

# BUSINESS DIMENSIONS

FINANCIAL STRATEGIES FOR THE ENTREPRENEUR



## Welcoming your next employee

**How can your business attract, hire and retain good talent?**

In today's booming economy, unemployment is low, and hiring is competitive. For a business owner, it can make it harder to hire the right people, especially when you consider that much larger companies are competing for the same talent.

So what can an enterprising entrepreneur do? Emphasize the benefits of working with you over a large corporation,

such as having a more direct influence on the success and direction of the company, a more familial working environment, and flexibility in the work schedule.

### SET THE TONE

Being able to articulate your business strategy is vital in attracting top talent. Job candidates want to know about the stability and direction of a small business. Having a well-written vision and strategy for your company can instill confidence in your venture – for you and your potential new employee – and articulating growth opportunities and innovation may attract more cutting-edge, forward-thinking applicants.

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## Welcoming your next employee (cont.)

### ROLES TO PLAY

According to *Entrepreneur* magazine, there are five employee types that every small business should have. Look for:

#### The Mentor

Small businesses often lack the resources for formal development programs. Having employees who want to share their knowledge can help with job succession.

#### The Knowledge Seeker

Not every employee is born to lead. What's more important is one's passion to learn about the company's goals and how to improve his or her ability to help achieve them.

#### The Renaissance Man & Woman

Small business owners often wear many hats, so it helps to have employees who can function in many different roles and areas in the company.

#### The Morale Booster

As economic conditions fluctuate from year to year, it's good to have people on staff who can find the bright spots, which can have a positive effect on everyone.

#### The Challenger

Surrounding yourself with yes-men doesn't benefit you or the business. Having someone who questions the status quo can cultivate a culture of healthy debate and creative solutions.

### INTERVIEWING LIKE A BOSS

Every employee you hire either enhances or diminishes your bottom line. Each new hire also can have a significant impact on your company's overall energy and culture. With the right interview process, you can increase the odds of a strong and positive experience with each new employee.

#### Create an accurate job description with qualifications

In addition to necessary skills, the job description should reflect the personality attributes that are important for the role and any experience that would differentiate one applicant from another.

#### Post the ad in the right places

The internet, including a company website, has certainly become the leading venue to post job openings, but traditional means like industry publications and local newspapers still add value. In addition, if you are seeking to hire for an executive management role that requires a more select search, you may want to consider using a recruiter.

### DURING THE INTERVIEW

Have your questions ready, but remember that a good candidate also will want to interview you, so be ready to answer questions about your company's culture, history and strategy.

If possible, choose questions meant to draw out a less-rehearsed response and avoid those that lead to a yes or no answer. For example, rather than just asking what job candidates' greatest weakness is, ask them what they have learned from them.

### AFTER THE INTERVIEW

Be very clear on how and when you will follow up. Even if you decide against a particular candidate, be sure to let him or her know that you've chosen another. It's not only proper etiquette; it's a reflection of you and your business.

Many businesses hire interns to gain a sense of their abilities and attitude. As a result of this vetting process, companies frequently offer interns a full-time position.

### NEXT GEN EMPLOYEES

Young adults, fresh out of college, are teeming with new ideas and are technologically savvy. They also want their work experience to mean more than a steady salary and benefits. They expect technology at the office to be as progressive as what they use in their personal lives. They want workplace flexibility, fair compensation and opportunities to learn and grow – and they are motivated to work for companies that are civic-minded and socially responsible.

### HIRE WELL FOR YOUR COMPANY'S WELL-BEING

Adding high-performing employees is vital to your company's success. It can help your business grow faster and run smoother, directly impacting your bottom line. It can pay dividends for years to come, so it pays to give this business practice your full attention. ■

#### NEXT STEPS

- Prepare for phone screening and in-person interviews.
- Conduct competitive research to help differentiate your business.
- Consider asking star employees to recommend candidates.
- Make offer and conduct background check.



## Managing cash: The lifeblood of your business

It's important for your business to have cash on hand to meet everyday expenses, pay salaries and suppliers, invest in new equipment, real estate or technology, fuel growth and expansion – and manage unexpected expenses and economic downturns.

Cash can offer a buffer in times of stress or opportunity, so you want to manage it well. Generally speaking, you should have enough cash to cover two to six months of operating expenses. It may also be smart to have a line of credit available – just in case.

### STRIKING THE RIGHT BALANCE

There's a balance between having too much cash and not enough. If your business is holding too much cash, you could be missing out on opportunities to invest it and potentially generate additional earnings. Conversely, with an inadequate supply, you may have to borrow and pay interest, or sell off assets.

