



**Rehoboth Chamber of Commerce “Rose Colored Glasses” Roundtable  
What Works – Making your business bulletproof in 7 steps  
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**1. Be Responsive**

If you use “Responsiveness” as a customer service mantra for your business, it will allow you to beat your larger competitors. Customer buying decisions are based greatly on emotion and timing. When prospective customers are ready to buy, they want lightning quick turnaround on their questions and objections so that they can make the purchase that they have decided on. Always accept payments when they are offered to you from customers.

**2. Be an Expert**

\*\*\*The information age is now the participation age\*\*\*

Potential customers expect you to PROVE that you are an expert. Saying that you have been in business X number of years is not enough any longer. Be more transparent. Share your knowledge and give insight to your company, services, and culture with newsletters, blogs, and press releases. Be bold and explain what you do and how you do it. Articles with this content also show up higher in Google, so take advantage of blogs for this.

**3. Be Thrifty**

\*\*\*I didn't get rich writing checks - Bill Gates on the Simpsons\*\*\*

Never sign long-term contracts. Hiring should be a last resort. Hire slow, and fire fast. Outsource your accounts payable and accounts receivable. Outsource your HR. Outsource your IT services. Watch your bills for usage-based services (like cell phones) very closely. The folks that say you should market more in a down economy are usually selling marketing services. Don't fall into the search engine marketing hype trap. Market to your EXISTING customers more, because it is much less expensive and effective than marketing to people that you don't know. Don't be shy – ask for referrals from customers too.

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#### **4. Be Positive**

Attitude is everything. If you offer services, then you are actually in the problem-solving business. Make sure your staff is aware that customers with problems are paying you for help.

***\*\*\*A customer with a problem is not a problem customer\*\*\****

Understand that in the current economy, more customers will be in distress, so plan on handling stressful situations in a calm, positive manner.

#### **5. Be Afraid**

***\*\*\*just because I am paranoid, that doesn't mean they aren't after me\*\*\****

Trust, but always verify what people are telling you. Employment applications should include a signed waiver allowing background checks. Background checks only cost about \$70 per person. Never give someone so much control and power in your company that you are afraid to fire them. Create a "Plan B" for roles within your company, and providers that you depend on. Be aware of potentials for theft of tangible and intangible assets in and around your business. Use the current slow times to firm up your legal agreements. Always do business formally, even with friends, family and neighbors. Perhaps behave even more formally than usual with people that are close to you.

#### **6. Be Flexible and Accountable**

***\*\*\*A goal without a deadline is nothing more than a wish\*\*\****

Priorities change quickly, so use a calendar to take charge of your professional and personal life. There are only so many hours in a day, so you have to constantly reassess how you are spending professional time between 1. Generating revenue, 2. Keeping a dialogue with customers, and 3. Improving your business. Create deadlines for improvements to your business so that they actually happen. Always be looking for ways to streamline how your business operates.



## 7. Be Selective

***\*\*\*What customers can I have the greatest success with in making them happy?\*\*\****

Not every customer or vertical market is the best for your business. Identify who you can provide the best service to, and still be profitable. Look for trends with problem customers to see why those relationships didn't work. Readjust your procedures, pricing, policies, and marketing to identify conflicts early. This saves everyone time, money, and aggravation.

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