

# TITAN TIMES NEWSLETTER

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**TITAN BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT GROUP, LLC**



## **Small Business Seasonal Cyclicity**

Many retailers depend on holiday sales to earn a profit for the year. Some small businesses rely on sales generated primarily in one season, too, even those that aren't involved in retailing. But unlike national chains, small businesses typically need to generate a profit every quarter or month. They must optimize their earning potential year-round to really establish a strong financial footing. Following are three very basic concepts.

Diversify a Company's Offerings. Everyone is familiar with the Halloween stores that pop up in late August or early September. They appear in vacant shopping mall storefronts, luring in customers with animatronic displays and interesting costumes. They do a booming business—for the two months they're open. As soon as November begins, Halloween shops are vacated and become empty storefronts again. Although these business owners struggle with cyclical revenues, they need not necessarily cease operations entirely. They can work to generate a profit even when their primary activity is out of season.

A landscaping company owner, for example, may find that come October, his business prospects begin to wither. He can optimize his earning potential year-round by raking leaves and winterizing properties in fall, clearing snow and ice in winter and prepping gardens and lawns in the spring. He may need to invest in some new equipment, but the cyclicity of his earnings will be reduced significantly.

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*“ Seek Opportunities to Promote Yourself in the Offseason. Though, clearly, small business owners shouldn't move away from their primary revenue drivers. .”*

Similarly, the owner of a Christmas shop may do 90 percent of her sales between October and December. If, for example, she changes her product offerings slightly, diversifying into home décor or other holiday items, she is more likely to help normalize (evenly spread) her earning potential throughout the year.

Seek Opportunities to Promote Yourself in the Offseason. Though, clearly, small business owners shouldn't move away from their primary revenue drivers. The landscaper and Christmas shop owner ought to continue landscaping and selling Christmas items. But, they should also try to market their original business offerings while they are generating revenue in the offseason. The landscaper can mention to winter clients that he would be happy to work on their property in the spring or summer. Similarly, the Christmas retailer can advertise her store's holiday offerings months before the holiday merchandise is even put on display.

Marketing is a study in consumer psychology, and small business owners can hint at the value their enterprise adds. Rather than refer to his business as a landscaping company, the landscaper can refer to it as a "property maintenance" firm. The retailer can use red and green in her logo or marketing materials to subtly suggest that Christmas is her specialty.

Seek Other Income Sources. Perhaps an entrepreneur's revenue optimization and marketing strategies are not working as planned. Or a business owner may want to expand his or her roster of talents and have new career experiences. The best way to pursue personal growth and new revenue streams may be the addition of entirely new business activities. Consulting is one such option, an avenue by which a small business owner can offer his or her expertise and make money doing so. In addition, business owners likely have talents that they don't typically use in their line of work. The Christmas retailer may be a talented writer; she could write on a freelance basis to supplement her income.

Seasonal cyclicity is something that many small business owners may face. They can take action to reduce cyclicity and bolster their revenue stream. Being creative, flexible, and open to new challenges can move a business into the black. By offering new services, marketing cleverly, or pursuing new personal ventures, a business owner can take charge and ensure his or her success.

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### *Masterful Quotes*



*“The great accomplishments of man (and woman) have resulted from the transmission of ideas of enthusiasm.”*

*– Thomas J. Watson*

*“To think creatively, we must be able to look afresh at what we normally take for granted.”*

*– George Kneller*

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### **Five Important Ways to Improve Client Relationships**

Good business owners are well aware that in order to grow and survive, they have to cultivate and nurture relationships with existing and potential clients. It is also a fact that throughout your business cycles, you will lose clients for a number of reasons that are not even related to you or your product/service. That is just a fact of life and in business is a game of percentages. That said, it is all that much more clear why you need to not only continually attract new, but also purposefully retain, existing clientele. Those existing clients can be future sources of additional evolving profits and potential providers of new referrals. Because of this, you want to pay specific attention to improving your client relationships. It simply makes sense and is worth putting some effort into even for the smallest of businesses.

Some simple ways of cultivating and improving client relationships include:

1. Listening more than you speak and answering more than you question. You need to understand what someone needs in order to determine if and how you can help them, but in general, people don't like answering too many questions about all of their business requirements. It can become a chore. So instead, cultivate conversation. Learn to steer conversation based on what you've heard and pay particular attention to helping them down a conversational path that is natural – not a series of disconnected questions ad-nauseum.
2. Listen to what ISN'T being said. In a business conversation, topics are often omitted because the other party may already have someone or something that satisfies a particular need. This isn't to say you can't inform them of your ability to provide a particular solution – probing for opportunities or upsells is not a bad thing - but it does suggest keeping it brief and moving on if it is not a current need for them. Otherwise, you risk coming off as a “salesman”.

3. In concert with the above suggestion, keep in mind that your understanding of your client and their understanding of you is probably based on previous or existing business or maybe on the referral from someone else. It doesn't matter how you get around to having the discussion but you must always remember that the client only knows what they know based on what they've experienced or have been told. Do let them know of the related products and services that might be of interest to them and explore other opportunities in their business. Quite often, even established business relationships built on a singular service or product can be developed into something more. Just don't push too hard and infringe upon areas they have communicated contentment with.

4. Provide feedback and even a degree of "free" advice. Be careful here, you don't want to give away all you know – you deserve to make a living – but do be a little generous in offering advice and thoughts to your clients as a way of building trust. Remember, the more the client trusts you the more likely they are to tell other businesses about you and we all know that is the best form of marketing we can get.

5. Be prompt. A strong relationship built up over years might get away with a late delivery, occasionally, but fresh or young relationships generally don't. Regardless, be sure the client is kept informed along the way and if anything goes wrong, you must assure them it won't happen again and then make sure it doesn't. If you fail here, it will likely take a great deal excellent, dependable and prompt service before they get over it. Likewise, keep your clients apprised of how the deliveries are coming along, provide regular updates on progress and be completely transparent Above all else, don't make a promise you know you will have difficulty delivering.

Excellent client relationships are the key to all business success yet it's surprising just how often it gets forgotten and 100% of the effort goes into selling a product or delivering a service. You will eventually be known for your product or service, providing it reliably and properly fulfills a need, but keeping and expanding your client-base in order for that to happen will require a thoughtful and consistent effort.

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*Happy holidays from all of us and the best of  
success to you in the upcoming New Year!*