

Expanding Your Business



In business, there is no status quo. A business that is not growing is, in fact, shrinking. In order to survive, your company must grow, either vertically or horizontally.

Vertical growth has its limitations. If you are dependent on the local economy for your business and growth, you are vulnerable to your local economic climate. Expanding into other cities or areas allows the straddling of various economies and spreading the risk.

Trade contractors may also consider expansion into related industries. For example, the logical expansion for a heating contractor would be into the sheet metal ductwork fabrication and installation. However, by taking this on, the contractor eliminates a subcontractor and assumes the added risk. Considering this, expansion might be best achieved geographically.



When the economy in one region is slow, the economy in another may be booming. When the booming one slows, the slower economy will, no doubt, pick up. Economies swing like a pendulum and by expanding to other cities, you can make your company immune to the swings.

Remember—timing is important. Without solid structure in place, expansion could be disastrous for your business. You should only consider expanding if you have "all your ducks in a row." In other words, every department of your company has to be independent of your direct daily supervision. The idea in expanding is not only to add volume to your existing business but also to lessen the economical risk and improve the odds. That's business.

Is your company solid and ready for expansion? Through our customized training, AVITAN can help identify possibilities available to you in new markets, and develop an effective expansion strategy for your business. Give us a call!

★★★★★ 5 STAR Leadership Series



No seat was left empty in the Edmonton session, traditionally held at the Radisson Hotel South.

Our "Managing People" Workshop in Edmonton saw a huge turnout and was a tremendous success! Presented again by Amos Avitan and Ron Hofman, the workshop explored the most (and least) effective managing and hiring techniques. The topics that particularly resonated with the participants were the difference between power and control and the importance of letting their employees do the work they were hired to do.

We believe the lively discussions and lots of interaction made it a memorable experience for everyone. Big thanks to all attendees—we look forward to seeing you again at one of our next Specialty Workshops!



Amos Avitan answers one of many questions asked by attendees.

The Vancouver session of this workshop takes place on February 2, 2012. For more information on AVITAN events, visit www.AVITAN.ws.

What to Look for When Hiring a Salesperson



Recruiting the right salesperson is vital to your bottom line. Hire the wrong person, and within months you'll be dealing with lost revenue from wasted sales opportunities; not to mention the recruiting, training and salary costs that went down the drain. Selecting the right individual has to be done carefully. Here are some key qualities to look for during an interview:



Presentation skills—Your salesperson is the face of your company. It is paramount that he or she is likeable and makes a positive impression on prospects.

Assertiveness—A must for a good salesperson. Watch for the difference between assertive and aggressive. An assertive person speaks with confidence without intimidating the other party.

Competitiveness—This is a crucial quality. Many people dislike selling and fear rejection. A competitive person actually enjoys the challenge of overcoming objections.

Enthusiasm—it's infectious. If your sales guy gets a prospect excited about the benefits of your services, you've won half the battle.

Listening Skills—The best sales people aren't on top because of their perfect sales pitch, but because they are excellent listeners. If the salesperson really hears a prospect's concerns, he can more accurately address their needs.

The effectiveness of your salesperson often sparks the difference between getting by and getting ahead. If they can't sell themselves to you, how likely is it they'll be able to sell your services?

Employee Subcontractor

Do you know the difference?

Determining whether a worker is an employee or an independent contractor is not always perfectly clear. Your company is exposed to a huge financial risk if you mislabel the person working for you. If a subcontractor is deemed by the CRA as an employee, the outcome can be severe.

If unsure, consider the following factors:

- Does the individual work independently or does he follow the directions of your company?
- Does he or she provide their own tools and equipment or are they provided to them?
- Can the worker subcontract work or are they not in a position to hire and send replacement?
- Does the worker incur his own expenses or does he have no responsibility for operational costs?
- Does the worker have a chance of profit/risk of loss?

For more information, refer to CRA's RC4110 Employee or Self-employed Guide: www.cra-arc.gc.ca/E/pub/tg/rc4110/README.html.

Safety on the Job—Are You Enforcing It?



Nobody starts their day planning to get injured but it still happens. Despite constant reminders about the importance of job safety, it is not unusual to witness cavalier attitude of some workers who display disregard for their own safety and that of their co-workers. Too often we hear about tragic workplace accidents that could have been easily prevented.

Take the following example: A man was observed standing on an extension ladder about 25-30 feet up against a building, power-washing the exterior walls. Neither the ladder nor the man were anchored to the building, so they could have easily collapsed, slipped or simply been forced back by the strong waterflow. Had an inspector not been called to the site, this could have

had disastrous consequences for the worker and the pedestrians on the sidewalk below.

Any time you see any of your workers operating in an unsafe manner, you must stop the work immediately, provide the worker with a written warning, and take remedial action. Remember, if you don't take steps to correct an unsafe condition, you could be held responsible for any damage caused by the worker, whether to himself or others.

Although safety in the workplace is constantly improving under the watchful eyes of Workers Compensation Board, it is often not enough. Safety rules and regulations are only effective if they are properly followed. Ultimately, it is up to you, the employer, to enforce the rules unflinchingly.

The Power of Customer Testimonials



Market surveys show that other people's recommendations influence customers' decisions more than anything else. Smart companies know this and harness the power of testimonials to generate new business.



