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THANK YOU, LUIS & FAMILY! Outgoing 2020 President Luis Casas and SFV First Lady Gwendolyn are shown here with daughters Luisana and Billie at the Chapter Family Fun Day and Potluck in August of last year. Although the girls are a little older now, their parents have not changed. Neither has Luis' commitment and soft-spoken determination with which he began his Presidency two years ago. Thank you, Luis for your outstanding leadership.

**SFV Chapter
Installation
January 7
- Online -
• See Page 3**

Leadership
California Landscape Contractors Association
conference **2021**

Wednesday, Jan. 13, 2021 | Online
• See Page 4 for Details

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STATE AND LOCAL EVENTS

Don't miss any of these very important events!

Subject to Change – Check with Chapter Office First
WATCH FOR LAST-MINUTE CHANGES DUE TO COVID-19

- Jan. 7 SFV Installation and Board Meeting 10 a.m. via Zoom. Contact Jan Veis for Zoom link.
- 13 CLCA Leadership Conference via Zoom. 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Keynote speaker is Cynthia Mills of The Leaders' Haven, speaking on the Experience of Leadership in COVID Days. Contact Maria Abero at State HQ (800) 448-2522 for details.
- Nov. CLCA Convention in Hawaii scheduled for November 2021.

2021 SFV Board Installation Set for Thursday, January 7 Via Zoom

The Installation of the 2021 San Fernando Valley Chapter Board will take place Thursday, January 7, 2021, 10 a.m. via Zoom. Installing Officer will be CPC Director South, Ed Wallace. All interested persons are invited to attend. The new Board will then hold its first official Board Meeting immediately following the Installation.

Thank you to the members of the 2020 Board for their hard work and leadership during this most difficult year. And congratulations to the 2021 SFV Board Members:

Chairman of the Board – **Luis Casas**

President – **Francisco Salazar**, Groundcare Landscape

Vice-President Membership – **Steven Kinzler**, SK Landscape Design Inc.

Vice-President Programs – **Joshua Emeterio**, SLM Landscape Management

Secretary – **Natalie Balyasny**, LCIS

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Contact Jan Veis, SFV Executive Secretary at (818) 772-7233 or sfvclca@gmail.com to get the link to the Zoom meeting.

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LUIS CASAS
SFV President
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Goodbye 2020...Good Riddance!

It's officially the last month of the most chaotic year in our lifetime. As we know in life, the only thing we can count on is change. I for one can say good riddance to 2020. It has been fun (not really), but I am glad to see you go, hopefully to never see you again.

Next year brings a level of uncertainty but great hope. Live in the moment and be ready to take on the challenge. The Green Industry has remained resilient

and has stepped up to the task of fulfilling its essential role to keep our landscapes safe and looking good for everyone to enjoy. Our team members more than ever are happy to be outdoors and doing what they love.

What is abundantly clear is that we need all small businesses to survive and thrive. They need our support. Please go out of your way to spend your money with them and encourage others to do the same. Give them moral support. I have done martial arts for over 20 years and will continue my journey.

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Support your CLCA chapter. Drop in on the Zoom meetings and get involved. A group of like-minded individuals can help make a change. I wish the San Fernando Valley Chapter President-Elect Francisco Salazar and the new board the best and will stand firm by the chapter.

I wish you all a Great 2021 and let us kick Coronavirus' butt.
– Luis Casas

Leadership

California Landscape Contractors Association

conference 2021

Wednesday, Jan. 13, 2021 | Online
9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Learn how to develop and position yourself as a leader who remains positive, transcends the circumstances and uplifts members – and your employees – to see what we can accomplish together.

The Experience of Leadership in COVID Days

We'll be joined by Cynthia Mills, Founder, President & CEO of The Leaders' Haven, who will address the Experience of Leadership in COVID Days

We've all felt it – the presence of great leadership; sometimes for a fleeting moment and, if we're lucky, a little longer.

- What is present when an individual creates followers?
- What happens when a group leads in consensus?
- How can we reproduce those moments and turn them into replicable behaviors that are dependable?
- What does it take for individuals to commit, be willing, exert the effort, and transcend the day to day?
- What are we willing to do to "Experience Leadership" daily and transform our present into one of unbounded possibility?

