rumors

- Let the rumors run amok
- Not responding to complaints
- “In the absence of a response, folks will assume the worst”
- Can lead to speculation such as you are going out of business
- Suggests that you do not care

# Recommendations

- Acknowledge and Respond
  - If complaint is on Facebook, post that you are responding in private message if needed
  - Apologize! (can be as simple as “I am sorry you are feeling upset” if needed.)
  - “Give them the Pickle”
  - “To Err is Human, To Forgive is Divine” – most folks are happy with an apology!