

The Benefits of Incorporating Your Business



*Before a business begins operations of any sort, it **MUST BE** incorporated into a limited liability company. As a separate legal entity, it provides the owner—you—a degree of protection from creditors.*

In every business, there is always an element of risk. Things happen—like a client from hell refusing to pay their bill, a project falling behind schedule, equipment failure that requires replacement, etc. Any of the above could affect your company's cash flow to a degree that suppliers' timelines are not met. In another scenario, your business can be sued for any reason and exorbitant legal fees will bleed your business of funds.

When that happens, it is like a house of cards. Suppliers cut off credit, attach the business receivables, lien assets, and unless your company is incorporated, they will pursue your personal assets. That's why it is important to keep those separated from your business assets.



If you do hold personal assets in your name, remember that you are risking these with any personal guarantee you provide on behalf of the business. Knowing that, negotiate earnestly with suppliers to avoid these guarantees.

You also need to know that government agencies can pierce any corporate veil if they have to. A liability insurance policy is a good idea. The key is to plan right from the start to prevent potential devastating results should the unthinkable happen.

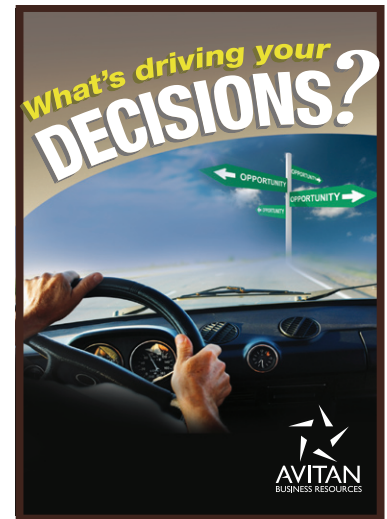
All of the above, and more knowledge as to how to structure, and protect your assets, is what we teach our clients in our business and management training programs.

AVITAN Specialty Workshops

Avitan continues its Leadership Series this September, with sessions scheduled in Edmonton, AB, and Vancouver, BC.

This workshop analyzes the process, and provides a formula for making good business decisions without guesses or impulses.

Make sure to reserve your seat—space is filling up fast! Free to current and past AVITAN clients. The cost for non-clients is \$1250 per session.



For more information and to register, call 604-542-4713 or visit our website at www.AVITANevents.com.

Edmonton

Sept 8, 9 a.m. - 3 p.m.
Radisson Hotel South
4440 Gateway Blvd

Greater Vancouver

Sept 15, 9 a.m. - 3 p.m.
Sandman Signature Hotel
10251 St Edwards Drive, Richmond

We have launched our **NEW WEBSITE!**

DO BETTER

Every company's website should be refreshed periodically in order to look current and attractive to potential customers. That is exactly what we did and it's looking great!

BE BETTER

Visit us at www.AVITAN.ws to read client testimonials, learn more about our trainers, and find out how Avitan can help you to BE BETTER and DO BETTER.

Plus, in a brand new "News & Articles" section you'll find tons of FREE advice on sales, marketing, management and more!

Managing to Keep Them on the Job



Finding and recruiting quality workers is not easy, especially if your company gains the reputation for being hard on employees. Research shows that 70% of employees who change jobs do so because they don't like their immediate boss (this touches on management style as well as a common mistake of failing to hold field leaders accountable).

The objective is to create a management team that knows how to get the most out of its people without ticking them off. The construction labour market is a seller's market. The good workers have the power, not you. If they

are hard working and skilled, they will always be in demand and can therefore choose who to work for. The best you can do is become known as an employer of choice. **Become known for:**

- Having plenty of work (hours for them to work)
- Treating workers fairly and respectfully
- Being straight forward and honest
- Listening to workers' opinions and advice
- Not placing unrealistic demands on them
- Providing them with the tools they need to do their job right
- Treating them as if they were partners in your business

High turnover is a warning sign that your management team needs to make a few changes in its approach to managing the personnel.



Do You Back Up Your Company's Data Regularly?

There is a much higher chance of your computer crashing or getting infected with a virus than that of your business burning down. Having a good data backup-and-recovery strategy seems blatantly obvious, but it is shocking how often companies fail to have such a plan in place.