Leading with intention during the ever-evolving climate we live in is important to the continued success of CLCA – and your business.

All CLCA state and chapter leaders are invited to attend the 2021 Leadership Conference. If you're interested in attending but are not yet a CLCA leader, please contact Maria Abero at CLCA HQ, (916) 830-2780.

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How to Set Up and Scale Lucrative Lead Generating Partnerships

From an article by Danny Wong, co-founder of Black Label, and an ecommerce expert

Technology has changed the way buyers interact with sellers. Customers have an endless supply of information at their fingertips which allows them to educate themselves prior to speaking to a sales rep. This has led to the decline in advertising's efficacy. Less than a quarter of all Americans trust print advertising, and even fewer trust digital marketing.

In order to make up for the shortcomings of traditional advertising, companies are increasingly turning to referrals to pick up the slack. One study shows that 92 percent of all consumers trust referrals over advertising. If you want something that drives immediate business, nothing is more effective than a positive customer referral.

The trick is finding ways to earn more referrals. By now, you should know how important it is to actively ask your existing customers for referrals. What you may not have already thought of, however, is taking a more proactive approach by setting up lead generation partnerships with other companies. Two ways you can do this are:

1. Build partnerships with complementary businesses

The easiest partnerships you can make are with businesses that complement your own. Take the time to think about your customers and how they use your goods and services. Are they using your company as part of a specific goal or strategy? If they are, what companies are they reaching out to first? These are the companies that you will want to target.

One good example is a mortgage loan officer partnering with local realtors. People need mortgage loans when they buy houses, so they will be working with realtors during the home buying process. Building good relationships with like-minded vendors will keep a steady stream of business flowing in.

You should try thinking outside the box, too. If you are a company that provides IT services, you could reach out to local commercial building owners. New tenants need help setting up new IT infrastructures and you will be able to assist.

2. Set up referral arrangements with direct competitors

At first glance, approaching your competition to ask for referrals may seem like an attempt at self-sabotage. After all, they are not going to send their leads your way, and you do not want to send any of yours over to them. When you consider how business is done, though, it actually makes sense.

Your business is not a perfect fit for every customer that comes your way. You might not have a specific feature that they need, or their needs are a bit too big or too small in scope for your capabilities. No matter what it is, you are not going to be able to effec-

tively service them. Due to your industry experience, though, you probably have a good idea of who can.

You should reach out to competitors that cater to customers with slightly different needs and set up a referral program based on specific criteria. When you have potential customers that are not a good fit, send them over to your competitor's sales team, and vice-versa. Of course, you can and should continue to compete for customers who make sense for both of you.

A hidden benefit of these partnerships is the relationships that develop between you and the prospects that you refer. You are showing your integrity by admitting you are not a perfect fit and pointing them towards a competitor that is. They will remember this, and you could capitalize on this rapport to secure their business in the future or get them to refer other potential clients your way.

How to manage fruitful, long-term partnerships

Managing partnerships is just like managing any other business relationship – it takes time and strategy. Here are some ways to make sure you are building successful partnerships:

- **Give back.** Offer something in return, whether it is a finder's fee, commission, or referrals of your own.
- **Be judicious.** Do not partner with just anyone as their reputation will reflect on yours.
- **Explain your ideal client.** You do not want to waste time with referrals that are low value or a bad fit. Carefully describe the type of referral you are looking for.

Lead generation partnerships are tricky to set up and manage but are invaluable once you have them. If you are able to develop referral-based relationships, you will enjoy a constant stream of prospects that are eager to do business with you.

In order to make up for the shortcomings of traditional advertising, companies are increasingly turning to referrals to pick up the slack. One study shows that 92 percent of all consumers trust referrals over advertising.



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7 Mistakes of Start-Ups and Young Companies

By Mike Wood – Online marketer and founder of Legalmorning.com, in allBusiness

Marketing is the lifeblood of any startup, but it's not always a walk in the park. In fact, marketing mistakes are often unavoidable, especially in the early stages of your business. While there is no surefire method to marketing success, there are plenty of mistakes you can avoid to improve your chances of building your brand.

