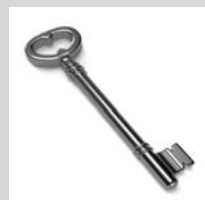




Tips to Increase Productivity & Profit in '09

Ask Yourself One Key Question



"When things pick up, what will I want to have accomplished so that I am ready to effectively manage and profit from new business coming my way?" What needs to happen to have all your "ducks in a row" prior to things picking up?

Some examples:

- **Stellar staff in place.** Now is the time to have a high performance staff. Are you excited about each member of your team? If not, make a quick note of who you are unsatisfied with and why. Start addressing this now (communicate your expectations, give timely & candid feedback, follow through on consequences if things don't improve). With all the good talent out there, why would you settle for less than the best for each dollar you pay? This applies to vendors too.

- **Job descriptions updated, hiring process or outsourcing plan in place** for the roles you will need to fill (or re-fill if you had to cut). Think about what tasks make the most sense for each position, and whether you can consolidate roles or outsource certain tasks to save on costs (think [Virtual Assistants](#)).

- **Database updated and cleaned out.** Use this time to remove duplicates, incomplete entries and fill any "holes". You want your customer database primed for when things get busy.

- **Relationships built.** Make those cold calls, meet with past clients, expand your reach and know what your customers are looking for. Be at the forefront of their mind when they are ready to purchase.

Don't Skip the '09 Strategy Session



Though you may have cut the "Executive Retreat" this year for budgeting purposes, the Strategy Session is crucial. Some tips for strategy sessions:

- **Acknowledge your '08 accomplishments, yes, you have some.** Everyone wants to skip this step but it gives you perspective & momentum for '09 planning. It always serves you well to look at what you HAVE achieved in addition to what you haven't. The more you focus on & celebrate your "wins", the faster they multiply! Try it.

- **Set motivating '09 goals.** Keep them short & simple. Remember to make them [S.M.A.R.T.](#) Make sure you've bought in and are eager to work on these goals. If you have it on the list because it feels like it "should" be there, pitch it. Make these the goals you WANT to work toward.

- **Create action steps to achieve each goal.** This is what you want your team committed to focusing their time on. Include as many people as you can in this brainstorming. If achieving the goal is more of a "project", assign a project team and schedule a kick off meeting for this project. See more [project management tips here](#).

- **Track progress and continually improve strategies.** Set up an easy system to measure your results. Review progress monthly. Talk over each metric with everyone who can affect next month's outcome on this goal. Discuss how you will improve these numbers next month. You can't help but make positive changes & conscious, calculated decisions when you know exactly where you are and are focused on raising the bar each month. [Call me](#) if you need sample templates.

Leverage Staff & Achieve Results

Share these plans with your staff! I know a lot of business owners who do not think this is necessary. It is crucial. Empower everyone on your team to help you, don't carry this burden yourself. If you think they can't help affect the outcomes you are looking to achieve, you are wrong. You'll be surprised where your staff can contribute to the goals in ways you've never thought of. Some things to consider:

- **If everyone knows which direction you are headed, you have a much better chance of getting there.**

- **Be candid.** Why wouldn't you tell them where you are, what your plans are for turning things around and how they can help? Do you want them to be surprised if you have to lay them off?

- **Give staff the opportunity to help.** Do you want them to tell you the ideas (that run through their heads daily) on how the office could be run more cost effectively & efficiently? Why wouldn't you open that door?

A Fresh Optimistic Outlook for 2009

Envision your best possible outcome for the year. Start every day from this perspective vs. a frustrated or defeated one... Do what you need to do to get in this confident mindset before you come in each morning. Your attitude has a huge impact on your staff's outlook and productivity. It is more important now than ever to keep their spirits up & motivated about where you are headed so they can produce results for your business. It all starts with you, but don't fake it (it's too obvious). What gets you in this positive state of mind? It may be exercise, meeting with a mentor, time with friends, journaling, visualizing your success, or time outdoors. Try different things until you find one that works for you, and then stick to it!

KS Consulting Updates

Happy New Year,

Hope this message finds you all happy, healthy and ready for your business breakthrough in 2009.

Come visit me at my upcoming speaking engagement, [January Crave Business Coffee Chat](#). Learn how to power through your critical projects quickly.

- Have a project you need to get off the ground in Q1 of '09?

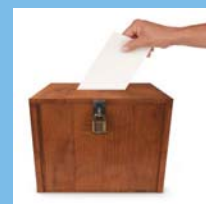
- No time to focus on making this happen?

Let me take this burden away with the '09 Project Kick Start Program. [Contact me](#) today for information.

Best of luck for a transformational Q1.

Sincerely,
Kristin Swanson

Suggestion Box



What struggles are you facing right now? What is stopping you from finishing revenue-generating projects? [Click here](#) & send in suggested topics for future **KS Consulting Tips**. I will do my best to respond to all suggestions via this publication.

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