### DON'T CONFUSE PROFIT WITH GOOD CASH FLOW

You can't accurately measure your cash flow by simply studying your profit and loss statement. Many factors must be assessed, including accounts receivable and payable, capital expenditures,

inventory and taxes. Your financial advisor can help you assess your cash flow in conjunction with your accountant.

### HOW CAN A BUSINESS PUT ITS CASH TO WORK?

CDs offer higher yields than savings accounts, but you may have to tie up your savings until it reaches maturity. Money markets have a lower earning potential, but offer easy access to your savings – so you can make quick adjustments when rates change.

You might want to also consider a securities based line of credit. You can use the borrowing power of one or more personal or business brokerage accounts to establish a loan. Approval is typically done in just days, and there are no upfront, maintenance or closing costs.

There are flexible repayment options, as well. ■

### NEXT STEPS

- Account for cash on hand and conduct a cash flow forecast.
- Work with your financial advisor to strike a balance between cash and credit to leverage the advantages of both.
- Ask your financial advisor about how to access liquidity to help you and your business.

Investments or strategies mentioned may not be suitable for all investors. Past performance may not be indicative of future results. Every investor's situation is unique, and you should consider your investment goals, risk tolerance and time horizon before making any investment. Investing involves risk and you may incur a profit or loss regardless of strategy selected. CDs offer FDIC insurance and a fixed rate of return whereas both principal and yield of investment securities will fluctuate with changes in market conditions. Money Market Funds: Although fund managers strive to maintain a stable net asset value, the funds are not federally insured and there is no guarantee that a stable net asset value will be maintained.

A securities based line of credit (SBLC) may not be suitable for all clients. The proceeds from an SBLC cannot be used to purchase or carry margin securities, variable insurance products or any insurance product issued or brokered through an affiliate of Raymond James. Raymond James Bank does not accept RJF stock or any securities issued by affiliates of Raymond James Financial as pledged securities toward an SBLC. Borrowing on Securities Based Lending products and using securities as collateral may involve a high degree of risk including unintended tax consequences and the possible need to sell your holdings, which may lead to a significant impact on long-term investment goals. Market conditions can magnify any potential for loss. If the market turns against the client, he or she may be required to quickly deposit additional securities and/or cash in the account(s) or pay down the loan to avoid liquidation. The securities in the Pledged Account(s) may be sold to meet the Collateral Call, and the firm can sell the client's securities without contacting them. A client is not entitled to choose which securities or other assets in his or her account are liquidated or sold to meet a Collateral Call.



## Make your blog posts pop

**Want to better engage the current and prospective customers of your business? A blog is an excellent way to do so. Here's how to entice them to read what you write and hang on every word.**

First, make your blog an extension of yourself, your experience, your passions and your ability to meet your audience's needs. You know your clients well, so use that knowledge to showcase your thought leadership and opinions and connect to your ideal clients and their network.

Next, nail the headline. It's not only the first thing your audience will read, but the most important thing you'll write. Compel them to click on your link. Consider using questions, numbered lists, statistics, best of's, and do's and don'ts to draw your reader in. Try writing more than one and then looking them over. If one jumps out, use that one.

### LINKABLE, SCANABLE, SEARCHABLE AND SOCIABLE

In other words, better blog performance is possible if you follow these four tips. Sprinkle in relevant links and sources. Break up the blog's text with bullet points, images and headers to make it easy for the eyes to scan. Help your audience find you by using keywords they search for. This can improve search engine optimization (SEO) as well. Lastly, make use of social media and email to promote your posts and drive traffic to your blog.

### KEEP THEM COMING BACK FOR MORE

You'll want to generate fresh content on a consistent basis, two to three times a month, or at the very least, quarterly. The point is: a blog takes commitment. It will not serve its

purpose if you let it get stale. So set a recurring reminder on your calendar and post original content whenever possible.

### WRITE LIKE YOU TALK

In addition to posting consistently, you want to do so in a voice that reflects you and your team, blending industry insights, personal interests and lifestyle content that appeal to your readers.

Offer your perspective on timely topics or concerns you hear in client conversations, current industry or market news, events or restaurants that piqued your interest, and updates about your office and team.

**Think of your blog as your custom newsletter, an extension of your online brand, website and social media.**

### GET TO THE POINT

Keep your blog articles 500 words or less. Don't write a novel. Outline, write, then edit, and edit some more before posting. If you can say something with a picture, video, chart or graphic, by all means, do so. Multimedia and interactive elements increase engagement and drive clicks.

And, of course, have somebody proofread what you've written before you post it. ■

### NEXT STEPS

- Identify a few topics for your next blog articles.
- Invest some time in writing compelling content.
- Set a timely reminder for working on your next article.