1. Hiring an in-house staff early on

Being careful with spending and staffing is extremely valuable, especially early on in your company's development. What you don't need are any superfluous expenditures when you're just starting out, and that's exactly what an in-house marketing staff would be. It's more cost effective to hire freelancers, interns, or even an external agency.

2. Neglecting to have a website

If you don't have a website, you may lose a potential client to a competitor who does. On top of that, a website can be a direct line of communication between you and a potential customer. And websites are no longer complicated or expensive to build. There are plenty of cheap web hosting companies like GoDaddy, Wix, or Weebly that can get you started.

~KURAPIA~

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3. Not employing an SEO strategy

Just having a website isn't enough. Search engines (most notably, Google) are significantly more likely to rank your website higher on relevant queries if you have the right SEO strategy. This includes adding keywords to your content, titles, descriptions, and title tags, while also delivering well-written and useful content.

Just having a website isn't enough. Search engines (most notably, Google) are significantly more likely to rank your website higher on relevant queries if you have the right SEO strategy.

4. Failing to review your marketing strategy

Knowing the status and effectiveness of your marketing strategy is almost more important than the strategy itself. If you're not consistently reviewing your analytics, measuring sales volume, and evaluating your pay-per-click ads, then you might as well not have a marketing strategy at all. By studying this data, you can find out what works and what does not and make changes accordingly.

5. Targeting the wrong audience

If you do not understand your audience, there is a good chance that they will miss what you have to say. Finding the right marketing channels to reach an audience that connects with your brand is vital. Also, focusing on only a single channel may reduce your exposure to another audience that might find your products and services useful.

6. Not using blogs effectively

For starters, every business should have a blog on its website (with frequently updated content) that helps it connect with potential clients. But there are plenty of other ways to use blogs, even if you do not have your own. Guest posting is a hugely successful marketing strategy that is woefully underutilized. Getting a guest post on another popular blog is a great way to drive traffic to your company's website. So is leaving insightful and worthwhile comments on other blogs or new articles.

7. Focusing too much on competitors

While it's never a bad idea to take a look at a competitor's marketing strategy, you should never try to mimic it exactly. Potential customers will inevitably catch on to or get bored by the similarities, and you will not be able to cultivate your own unique voice.

Beyond that, your competitors (even if they are established businesses) do not always have the marketing magic touch. So, study what others are doing and take notes, but do not neglect innovation and new ways of thinking.

SFV Board's Holiday Celebration Draws Honored Guests

The December 3 SFV Board of Directors' Holiday Celebration and Board Meeting (via Zoom) was attended by Past SFV President Ken Bragar and wife Iris. Ken served as Chapter President in 1987. Continuing to remain active in the Chapter, Ken and Iris attended the SFV Family Picnic a couple of summers ago, where the photo shown here was taken. It was great to see them both.

The Holiday slant to the Meeting was the Board's way of ending the Chapter year on a positive and less serious note than the latest news regarding COVID 19 and the presidential election fiasco. The Chapter is looking forward to a positive 2021 under the direction of 2021 President Francisco Salazar. Among the possible events being considered for the coming year are a Regional Golf Tournament organized jointly with the Channel Islands Chapter, and additional landscaping at the LAPD Police Academy.

And don't forget, the 2021 CLCA Convention is still planned for Hawaii in November. Keep your fingers crossed for that one.



Happy Holidays from your San Fernando Chapter Board of Directors!

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FRANCISCO SALAZAR
Groundcare
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Outdoor Living in Winter *By Francisco Salazar, Groundcare Landscape Co.*

Following is an example of timely and helpful communication with clients and future clients. It appears in Groundcare Landscape's most recent – and outstanding – company newsletter.

With the pandemic and corresponding restrictions, people are spending more and more time in their front and back yards to avoid going out. This is the time of year when being outside starts to feel colder so let's get ready for the change in temperature by creating a more warm and comfortable outdoor living space.

