

**WHAT IS IT THAT SUCCESSFUL SMALL BUSINESS PEOPLE DO THAT IS DIFFERENT?  
Here are 5 SECRETS to success in this economy.**

**1. START WITH YOURSELF**

The most important 6 inches in the world is the 6 inches between your ears. All the leaders, gurus and the most successful business people will say it's not what you do but how you do it that counts. What is underneath the how you do something is how you think about it. In fact that you have thought about what you do and why you do it is one of the key differences between good business and great business. When and where did you last have a really good experience of doing business as a customer? What did the person do? What was the difference? A smile? Going a bit further for you? A special order? The most successful businesses do the exact opposite of the unsuccessful ones. While those with problems make unrealistic promises that they can never deliver good businesses do it better. You can promise Friday and deliver Thursday. (BE EARLY) You can promise it will take 3 days and be out in 2½. (BE EFFICIENT) Warn them that this could be messy and then clean up after yourself

**Secret No 1  
UNDER PROMISE AND OVER DELIVER**

**2. CONTROL YOUR COSTS**

The aim of business is to make a profit. If you could make more money without increasing the price to the customer wouldn't that be great? An easy way to do this is to examine your costs.

The usual areas where costs can be cut are:

Materials: Suppliers are now really competitive. They need your business so you should be able to play suppliers off against each other for a better price, a bigger discount. It won't happen if you don't ask. So ASK. If you got 3% more what would that do for your business

Phones and utilities: All the phone companies both mobile and fixed line are really keen to get new customers. They will also compete on price. If you change your price plan you could save between 10 and 40%

Gas and electricity are the same.

Insurances: When did you last have a check on the value you get in insurance? 10% is the minimum saving you get if you shop around or change broker.

Petrol or Diesel: Look at the price per litre. The differences are up to 15c per litre. On a 50l tank and one tank a week that is a saving of €400 a year

Bank loan repayments: Ask what interest rate you are paying, and if they can offer you a better deal. Don't be put off by the first answer. Check the best deal. If you are buying a car the dealer may not offer you the best deal available. Look around.

**Secret No 2  
LOOK AFTER YOUR COSTS AND THE PROFITS WILL ALWAYS GROW**

### **3. LOOK FOR THE PLACES WHERE OTHER BUSINESSES DO IT BADLY**

Lots of businesses will be fat and lazy after the years of the Celtic Tiger. They will sit around and wait for business to come to them. That doesn't work any more. You have to go out and get business. You have to show the customer your value proposition. Why should they buy from you instead of someone else?

Ask yourself the hard questions WHY Would I buy from ME?

Those other businesses will wait till it is too late to change things. They will RE act to the changes. The smart and successful businesses will change before they absolutely have to. They are watching for opportunities to meet new customers. They promote their business more actively. They are looking for the opportunities that are there but that the lazy people have missed. They are PRO ACTIVE

#### **Secret No 3**

**DON'T WAIT FOR SOMETHING TO HAPPEN GO AND MAKE IT HAPPEN.**

### **4. ADD VALE TO YOUR OFFERING**

People are now much more cautious about spending their money. They are looking for better value, different options. Many people are now changing to the cheaper brands in the supermarket, even changing supermarket. What can you offer to your potential customers without changing your price? Is there a simple value add on you could do? Like the carpet cleaner who now steams your curtains for an extra €15 or the mechanic who gives your car a clean for an extra €20. What hassle can you save your customer at little cost to you? Take away the rubbish for the price of going to the dump? What about a Loyalty scheme? Tesco, Dunnes & Superquinn all do it. What can you offer as an incentive to repeat business? A draw for a prize? Or a reward for the 40th client this week or the 41<sup>st</sup> and 42<sup>nd</sup>.

#### **Secret No 4**

**GIVE THE CUSTOMER MORE THAN THEY EXPECT.  
EVERYONE WANTS SOMETHING FOR NOTHING. DO A GIVE AWAY**

### **5. BUILD UP A LOYAL REPEAT CUSTOMER BASE**

Customers are the life blood of business. Everyone knows 200 people, at least. If you have a satisfied client they might tell 10 people. If you were great they will tell 30 people. But if you are fantastic they will tell **everyone**. So no matter what you do; you have to do it really well if the customer is to become a 'Raving Fan'. These raving fans can become the best marketing and advertising you can do. Ideally you should do something to get the customer to give you a repeat order, a personal introduction to a new client or a testimonial you can show to another prospect every time you do business. So what are YOU doing to grow your business this week?

#### **Secret No 5**

**GET PEOPLE TALKING ABOUT YOU BEHIND YOUR BACK  
– AND MAKE SURE ITS GOOD THINGS THEY SAY.**

**Smart businesses are working hard in this climate to get new customers; and keep them.**

**Only the people who do a good job will have great businesses in 2 years time**

**What is your strategy to make the most of the mistakes that the bad businesses are making?**

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