

## ***Tis the season for lists!***

A recent Fortune magazine article highlighted *40 Under 40* list of successful individuals. <http://www.fortune.com> Another list in that same issue mentioned *8 Over 80*. Still another was the *Top 50 Powerful Women in Business*. No doubt the writers, researchers and editors did their homework in making the selections memorable. Such lists exist in local newspapers and magazines. These lists do not suggest that the flourishing individuals and companies spotlighted are exclusive in their knowledge and expertise.

The majority of small business owners will not land on any published list of such distinction. However, that does not mean that small businesses should not create lists of their own to remain focused in their vision and goals; ensure that products and services are meeting, even exceeding expectations; customers are satisfied; employees are happily compensated; and, personal and family lives are enriched, not neglected. Business owners should maintain a habit of building and checking lists.

1. ***Review your vision/mission statement and company goals on a regular basis.*** Chances are that these have not been given a serious analysis since the company started. Are these statements posted anywhere employees can proudly gaze upon for reminders of why they work at such a great company?
2. ***Are your products and services meeting expectations?*** Technological updates can render some products and services outdated in a shorter period of time. Use creative ways to make changes to packaging. Revise your service delivery model. This may be a good time to convene an internal focus group to evaluate current products and services.
3. ***Are customers satisfied?*** This should be an easy one to check but not so fast! A simple yes or no answer is not enough to gauge customer satisfaction. Develop a short survey using a website like the popular *Survey Monkey* to get some measureable data.
4. ***Employees are happily compensated.*** This may seem like a no-brainer with unemployment at record highs, employees should be happy to get a paycheck. How will the company keep them happy through the challenging times?
5. ***Personal and family lives should not be neglected.*** Lots of energy goes into running a business and burnout occurs. Incorporate some fun time in your busy schedule to include those close to you. Show them how appreciative you are of their support of the business.

If you envision yourself on a published top performing list some day, then keep that positive mental attitude. Meanwhile, pull out the gold stars and place them next to the achievements on the lists and celebrate your successes!

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