Imagine your outdoor space as an extension of your indoors and recreate or add those same elements that provide warmth and comfort indoors. You may already have things like furniture and some accessories. Now you just need to add other elements to enhance it and make it cozy.

One of the most important elements is heating; it should be a top priority. There is a wide selection of patio and area heaters that you can add. Take into consideration the space you have and what type of heat source you would like. Options can range from a patio propane heater, a propane or wood fire pit and, if the space allows, a propane or wood chimney. All of these options can add style (and heat) to your existing space. Stay safe and be sure to follow precautions when dealing with outdoor heating.

Outdoor lighting is also an important element for enhancing an outdoor space. In working to create a cozy environment, make sure you choose soft lighting and avoid bright spotlights. Also, you can never go wrong with landscape path lights and some hanging bistro or string lights to add to the comfortable ambience.

Wind can sometimes be an issue when you are trying to relax, especially when trying to read or if you have things laying around. A barrier to stop or minimize the wind can be created with something as simple as a tall row of shrubs or plants. This barrier can also help keep out any ambient noise, like a busy street. If you have a pergola, consider adding fabric curtains to give it a more indoor feeling.

Last, but not least, make sure you have comfortable furniture. Your seating furniture should have cushions that are thick and lush. Don't be afraid to add outdoor blankets and throws for those especially cold nights.

These are some simple things to implement into your outdoor living space to help make it warm and comfortable. If you'd like help enhancing your outdoor space, be sure to contact us.

How to Successfully Rebrand Your Business

By Alicia Galan, Content Manager at Sunbird Creative

Something's changed. You don't feel as inspired anymore. You're not getting the same enthusiastic responses you used to. You try to fall back in love, but something feels...off.

Your brand is just like any other relationship. It's complicated. There are issues.

Issues are natural; they don't mean that you've done anything wrong. It's natural to take a step back from your brand and rethink things every once in a while. It's part of a healthy business life cycle. In fact, even the most well-known corporations regularly do rebrands (Facebook and Netflix, just to name a few).

If something feels off with your brand, pay attention to your intuition, but don't let your imagination run wild. While you probably need to adjust your brand, it doesn't necessarily mean changing your entire business. A rebrand could be minor, such as simply refreshing a brand's look and feel after a long period of time; it could also be major, requiring you to redefine your goals and target market.

If something feels off with your brand, pay attention to your intuition, but don't let your imagination run wild.

Whatever the scope of the rebrand, the process doesn't have to be overwhelming. Follow these four tips to prepare yourself for a rebrand.

1. Pinpoint the source of your discomfort

The most important thing you can do before taking on a rebrand is deciding what needs to be changed – and what doesn't. Take out a fresh page piece of paper or turn to a new page in your business notebook. Try to remember the times your brand has made you feel uncomfortable: Was it when you were on your website home page, or when you heard a friend describe your business all wrong, or when you hesitated to pull out your business

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Improving Your Business Cash Flow

From an article by Eden Amirav, CEO and co-founder of *Become in allBusiness*

Poor cash flow management is the number one reason small businesses fail, causing 82% of business failures, according to a U.S. Bank study. How can you as a small business owner or manager mitigate this risk? How can you improve your company's cash flow? First of all, you need to understand exactly what cash flow is (and isn't).

According to Investopedia, "Cash flow is the net amount of cash and cash-equivalents being transferred into and out of a business." In a nutshell, it represents a business's liquidity: the cash flowing in and out.

Cash flow is not revenue or profit. One source of a business's cash flow is revenue, but there are many other sources, including, for example, the sale of business equipment. Another difference is cash flow is bidirectional in that it flows in and out and can become a negative number, while revenue is just an inflow.

How to increase your business's cash flow

Now that you have an understanding of the sources of a business's cash flow, you can think about how to increase it. Here are some tried-and-tested strategies:

Invoice immediately: Invoice your customers right away and determine the optimal payment terms for your cash flow strategy. You can either have a cash-on-demand business, whereby customers have to pay as they receive goods or services, or else you can have a business that provides a service and allows 30 or 60-day payments. Stick to the shortest term where possible.

