

Does Your Business Feel Like Ball and Chain?

Your company should be an investment, not a lifestyle.



Most businesses are born with an ambition and the determination to build a company. How it often ends up is a business created around its owner/manager. In

essence, what the owner created is a job and as the company grows, the job gets more intensive and more hours are required to manage it.

The business controls his agenda, hours worked and stress level. It can literally consume any personal life the owner had.



"A business is an entity with a life of its own," says Amos Avitan of AVITAN Business Resources. "The owner is not the company and it's not personal. Its products, services and clients should have nothing to do with the owner's likes and dislikes. It is only about what's good for the company. And the company understands only one thing—profits," he adds.

Your business must be run as an investment, not a lifestyle. It must be autonomous and independent of any management personalities. It begins with an idea, followed by creating an exit strategy, operational structure design and a business plan. It needs to be supported with a multitude of operational tools such as cash flow projection and operational budget. The focus is on generating profit, and the management is regarded as the captain of a ship managing its course.

"All of the above (and more) is what clients learn in our business & management training programs," adds Amos Avitan.

AVITAN Specialty Workshops



Avitan is beginning the first in a series of quarterly workshops that will be held in major centres around Western Canada.

The first workshop is titled "**Leadership Series 1: Communication**" and deals with how to communicate effectively with employees and clients. Different personalities require different styles of communication. Knowing this gives you a powerful advantage.

These workshops are free to current Avitan clients and the graduates of our training programs. The cost for non-clients is \$1250 per session.

Greater Vancouver

May 4
Sandman Hotel, Richmond
3233 St. Edwards Drive

Edmonton

May 10
Radisson Hotel
4440 Gateway Boulevard

For more information on our workshops, visit our website at www.AVITANevents.com.

"People with goals succeed because they know where they are going... It's as simple as that."

— Earl Nightingale

How to Resolve Any Conflict

How do you settle a disagreement, personal or professional, when you're feeling angry, frustrated and emotional? A few simple steps will help you work through a dispute.

1 Determine what you really want. Don't let your emotions get the best of you. When you are angry, you quickly become accusatory and start blaming. Instead, stop, and focus on the fact that you want to reach agreement.

2 Set ground rules for yourself as to how you will speak & act. Keep name-calling and accusations out of the process. Using a neutral spot to resolve a conflict is always a good idea.

3 Arm yourself with as much information as you can before your discussion. Once you've worked out your thoughts, get a handle on the other person's. Don't assume you know—be prepared to listen. You need to understand their position as well.



4 Make it clear that you want to work things out. That message has to be physical as well as verbal, so avoid movements and a tone of voice that indicate irritation or frustration. Keep anger out of the equation by focusing on your goals for the meeting.

5 When a resolution eludes you no matter how hard you try, bring in a mediator. This neutral third party gathers information from both sides and then brings them together to find an equitable solution.

The important thing to remember is that avoiding or ignoring a conflict won't make it go away. Take positive steps toward a resolution—and then move on.

Is Your Company's Data Insured?

Imagine that you're storing all of your company's bookkeeping on a laptop. The laptop gets stolen and you had no backup for your data. Now you have no records of anything and no data recovery plan in place.

The bad news? This has actually happened to a company we know. What a nightmare for them. The good news? You can prevent it by purchasing "**Data Recovery Insurance**." Most companies don't realize the potential of data loss until it's too late. Don't be one of them!

Acts of Kindness Can Inspire Others



Studies show how positive stories can bring out the best in people. In October 2006, a 32-year-old milk truck driver barricaded himself in an Amish schoolhouse in Pennsylvania and shot 10 young girls execution style before putting his 9 mm pistol to his head and pulling the trigger.

The crime shocked everyone, but what came next was perhaps more stunning. Within days, grieving parents reached out to *the widow of the killer*, offering forgiveness and financial assistance.

In a new study from University of B.C., Prof. Karl Aquino finds that just reading about extreme acts of "human goodness"—such as the forgiveness shown by the Amish parents—can make people more virtuous, and more willing to help strangers.

Findings in his report also indicate media outlets could change society for the better if more attention was paid to positive stories. He cited the example of the earthquake and tsunami disasters in Japan. If rare stories of incredible human virtue were uncovered in the rubble, media could likely spur greater humanitarian donations by highlighting them, instead of focusing exclusively on death.

Smart Marketing



Are your sales consistent? Or do you find that while some months are great and filled with jobs, other months not so much? Ups and downs not associated with normal business cycles are most often the product of inconsistent marketing efforts. The smart contractor runs his business in a way that keeps the flow steady.

Take a systematic and consistent approach to your marketing.

Referrals from satisfied customers are of paramount importance, and should make up a good percentage of your sales. However, many contractors rely far too heavily on word of mouth alone.



Referrals, as great as they are, are an unreliable and unpredictable sales source. Assuming that every past customer will be happily telling everyone about you for the rest of their lives is not realistic.

To get new customers, **get your company's name out there.** Use print, radio and television advertising, flyers, brochures, lawn and fence signs, truck signs, and targeted regular mail and email. Put up signage and billboards wherever you can, especially on your job sites.

