



# Movin' On Up...

Moving Your Business Forward

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**Y**our business may be relatively new and in its "start-up" stage, in its "building stage" or already "established," but it's struggling through the "tough economy" stage. If you want to create and sustain success, you must consistently seek new ideas to grow your business. More importantly, you need to take action on these ideas - hit the thrust button and propel your business forward.

Sounds exciting, doesn't it? Wouldn't it be great if right after you've hit that thrust button, you could see immediate results? Sure, but that's not the reality of today's new world.

What many business owners and managers need to do is slow down in order to speed up. Take some time out. Go to a quiet place where you will be undisturbed. Then, take a long hard look at the current status of your business and make a plan to get you moving forward.

Here is where it helps to have the innate ability to look at your business from the "eye of an outsider." Detach yourself emotionally and view the business as if you were a consultant who has been brought in to help define specific areas for improvement for where your business is at that time and make a plan to help expand it to higher performance and profitability.

**Here are some key things to ask yourself when you are ready to make the push to move forward:**

- **Where are there opportunities to expand our services?** What more can I offer? Could I provide an additional service? How will I accomplish it?
- **Do we have a marketing system that operates like a "well-oiled machine" on a consistent basis?** Do I know my customer base and have I fully tapped into that market? Are we calling on every potential piece of business out there? Are we using the internet to learn what other markets we may tap into?

Are we taking advantage of free marketing such as Twitter® and LinkedIn®? The younger generation will find you there.

- **Do we need a new approach to our sales efforts?** Is our website and/or other marketing materials working? Do we have our website optimized or are we wasting money? Are we getting referrals? Are we asking for them?
- **What have we done to differentiate ourselves and our business from the competition?** Do my customers know why we are different from the competition? How would your customers answer, "What's different about (XYZ Company)?"



- **Are we consistently working to improve our service?** Are we soliciting feedback from customers to see how we've performed? Do we have a high level of employee involvement and do they regularly contribute their ideas? What service flaws exist? How can we be more proactive in preventing them from occurring?
- **What do we need to do now to reach greater heights?** What skills do our people need? What will give us the best chance for quick results? Are our drivers certified? How do our people handle difficult and irate customers?
- **Do we provide quality service to our customers?** How quickly do we respond to calls?
- **What is the reputation we have?** Do we operate with the core values of honesty, integrity and respect? Are our prices fair?

### Here are ideas to help propel your business to greater heights:

- **Expand your services.** Are there other products or services you can offer that compliment yours? Can you offer machinery or truck washing equipment?
- **Get your marketing system to operate like a well-oiled machine.** Any business owner who thinks that marketing is simply having a great brochure and website and handling inquiries is probably missing many opportunities. Again, take advantage of social marketing and get your website optimized.
- **Be different.** Competition is a fact of life and you should welcome it as an opportunity to keep your own skills sharp. Get customers' attention so that you will stand out amongst other competitors. Look at their websites and determine how you can outshine them.
- **Consistently strive to be a better company than you are.** We've talked a lot about marketing

and service, but let's not forget why you were "asked to the dance" to begin with. Consistently work toward getting better. Develop an obsession for turning in the best performance - with every customer, on every call every day.

- **Determine what additional skills you need.** Determine what you need to work on and take advantage of industry seminars or other skill-building opportunities to help with those skills.
- **Develop solid business relationships with clients and colleagues and establish a good reputation.** Your customer is buying your reputation and your good name. They are buying your credibility and other people's opinions of you and your towing business. Establish core values and demonstrate those core values at all times.

Relationships, like business growth, take time. Spend time each day on developing and strengthening relationships that will breed success. You started your business because you enjoy being an entrepreneur. If you are to grow, however, you need to take the time to analyze your own business and look for opportunities to improve. It takes a bit of work. Looking at these areas may be a bit out of your comfort zone. After all, your expertise may be in towing, but if you make the effort to develop your business then you'll find that the results will be very rewarding not just for you, but for your employees and customers as well.

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Christine Corelli is the author of five business books including the popular *Wake Up and Smell the Competition* and *The ART of Influencing Customers to BUY From YOU*. Her track record includes over two hundred published articles, hundreds of presentations at meetings and conferences and an impressive client list including the Florida Tow Show. To learn more visit [www.christinespeaks.com](http://www.christinespeaks.com) or call 847-581-9968.

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