Set up a payment collection strategy: A study by Fundbox reported that U.S. small businesses had \$825 billion worth of unpaid invoices (equivalent to 5% of the U.S. GDP!). If you set up a structured and firm payment collection process, you will more likely get paid, and on time. You can start off with a soft approach through friendly email reminders (if you use a cloud-based invoicing system, you can set up automated reminders). If the customer still doesn't pay, then it's time to follow up with a phone call.

Offer multiple payment methods: The more payment options you offer your customers, the more likely they are to pay you. Thanks to digital payments, your customers can pay you quickly and easily.

Consider the subscription model: If relevant, consider offering your customers a subscription option, as this will give you regular, consistent payments at set, expected intervals.

Manage your cash outflow

To remain cash flow positive, you not only need to keep your expenses to a minimum but also to manage them effectively by:

- Paying bills on time to avoid late charges or interest
- Negotiating better payment terms with suppliers, including early payment discounts
- Creating buffer zones in case your customers don't pay on time. For example, if your customers have a 30-day payment term, negotiate 60 days with vendors.

- Building strong relationships with suppliers – the better your relationship with your suppliers, the more likely they are to give you payment leeway and be flexible on payment terms

Bridging the business cash flow gap

If you've done all these things but still can't manage to keep your head above water and are at risk of negative cash flow, there are other ways to increase your cash inflow:

- Apply for business funding: There are many types of funding options for small businesses, including lines of credit, business loans, business credit cards, and invoice factoring.
- Sell old, outdated inventory at a discount: You can sell your old inventory to your customers or sell it online to a surplus inventory company.
- Sell off old, unused equipment.
- Sublet office space: For example, a hairdresser can sublet a section of the salon to a nail studio or beautician.

Be proactive

The key to your business staying cash flow positive is proactivity. Don't wait until you run into cash flow problems to take action. Rather plan ahead with cash flow forecasting, monitor your cash flow continuously, and have creative strategies in place to keep your cash inflow up and your cash outflow to a minimum.

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Business Expenses to Re-Evaluate During an Economic Downturn

From an article by Drew Page, content marketing lead Embroker

There is perhaps no time more important for business owners to know where their operating expenses are coming from and how to remain solvent than during a crisis. The unprecedented nature of COVID-19's impact on the global economy cannot be overstated. The economic impact will likely be felt for years to come, but businesses that implement fiscally responsible practices can survive, and even thrive, in this environment.

In fact, throughout the period of quarantine, many businesses have done some self-reflection and realized that many of the things they thought were necessary operating expenses are actually not necessary at all. It appears the methodologies behind the "lean startup" are starting to permeate into every business and industry that takes part in this global economy.

Management and HR expenses that should be trimmed

Expensive business trips: Today, the business world is realizing the effectiveness of remote collaboration tools, and the thousands of dollars that would otherwise be spent on a business trip can be used for other, more productive purchases. So, do away with them.

Expensive office space: Many businesses are continuing business as usual throughout the quarantine and realizing productivity can still be maintained, even while employees are working from home. If eliminating rented office space is not ideal for your particular business, one strategy to reduce the financial burden is to implement a desk sharing system where some employees can work from home a few days a week, while the alternating employees use the desk in the office.

Technical debt: Any decision that makes long-term sacrifices for short-term gains is a poor business strategy. Technical debt is when you accept subpar solutions that are easier and less expensive to implement, with the knowledge you will need to invest more time and money in the future to fix them. Instead, take the time to explore alternative options and external solutions and services that could adequately fulfill your needs without willingly taking on technical debt.

Renegotiate compensation structures: Instead of letting your top talent go and potentially work for the competition, try to renegotiate the terms of their employment at all costs. For example, if your sales team would be willing to work for a lower base salary in exchange for a higher commission, your top reps may actually prefer this structure. This compensation structure will also help identify and reduce any employees who don't belong in their hired role. For other crucial roles within your company, consider hiring top-performing contractors or freelancers.

