

13 Rules for Businesses to Thrive in any Economy

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Be a true leader and use these 13 rules to ensure your business not only survives, but thrives, in any economy! Adversity is just a road to success - you have to learn from your mistakes and adjust your management style to motivate your team and increase performance.

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How many more businesses will close their doors this year and blame “the economy?” For a large number of these businesses, shutting the doors could be considered “cop-out closures,” businesses that opt to give up, throw in the towel or take the easy out now that there’s something other to blame than poor management. The good news is that every closure represents a tremendous opportunity for businesses who intend not just to survive, but to thrive. While there is no simple recipe, these thirteen rules will help ensure success.

1. Control your own destiny - become a true leader, despite what’s happening around you. Stand up and make things happen. It takes a real leader to do that in the face of adversity.
2. Sometimes there are no quick fixes, but even a month can make a difference. The 30-day Fix: Create an Elephant List and work it – “one bite at a time.” Use a legal pad and for 30 consecutive days, write down every problem that comes up and what was done to correct it. At the end of 30 days, look at the very first problem you recorded. If it’s still there, come up with a real permanent solution, not just a “quick fix” to get it off the list. Elephants have small brains, so not every “solution” will be well thought through the first time. Keep working each problem until it no longer exists – one bite at a time.
3. Instill the “Red Carpet Treatment” philosophy throughout the organization and create clients who buy because of their relationship with your business and the star treatment they receive, not because of price. A red carpet is traditionally used to welcome VIPs such as dignitaries and celebrities at events. Who in your business is more of a VIP than your customer? Be willing to go the extra mile to “wow” your VIPs, from their first greeting to the delivery of their product or service.
4. Work every single opportunity fully. Focus on closing not on generating leads. Turn

buyers into loyal clientele by helping them buy the product or service they want. Ask the right questions and listen to the customer's needs, wants and desires. Adopt a positive attitude for positive results. Don't turn buyers into shoppers by pushing them to "buy now!" – customers have no other reason for being in your business other than to buy at some point. When salespeople understand that their job is to help buyers select the right product or service, now becomes irrelevant. Whether a buyer completes a deal today or next week doesn't matter; what matters is that they buy, and buy from your business.

5. Educate and train - constantly. Provide education, hands-on training and practice for salespeople and managers that shows them how to follow-up and pursue sales until the through delivery and beyond. Teach them to use a customer-focused approach – not high-pressure sales tactics. Demonstrate not only how the process works, but your willingness to lead and work with them. Monitor, assess, pinpoint and correct selling problems.

6. Manage the entire sales operation. Develop an effective, step-by-step game plan so everyone knows what he or she should be doing at any given time. Now that you have the data, use it to track, analyze monitor progress and performance through every step of the selling process, every day. Use the results to identify new areas for education and training.

7. Promote managers from within your existing staff because their skills and performance will continue to improve with on-going training and education. Do not let performance fall because traffic is off; performance should increase, not decrease.

8. Count traffic: Base performance on an accurate traffic count to create a level playing field and measure execution based on an improvement in closing ratios, the number of items vs. customers the salesperson worked. Using traffic counts to track performance gives every salesperson the opportunity to improve and take advantage of incentives and contests.

9. Meet with your team daily to motivate them to achieve their best performance each day. Emphasize teamwork and demonstrate how every individual's performance contributes to the team's success. Structure incentives so every team member has a fair shot, and so that the person delivering an "assist" is rewarded as well, not just individual who "scores."

10. Conduct sales training daily. Help your people plan. Give every salesperson 10 things to do each day: Put a plan in place to meet their goal for the month; review their progress daily.

- Generate two customers a day.
- Listen! Find out what customers want in the first five minutes (work to hit the goal).

- Call five previous customers; look for the referral.
- Send 10 follow-up letters or cards.
- Visit two local businesses and secure two prospects from each.
- Be helpful - even if there's no immediate profit in it.
- Deal with complaints - patiently.
- Give every customer a tour of the facility – even if they haven't made a decision to buy.
- Maintain a good sense of humor and positive attitude.
- Make a game plan for the next day.
- Practice good time management skills.

11. Check each other for accountability – at the end of the day – and make a plan of action for the next work day.

12. Think like “The Little Engine That Could:” – Yes I can!

13. Work with your people using a tell/show attitude – whatever you tell them, show them as well.

If you found this article helpful, check out this e-book by Richard Libin: Who Stopped the Sale.



Richard F. Libin has written two acclaimed books that help people of all walks of life improve their sales skills, because as he says, “everyone is a selling something.” His most recent book, *Who Knew?* (Who-Knew.com), was published in early 2017. His first book, “*Who Stopped the Sale?*” (WhoStoppedTheSale.com), is now in its second edition. As president of APB-Automotive Profit Builders, Inc., a firm with more than 48 years experience working with both sales and service professionals, he helps his clientele, through personnel development and technology, to build customer satisfaction and maximize gross profits in their businesses. Mr. Libin can be reached at rlibin@apb.cc or 508-626-9200 or www.apb.cc.