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THE SBRA COMMUNITY HOW COMMITTED ARE YOU?



**By Gary Seibert, CEO,
Small Business Resource Association**

Here we are, one month into the New Year and many of you have attempted to set goals or resolutions to make some kind of a change about something. Regardless of your attempt to make a change, 80 percent of you will give up and go back to whatever behavior you were trying to change. Oddly enough, more people today are inclined to not even set a goal or make a resolution because they just don't want to or they know they will fail or they actually forget what their goal or resolution was. Sad, but true.

As human beings we are challenged daily with decisions that, in many cases, are simple to make such as what to have for breakfast or what to wear. Taking a short cut to work that sometimes saves you ten minutes versus taking the normal route, might be another example of a simple choice.

This article however is not focused on simple choices, rather, difficult ones that may have a significant impact on your business or personal life.

Choices that are hard to make, some with consequences that might even be life changing. Like setting goals or making resolutions, why is making a change from what you are currently doing to something else so difficult?

I was meeting with a client a few weeks ago that had come to me to discuss a business problem. He started his business three years ago and in the first year he had seven clients. Total revenue barely paid his expenses, let alone

give him a salary. Fortunately, his wife had a job that helped pay the family bills. In year two his client base stayed the same and by year three he started to look for help. Early in our meeting I asked him why it took so long to reach out for help. His response was that he was too embarrassed to ask for help. I then asked him what he was doing to get new clients. His response was, nothing because he didn't know how. Finally, I looked at him and asked, "how committed are you" to being your own boss and owning your own business? He looked at me and said "Very, that's why I am here. I am ready to make whatever changes I need to be successful." I then asked him "How bad do you want this?" After a few moments of silence he responded, "I am tired of working hard and making no money and being supported by my wife — I will commit to do whatever it takes to make my business successful."

His statement was huge as resolutions and goals are meaningless unless they are backed-up by a commitment. By definition, a commitment is an agreement or pledge to do something in the future. A commitment is something which regularly takes

up some of your time because of an agreement you have made or because of a responsibility that you have. A commitment holds you accountable to yourself and others. That's why many people fail, they do not like to be held accountable.

As business owners or managers, let's take a look at some of the commitments we inherit that may require us to make changes.

1. Being the **FIRST** one at work and the last one to leave.
2. Being the **LEADER** and driving force of the business. Make **SALES** a priority.
3. Taking responsibility for **EVERYTHING** that happens in the business — Good and Bad.
4. Being the **FACE** of the business and the relationship builder in the community.
5. Being **RESPONSIBLE** for sticking to the company's Mission and Vision. Don't get sidetracked.
6. Creating a **CULTURE** that lures new customers and employees and keeps old ones.
7. Embracing **CHANGE** as inevitable keeping your business relevant.
8. Being a constant **LEARNER** and engaged with your industry.
9. Being a consistent **ENCOURAGER** and **MOVIVATOR** to everyone.
10. Being a **SERVANT** leader instead of a boss.

Be a doer, not a procrastinator. It's easy to put things off till tomorrow that you should do today. Successful people are committed to being **GREAT**, not good. They run the extra mile and are not satisfied with second place. When in doubt about something, they search for people with the answers and don't allow their **EGOs** to hold them back from being successful. When they make a commitment to do something you can be assured that they will do it-**NOW**.

Are you truly **COMMITTED** to making 2025 your best year ever? If so, make a list of things you need to change, prioritize the list, assign completion dates to each change and then find an accountability partner to help keep you focused. Your success or failure will be determined by answering this question — **HOW COMMITTED ARE YOU?**



SBRA Business Spotlight



Jonestown Bank & Trust Co.

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Jonestown Bank & Trust Co. (JBT) is a Pennsylvania chartered community bank established in 1873 and headquartered in Jonestown, PA. JBT operates 11 full-service and 2 limited service branch locations in Lebanon, Lancaster and Berks Counties. JBT serves small to mid-sized businesses as well as families and individuals, fulfilling deposit, loan, and payment needs.



NO MARKETING PLAN FOR 2025? IT'S NOT TOO LATE.



By Mark Kramer,
Core1Marketing,
Proud SBRA
Member

If you have a small business, in all probability, you have a business plan, especially if you had to borrow money to get it going. Now, here's the big question, do you have a marketing plan?

If your answer is NO, you're not alone. Would you believe that only half of small business owners operate with a marketing plan? According to a survey of 350 small and medium business owners, conducted by *Outbound Engine*, 50 percent of those did not have a marketing plan for the year. I can attest to this statistic. I can't tell you how many business owners I've consulted with that after asking me how I might help them grow their business, I get a blank stare when I ask them to see their marketing plan.

Marketing is an *ongoing process* of educating consumers why they should buy your product or service, the key to ensuring the growth of your business. A well thought out marketing plan will help identify your target customer, where they live, where they play, and more importantly, it helps address the big question – *why should they buy from me?*

The key to having a marketing plan, especially for a small business owners, is the peace of mind that comes with knowing they can make the right day-to-day decisions about growing their business without spending a lot of time during the decision making process. If you're losing sleep over how to best spend your marketing dollars, a marketing plan provides the direction and ease of decision making that can help you sleep like a baby. Without a clear plan, many business owners end up trying too many different marketing tactics and end up walking away with little or no success without even knowing why.

As the former marketing director for a multi-million-dollar hospitality group and a healthy marketing budget, I was *constantly* being contacted by advertising sales reps selling print, radio, billboards, digital media, coupon books, directory advertising, cable TV, newspaper advertising, and more... DAILY. Without having a well-constructed marketing plan to follow, my head would have been spinning

wondering if I was making the right decisions to grow the business while spending tons of time evaluating every single ad proposal that came across my desk. If that *greatest deal ever, that limited-time offer that expires tomorrow, that promotion that's guaranteed to drive a boatload of customers through your door* is something that's not in your plan, it's easy to say "no thanks"... confidently.

So why do so many businesses try to operate without marketing plan? Budget is usually a factor. Let's face it, after employee salaries, marketing is typically the biggest expense for most businesses. But here's something that will put a smile on your face – developing a marketing plan will actually save you money. When you understand who your target is and you know how to best reach and connect with them, that's where you need to spend your marketing dollars. There's no waste, no guesswork, you simply follow your PLAN.

Time is a factor that often delays the planning process. Small business owners are BUSY. And we all know it takes time to plan, but when you think about the time you'll save by not having to negotiate and make decisions about countless advertising options for your business, having a plan to guide you will put you way ahead of the game.

Experience plays a large part in creating an effective marketing plan. While small business owners wear many hats and there is some great do-it-yourself online help for marketing, we all can't be great at everything. It may be worth allowing a professional to help you get started with your plan. And if you do have a marketing plan, you want to make sure those marketing dollars are being spent in the most productive way possible.

Finally, whether you're starting a new business or you're a seasoned veteran, your marketing plan cannot be created then tucked away until next year rolls around. Especially in today's climate, change is constant and you need to keep pace with your customers' change in habits in order to stay connected. Review your plan at least quarterly to ensure that its components continue to send a clear, consistent message to your target about what you do and why you do it.

Mark Kramer at Core1Marketing.com provides the experience of a virtual Chief Marketing Officer to small business owners in Berks County.

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