Lavish perks: Some perks have become staples across nearly every business and industry, like 401(k) matching, healthcare coverage, and snacks and drinks. Consider which perks are positively impacting your company culture and ask your employees to vote on their favorites and make compromises.

Even a temporary pause on all perks, 401(k) matching include, would be warranted (and widely accepted by your team) in the

current economic climate, especially if it can justify postponing or avoiding layoffs altogether.

Adapting to the new normal

Businesses must pivot and stay agile during any economic environment. As the world shifts to accommodate the new normal after the 2020 global pandemic, we will learn from our experiences and build stronger companies moving forward.

It's up to us to navigate this new normal – the entrepreneurs, the owners, the operators, the employees – and to create better products, services, and businesses in the process. We are all in this together and applaud everyone doing their part to save jobs and companies.

How to Successfully Rebrand Your Business, from page 8

card? Write down as many uncomfortable moments that you remember.

Next, make three lists: (1) things you love about your brand, (2) things you're neutral or have mixed feelings about, and (3) things you wish you could change. Start as general as you like but try to get as specific as you can.

Take your time with this exercise. It's a chance to review all your brand assets and get a handle on all those feelings about your business you may have been suppressing for the sake of getting things done – whether they're feelings of pride or feelings of anxiety. Simply by doing this exercise your brain will start to notice and clarify new things on its own.

2. Rediscover your ideal client

Remember that your brand isn't about you, the business owner; it's about your customers. Your offerings exist to serve them, and your marketing is always about resonating and connecting with them.

Take a look at any old documents you created about defining your ideal customer or target market – this would include your brand profile. Is the person you described still the same person you're seeking to attract? If the answer is no, it's time to do some research and collect some data!

Start researching your industry and market to see who your offering would most benefit. Even more importantly, speak to

Remember that your brand isn't about you, the business owner; it's about your customers. Your offerings exist to serve them, and your marketing is always about resonating and connecting with them.

Continued on page 12

10 Tips to Find the Perfect Employee

By Richard Weinberger, PhD, CPA, and CEO of the Association of Accredited Small Business Consultants

A key to small business success is finding and hiring “perfect” employees – people who exemplify the ideals of your business and become long-term, loyal workers. Paying attention to these 10 key factors will help you identify and hire top-notch employees:

1. Ensure the job candidate is a good fit

Your best employees need to have skills that are a good fit for their jobs. You can determine if a candidate possesses the right skills through open-ended questions, written questionnaires, problem-solving exercises, take-home assignments, and other challenges that test a person’s ability to perform a specific job. If an employee is unable to do the job they were hired to do, it will reflect poorly on everyone involved in the hiring process and, most important, your business will be negatively affected.



2. Look for integrity and a strong work ethic

Hire honest people who have high integrity. Years of building a business’s good reputation can be destroyed overnight due to a dishonest or unethical employee, especially in the age of online reviews. Additionally, employees should have a strong work ethic that can influence and enhance the work ethic of others. Integrity and a strong work ethic complement each other in the workplace.

3. Hire motivated people

Employees should be motivated beyond just receiving a paycheck to do the best job they can. They should have drive, an interest in the position and the company, and be willing to perform above and beyond their job description. There are a variety of methods you can use to motivate employees, but each employee must also have a certain amount of inherent motivation.

4. Hire employees with talent

It is important to identify and recruit talented employees who possess a natural ability to think through complex and evolving situations while on the job. They are often the ones who come up with innovative ways to improve job performance. Learn to rely on talented employees to help move your business forward. Few successful businesses are “one-man” operations.

5. Look for high-performing individuals

Good employees should be high performers for the tasks assigned. They push themselves and others to work at peak performance and, in turn, deliver high-quality products and services to customers. High performers also can be an inspiration to other employees to reach higher personal and business goals.

6. Choose people with initiative

Since it can be difficult for a small business to micromanage each employee, you should strive to hire employees who can think and work independently. Employees who require constant supervision, guidance, and monitoring impede production and efficiency.