To protect all the files you can't afford to lose, choose a backup system and ensure to keep your data in a safe place. The options are many—CDs, DVDs, external hard drive, or an online back-up server. If you go with the last choice, make sure all your data is encrypted.

If your hard disk really crashes, an effective way to restore your data is to use a hard disk image backup solution. That way, you can restore the data from your backup directly into your new disk.

Although regular data backup may seem like a tedious and boring process, it far outweighs the disaster of losing all your client records, contracts and other crucial business data.

Next time: Backing up your data off-site.

Got an Unhappy Customer? Use It to Your Benefit!



Handling customer complaints should be a top priority for every business. Why? A disgruntled customer will tell, on average, ten to twenty of his closest friends and relatives about the horrible experience. That number can be even higher thanks to the multitude of social media available today, potentially causing a lot of harm to your company's reputation.

You should do everything possible to avoid this. But if it happens, use it to your benefit. Complaints give your company a great opportunity to find out what area(s) of your service need improvement.

A complaint breaks the bond between you and your customer. If you handle it right, this will only be temporary—research shows that proper complaint resolution actually strengthens customer loyalty.

Do the damage control IMMEDIATELY, don't wait. Listen to your customer. What went wrong? What can you do to make them happy? Be sincere and genuine in your apology.

Once the customer sees that you go above and beyond to make things right, their trust in your services increases dramatically. Such a customer then happily provides excellent word of mouth—becoming the best salesman your company can have.



"Your most unhappy customers are your greatest source of learning."

- Bill Gates

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

Marketing in a Perfect Wor(l)d



It's easy to be disappointed if your marketing efforts don't produce the desired outcome, which, of course, is to generate leads for the sales dept. to pursue. Before you get frustrated, do some research and investigation as to what went wrong.

Most frequently, it's because your marketing message isn't hitting your potential clients' emotional hot buttons. That means you are flushing \$\$\$ down the toilet!

Lead generation is tough to get right. Whatever you are saying, in writing or in person, must be phrased nearly perfectly. Even professionals are frequently surprised by the difference that changing one word can make.

Jay Abraham, a legendary marketing expert, tells a story that demonstrates this point quite clearly. Store greeters were asked to test 40 different greetings over 40 days. As customers walked through the door, the greeters used the script written for that day.

Turns out one greeting generated three times the sales of all the others! Imagine that. Just saying the right thing to a customer walking through the door increased sales by 200%!

That's how fickle your market can be, and that's why you must keep testing your message until you find the one that produces breakthrough results. Don't give up; find the magic words.

By the way, the incredibly persuasive greeting that was better than 39 others, and resulted in a 200% increase in sales, was "What ad brought you into the store today?"

There are no crystal balls that could have predicted that correctly. Sometimes you must test your marketing message many times before you reap the rewards.



Keep Your Motivation Up

You're working on a project. You start out full of energy and drive. But as you continue, it becomes increasingly difficult to see additional progress and your motivation dwindles. So how do you stay motivated throughout a long project? Experts say it all depends on what you're focused on at the given moment.



At first, we focus on how much we've done so far and that keeps us quite motivated. At some point though, we shift our focus from how far we've come to how much is left to do. That's why we often get stuck in the middle of a task or won't even finish it at all.

A study published in *Psychological Science Journal* found that the middles are hard because, as the task goes on, we switch the frame of reference. The participants were given 9 documents to proofread. During the experiment, some people saw a progress bar showing how many documents they had read so far. Some saw a bar showing how many they still have to complete. A third group didn't see any indicator of progress at all.

The first group performed the best at the beginning, while the second group was most effective as they neared the end of the experiment. The third group, having no frame of reference, did well on the first couple and the last couple of documents but performed the worst in the middle.

So how can you make sure to keep your motivation up and follow through with a long task or project? Give yourself a few landmarks along the way. That allows you to focus on completing sections of the project rather than a long stretch in the middle. You'll find it much easier to stay motivated if you see continuous progress.

Newsletter Writing Tips

A company newsletter is a great way to keep in touch with your current and past clients. It can also be a powerful marketing tool to attract new prospects. Before you start designing it, there are few things you need to decide first.