Being consistent in your marketing efforts means that you are continually generating job leads from a variety of sources. Staying in touch with past clients will help them remember to mention you to their friends. Likewise, putting your company name and logo in front of lots of different eyes will bring in the jobs at a steady rate.

Make it part of your everyday routine to get your name out in some way, and you will eliminate the "feast or famine" cycle in your company.

Human Device Wins



In the battle of man versus machine at the airport, score one for the side with opposable thumbs!

Though scientists and security insiders have swooned over the potential for thermal cameras as instant polygraphs, a new study suggests the devices—which expose deception through a rise in skin temperature—are actually less accurate than human perception.

Reporting in the journal of Law and Human Behaviour, researchers found 64 percent of truth-tellers and 69 percent of liars could be classified correctly using thermal imaging on passengers at an airport. But interviewers, independent of technology, outperformed the thermal recordings by correctly classifying 72 percent of truth-tellers and 77 percent of liars.

A New Use for Fluorescent Lighting?

The harsh fluorescent lights commonly found in supermarkets seem to bring out the best in spinach. Continuous exposure to this light source actually raises the vegetable's levels of vitamins C, K and E, as well as folate. In fact, researchers found, folic acid levels as much as doubled after nine days of light 'treatment.'

4 Ways to Reduce Office Stress

1. The best way to counter the fight-or-flight stress response is to get active. Do push-ups against your office wall. Hike the hallways or walk around the block. Activity will relieve tension and condition your heart.
2. Add colour. Splashes of colour from a poster, painting, photos etc can improve your mood and your productivity, A combo of red and green is better than dull white, black or brown. In one study, those muted colours made people duller, too, scoring 12 points lower on IQ tests.
3. Take time for tea. Polyphenols in black tea may reduce stress hormones in your blood and help you shed tension faster.
4. Laugh. Lots. Instead of upsetting family life every night by taking work home, declare one night a week official FAB night, as in: Forget About Business. Watch a funny movie together. Tell jokes at dinner. Laugh it up. You'll feel the tension fade and the family draw closer.





Spotlight on Our Clients



Congratulations to **Time Line Construction** in Edmonton, AB, on winning the "Best Interior Renovator" Award at the 2011 CHBA Excellence in Housing Awards!

Last month, we welcomed aboard **Alartco Windows and Doors Manufacturing** of Edmonton, AB. Just a few weeks ago, the new owners Tony and Candace Cherfan officially took over the company from Tony's father, and their new corporate ID is already well on its way.

Our welcome also goes to **Renovations by Dan** in Edmonton, AB, the newest client to sign on for a business training with Avitan.

Island West Coast Developments in Nanaimo, BC, are going for gold again! They recently completed the construction of North Island College, a 23,000 sq.ft. trades training facility targeting LEED Gold certification. Congratulations!

Things have been busy for **Tasa Construction** in Burnaby, BC, as the company is currently working on their biggest commercial project yet. The end of April also marked the launch of Tasa's brand new website, created by Avitan. You can visit it at www.tasaconstruction.com.

Thumbs up to **GMAC Roofing & Cladding** of Victoria, BC, for getting into an aggressive mode to grab new market share on the Island, with a new corporate identity and a website currently in development.



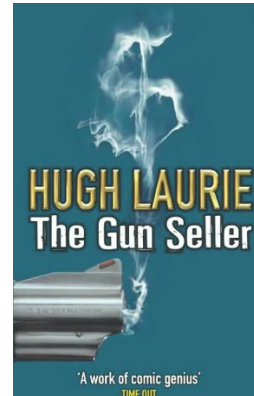
Use Your Car to Sharpen Your Smarts!



How? By turning off the GPS! A study found that drivers who get around by using maps and landmarks have more active cells in the area of the brain involved in memory and navigation than those who rely on a GPS. And that means they're less likely to experience foggy thinking, age-related memory loss and Alzheimer's. The study suggests that you use your GPS to help you find your way to new destinations, but turn it off on the way back and try to figure out your way home on your own or by using a map.

Did You Know?

You know him as the controversial Dr. House from the eponymous TV show. But did you know that aside from being a talented actor, comedian and musician, Hugh Laurie is also an accomplished writer?



Laurie's first book "The Gun Seller" is a fast-moving, sharp-witted, and brilliantly funny story that will pull you in right from the start. A spy-for-hire Thomas Lang is offered a tidy sum to assassinate an American industrialist but opts to warn the intended victim instead—a good deed that soon takes a bad turn. Up against

terrorists, and an arms dealer looking to make a high-tech killing, Lang's out to save the leggy lady he has come to love... and prevent an international bloodbath to boot.

ISBN: 9780099469391, \$14.56, Amazon.ca

Smart Marketing II



Bernie is driving down the street when he notices the following sign in the shop window of a local cabinet maker—ALL THE CAIBNETS YOU NEED FOR YOUR HOEM.

So he pulls over, goes inside and asks to see the manager.

"Can I help you, sir?" the manager asks Bernie.

"I just wanted to point out that you have two spelling errors in the sign you have in your window."

"Yes, I know," says the manager. "It's a deliberate marketing policy. You see, we get around a dozen people coming in here each day to point this out to us, and of these, at least 3 or 4 buy something. And now that you're in here, sir, can I interest you in our special pricing of new kitchen cabinets?"