7. Hire employees who follow the rules

Good employees follow the rules of acceptable behavior with managers, coworkers, and customers. Employees who do not follow the rules can “poison” other employees into imitating the same bad behavior. Businesses should not tolerate employees who consistently show up late, do low-quality work, or treat customers poorly.

8. Be sure the person fits your culture

It’s important to find employees who fit the culture and vision that your business has created. During a job interview, ask a candidate pertinent questions that will give you a true picture of their personality. A bad fit today will cause problems tomorrow; a good fit today will help propel your small business into the future.

9. Choose people who work well with others

Your small business should have a well-functioning team of employees. Dissatisfied and unhappy workers lower everyone’s morale and performance. During the interview process, try to determine if a potential new employee will get along with others, be a team player, and pitch in when needed – even if the task is not in their job description.

10. Hire those who will advocate for the business

Employees should be goodwill ambassadors for your company. The enthusiasm of excited employees will rub off on both other employees and customers. Passionate employees enjoy their jobs and spread their passion to others.

Ready to find the perfect employee?

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How to Successfully Rebrand Your Business, *from page 10*

your current and past customers about why they chose your business, and what they got out of the experience of working with or purchasing from you. Put yourself in your customers’ shoes before you start the rebranding process so you can best cater your new and improved brand to the right people.

3. Think long term

Branding is all about things that are deep and central to your business. Take that piece of paper out again and ask yourself, “What do I want my brand to have accomplished 20 years down the line?” Thinking about that long-term goal can help you realize what desires are prompting you as a business owner. Your deepest motivations are directly connected to the personality and values of your business.

No matter what level of rebrand you need, keep in mind that the process doesn’t involve getting rid of everything. Like pruning a tree so healthy new growth can come in, the goal of rebranding is to strengthen and improve the brand you’ve already built.

Let those goals and values shine through in your new brand identity. Don’t change something just to stay on-trend. A great brand is authentic and unique. If you try to be like everyone else, your audience will notice.

4. Decide if you need a refresh or overhaul

Let’s return to those lists you made earlier: (1) things you love about your brand, (2) things you’re neutral or have mixed feelings about, and (3) things you wish you could change. After looking at your ideal client and long-term goals, is there anything you’d like to add?

If your first list is very long and your third list is very short, you may very likely need a minor brand refresh. Maybe you discover, for example, that the only thing you dislike about your brand is the font you’ve been using. Maybe it’s “too old fashioned.” Or the color is old hat. Change then and fall in love all over again.

But what about if your list of things you wish you could change is pretty long? Or if you can’t put your finger on what the problem is? Then it might be time to consider a brand overhaul. In this case you will need to align all the elements of your brand, from mission and ideal client to colors and personality.

No matter what level of rebrand you need, keep in mind that the process doesn’t involve getting rid of everything. Like pruning a tree so healthy new growth can come in, the goal of rebranding is to strengthen and improve the brand you’ve already built.

What's in a Name?

• Applying the Wisdom of Buckminster Fuller From an article by Jim Paluch

R. Buckminster Fuller had a unique and impressive name, but his ideas and wisdom are his legacy, not his name. And they are as valid in this century as they were in the previous one.

Bucky attended Harvard in 1915 and was expelled twice, once for disorderly drunkenness and again for irresponsibility and lack of interest. He also suffered the hardships of losing a child, financial ruin, and depression, as well as realizing he just did not fit into the mold of what or how people should think.

Through all of this, he finally committed his life to a mission of, "finding out what one person can do to have an impact on the world and all humanity." He became an architect – the inventor of the geodesic dome – designer, author, humanitarian, and futurist. His impact on thought in the 20th century was tremendous and spilled over into many disciplines. His inventions and philosophies still influence the creation of product design and innovations in this century. which brings me to the reason I value R. Buckminster Fuller. He is the source of some tremendous quotes that still make me stop and think every time I come across them. Such as...

"When I am working on a problem, I never think about beauty but when I have finished, if the solution is not beautiful, I know it is wrong."