1. How often do you want to publish? Monthly, quarterly? Decide on the frequency up front and stick to it.
2. Create your content with your audience in mind - just because you find something interesting doesn't mean they will too. The information has to be meaningful and useful to your readers.
3. How will you publish? Although distributing your newsletter via email is easy and doesn't cost you anything except your time, a printed version has a much bigger chance of actually being read.

4. How to make the newsletter attractive and easy to read? If the thought of designing your own layout scares you, there are plenty of templates available online. Just remember that your newsletter should look consistent with your letterhead, website or a business card. Include the company logo and/or colours in the design.

Keep the articles short and to the point—we call them "edible chunks of information." Break the text up with some relevant images or graphics to make it visually appealing. If your newsletter is a sea of gray, the reader will lose interest.

5. Ask your readers for feedback and/or contributions. It's the best way to ensure that the content is of interest to your audience.



Spotlight on Clients



We were thrilled to hear from Ken Steinhoff of **Kengary Contracting** in Vancouver, BC, about how much positive feedback he's getting on Kengary's new brochure (created by Avitan). "We're getting a lot of compliments, and (the brochure) gets passed around," says Ken. With the combination of effective marketing materials and Ken's active sales efforts, we expect this company's client base to only grow in the future.

Congratulations to **Tasa Construction** in Burnaby, BC, on winning a bid on the biggest industrial job to date!



"We worked very hard on the bid, using our combined experience, industry contacts, training, etc. to beat out (a major construction company)—quite to their amazement," reports John Vis, the president of Tasa Construction.

Thanks to John Vis for sending us this photo of a Charles C. Noble quote John took when out for a walk. Inspirational and very true!

Kudos to **Time Line Construction** in Edmonton, AB, for taking team building to new heights! The company recently completed the Avitan Team Building module, and last month the entire staff went on a skydiving adventure!

For some, this meant overcoming their fears. "It was an experience nobody here will ever forget," says Teresa Stange, Time Line's Marketing Manager, and adds: "We instantly bonded (over this experience). I wonder what's gonna be our next adventure?"



Gaining a new perspective: Sebastian Schulz, Time Line's Project Manager, is enjoying himself in mid-air.

Cell Phone Safety

There is a lot of scary discussion these days about the link between cell phone radiation and brain or skin cancer. While there is no conclusive evidence, it is good to take precautions. If it turns out in the future that a link between brain or skin cancer and cell phones does exist, you will be happy knowing that you minimized your risk. 5 simple steps can help you to avoid cell phone radiation:



1. **Don't hold your cell phone directly against your ear.** The strength of cell phone radiation decreases by the square of the distance from your skin. A cell phone 2" away from your ear penetrates your skin with a quarter of the electromagnetic energy it would have if you were holding it against your ear. Using your speakerphone will protect your skin considerably.
2. **Use an earpiece.** Although opinions vary on the safety of hands-free devices (we'll get into that some other time), one camp claims that they transmit only one hundredth of the electromagnetic energy of a cell phone.
3. **Don't store your cell phone against your skin.** Just like holding the phone against your ear, storing it against your skin significantly increases your exposure.
4. **Keep the phone in "off-line" mode if you're not planning on using it for some time.** No radiation is being transmitted in off-line mode.
5. **Send text messages whenever possible.** Texting limits the amount of transmission time to a fraction of a phone call. Also, the nature of texting places the phone farther from you while it is transmitting. But remember to text only when it is safe to do so!

Having a Bad Day?

A contractor is sitting at the bar staring at his drink when a large, trouble-making biker steps up next to him, grabs the drink and gulps it down in one swig.

"Well, whatcha gonna do about it?" he says, menacingly, and the contractor bursts into tears. "Come on, man," the biker says, "I didn't think you'd cry. I can't stand to see a man crying."

"This is the worst day of my life," the contractor says. "I'm a complete failure. I was late to

an appointment with a client and lost a big contract. When I returned to the parking lot, I found my brand new car had been stolen. I left my wallet in the cab I took home. I found my old lady in bed with the gardener, and then my dog bit me."



"So I came to this bar to work up the courage to put an end to it all. I buy a drink, I drop a capsule in and sit here watching the poison dissolve; then you, you jack-ass, show up and drink the whole thing! But enough about me, how's your day going?"