Written testimonials show that you've been in business for a while and that you have some happy customers. Simply put, they increase the prospect's confidence in your company.

You can dedicate a whole new page on your website to testimonials, or just sprinkle them throughout the existing pages. The latter will constantly reassure the prospect that hiring your company is the right decision.

WHAT MAKES A GOOD TESTIMONIAL?

To be effective, client testimonials must be credible. If only first name is given below a testimonial, people will question its authenticity. Always include both first and last names, and, if possible, their location and a photo of the happy customer.

The best testimonials list specific points and details that prospective customers are concerned about. "They did a good job" says nothing about your services. Avoid vagueness in the content of your testimonials.

THE RIGHT WAY TO ASK

When asking a past customer for their feedback, enclose a list of specific questions to answer. Encourage them to be honest and not too formal—otherwise you may end up with a testimonial that looks like it was scripted by your own business. And always remember to ask if it's ok to use their testimonial in your brochure or on your website. Most customers will say yes.

Meet the AVITAN Team

Dan Martin is the Operations Manager at AVITAN. His job is to ensure that the day-to-day operations at the company run smoothly. Dan is involved in everything from the office IT to hiring of staff; anything that impacts AVITAN's daily activity.



Dan has been with AVITAN since 2006. He started by working as a designer in the marketing department. Prior to this, Dan designed ads for a Calgary daily newspaper, and later designed signs for a local Vancouver sign company.

His role at AVITAN has steadily expanded over the last five years as he has demonstrated an unrelenting commitment to maintaining the highest standard for the company.

Prevent Burnout at Work



Do you find it difficult to start your day? Have you become impatient with employees or clients? Do you lack satisfaction from your achievements? Emotional exhaustion, loss of motivation, and irritability are some of the warning signs that you are on your way to a burnout. Here is how to "recharge your batteries:"

Start your day right. Set the alarm a few minutes early and enjoy some extra time focusing on yourself, with a cup of coffee and a book in hand.

Exercise. Just 15 minutes of movement a day will extend your lifespan by three years.

Be social, regularly. Stop using lack of time as an excuse. Social ties are proven to be good for your health.

Slow down. Walk more slowly and breathe deeply. Pacing yourself will help you sustain energy throughout the day.

Note your stress points. The more aware you are of the stress sources in your day, the better you'll be able to control them.



"Letting your customers set your standards is a dangerous game, because the race to the bottom is pretty easy to win. Setting your own standards—and living up to them—is a better way to profit. Not to mention a better way to make your day worth all the effort you put into it. ~Seth Godin, author and marketing expert



Questions Our Clients Ask

Q: *"I'm just learning to be more aggressive in sales. We are a general contractor and up until now we relied on word-of-mouth for new business. Recently, I met an architect and we briefly discussed possible cooperation. This was a month ago and I haven't heard from him since. What should I do?"*

A: Glory goes to the bold. Ask yourself: what would your business want you to do? Sit and wait for the architect to contact you? We don't think so. Reach out to the architect to remind him about your initial meeting. Be respectful but confident. You are still here and ready to build a business relationship beneficial to both of you. The bottom line: Whether it's an architect or a potential customer, ALWAYS follow-up!

Your input is always welcome!

Got good news? Heard a great joke? Know of a topic you'd like to see in our newsletter? Please share with us!

Contact: Hana Bilikova hana@avitan.ws

How to Prepare for 'Down Time'

★ *If you plop yourself mindlessly in front of the TV to de-stress, you may not be getting as much relief as you think. "While recreational activities—like watching TV or playing video games—are important to help maintain a balanced life, doing so in a semi-trance is too passive to help relieve stress," experts say.*

Their advice is to take a few minutes before you grab the remote to sit or lie down and concentrate on breathing and relieving any tightness in your body. "If you're mindful of relaxing, then you'll be using time wisely rather than killing time," they say.

Practice a deep-breathing exercise help you decompress before you veg out, and you'll reap more benefits from your 'down time'.

TAX Audit

The owner of a small deli was being questioned by the Canada Revenue Agency about his tax return. He had reported a net profit of \$80,000 for the year.

"Why don't you people leave me alone?" the deli owner asked. "I work like a dog, everyone in my family helps out,

the place is only closed three days a year...and you want to know how I made \$80,000?" "It's not your income that bothers us," the agent said. "It's these deductions. You listed six trips to Mexico for you and your wife."

"Oh, that," the owner said, smiling. "Didn't I mention? We deliver anywhere..."

Save the Date!

AVITAN
8th Annual
CONVENTION

A conference for owners
& spouses at beautiful
Crescent Beach, BC

Friday, **June 8**
2012



GADGETS & TOOLS

Secure and Find



Always looking for your keys or your iPhone? The Kensington BungeeAir Tether keeps iPhone owners from losing both. A key fob and paired phone case connect on the long-range 2.4-gigahertz wireless frequency. Use the key fob to lock your phone remotely or make it ring so you can find it quickly. If the devices separate by more than 50 feet, the pieces alert you. amazon.ca, \$100

Stay Warm and Connected

Unlike other touchscreen gloves, the Outdoor Research Sensor Gloves don't limit sensitivity to well-placed dots on the fingertips. Every part of the leather that lines your fingers and palms is treated with nanoparticles that interact with touch screens the same way skin does. outdoorresearch.ca, \$65