What has this made me think? How many of us choose to pursue a problem and work on it, or even recognize that the frustration we are having is simply a problem seeking a solution? Do I stop long enough to evaluate the "beauty" of a solution, or am I just moving from problem to problem with duct tape and bailing twine trying to temporarily fix it? I believe real leaders, real thinkers, and successful people do stop and appreciate a solution and seek to sustain it so that in the future, even better solutions will evolve from it.

"We are called to be architects of the future not its victims."

That is one of my favorites of all time, because it is a foundational challenge to me and anyone who reads it to take ownership of our life, our success, or our contribution to whatever endeavor or organization we belong. We are called to make a difference, and the choices we make in regards to that calling determine if we will or not.

"There is nothing in a caterpillar that tells you it is going to be a butterfly."

This quote reminds me to find the beauty in everyone, find the opportunity in every situation, and expect a change to happen causing something even greater to emerge. It also allows me to challenge each of you that are still reading to this point, to just for

today. . . find butterflies where others may not yet see them.

"You never change things by fighting the existing reality. To change something, build a new model that makes the existing model obsolete."



JIM PALUCH
JP Horizons

It is not what is in a name that makes a difference; it is what's in our hearts! It is how we choose to use our talents, overcome setbacks, humbly respond to the wins, and the choices we choose to make that matter.

This quote is one of my favorites to put at the bottom of an agenda for a strategic planning session or solutions-seeking event. How many times have we caught ourselves trying to make a potentially great idea or solution fit into the current situation? We will argue its merits with others who are not ready for a change and then ultimately find the idea discarded by the group or ourselves as something that just did not work. This quote is reminding us to be vigilant, be absurd, be daring, and do things with the right intent, beyond

fighting for change, to becoming the change we want to see. It asks us all to be willing to lead the way, not for our own glory or self-satisfaction but to make a positive impact for others that follow.

What is in a name? The answer I would like to suggest is this: "Nothing!" It is not what is in a name that makes a difference; it is what's in our hearts! It is how we choose to use our talents, overcome setbacks, humbly respond to the wins, and the choices we choose to make that matter. If we all make those right choices, maybe, just maybe, in the next century someone will be referring to a quote we said or a difference we made.

Let me throw in one more R. Buckminster Fuller quote to consider: *"Dare to be naïve."*

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Individuality, Not Aloneness

This month is an excellent time to reflect upon all the past months together, recalling what was meaningful while on our individual journeys. Hopefully, there are enough positive things to remember in this most difficult year. Letting go of the past we must now look forward united in our expectancy of the greater yet to be. With the history that inspires and enriches our lives, we step out in confidence, inspiration and understanding of the lessons given.

As we celebrate joyous times together during the Holidays, each of us especially celebrates things most meaningful to us individually. This includes family, friends, that special someone, and our relationship with our Creator. God is the one source of all life. The incredible fact is that this Spiritual Source is individualized by means of us, through us, as us. God resides in His creation.

This month is also the perfect time to recognize Christmas as the "birth of Christ and His consciousness," and Hanukkah as God's never-ending abundance, and the threshold of "the individual awakening within." Yes, the thread of life weaves all life together, yet as individuals, no two lives are the same. Being sentient human beings, it's wondrous how this is all possible in the great Plan of our Creator.

As we celebrate joyous times together during the Holidays, each of us especially celebrates things most meaningful to us individually.

I have found from studies and reading and understanding, that God is the timeless, unchanging Creator – and as such is the source, continuity, and conclusion of every individual. He is the reason we are amazing individuals as we each embrace our individual



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journeys with clarity of purpose and with knowledge that God is the changeless reality in every season.

The ending of one cycle of life only brings about the beginning of a new and beautiful one yet to be, filled with love that transcends any fears, separation, or aloneness. Love is the cornerstone of life, and "Love Does" absolutely. It is at the center and circumference of all our interactions, always.

Each of us has been given a life filled with purpose. We must find that purpose and live that life to its fullest. Only you can live it, not for or by anyone else. Like Dr. Seuss put it so wisely, ***"Today you are you. That is truer than true. There is no one alive who is you-er than you."***

Finally, know that "...the friendship and flowers that bloom in all the tomorrows are in the seeds of today." Have a blessed Holiday Season. – *Dave*

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