

Small Business News & Notes

Tips For Running A Successful Small Business *Easy Ideas To Keep In Mind When Running A Small Business*

Ⓣ

(NAPSA)—Many people have adapted to the changing economic environment by trying their hands at running a small business—a seemingly daunting task, yet one that can be personally and financially rewarding. It's no wonder, then, that 75 percent of America's economy is comprised of small businesses. If you run your own business, here are some ideas to keep in mind:

Information Is Key: As a small-business owner, you need to juggle many different roles, and tapping into all available resources is essential. If you're new to the world of small business, start with your local Small Business Administration (www.sba.gov) for guidance on what's needed to begin your venture. In addition to start-up information, take advantage of free online resources that will help you with day-to-day tasks at your new enterprise. For example, HP offers free online classes specifically tailored for small businesses, with topics ranging from writing a grant proposal to utilizing computer programs. These resources will not only help you manage your business, but will also spur other ideas that can help it grow.

Think Technology: There are a myriad of PCs and printers on the market designed specifically for small businesses. When shopping for a PC, consider the type of work you'll do, where you'll do it, and what types of features you'll need. For example, if you're constantly on the road brokering deals, consider a tablet PC where customers can sign the screen and process information on the spot. Conversely, if your clientele comes to you for services, consider touch technology computers, which are user-friendly and provide a streamlined experience.

Also think about how often you're on the road and how important portability is to you when choosing between a notebook PC and desktop. If you primarily work in the office, you may prefer an affordable high-powered desktop. You should also consider a high-performing office printer such as an HP Officejet Pro, which delivers up to 50 percent cost per page and energy savings compared to competitive laser devices. When purchasing your new technology, bear in mind that many companies such as HP offer financing deals with minimum purchase requirements as low as

\$1,500. These options can give you a little wiggle room to stretch your finances when you need it most.

Protecting Your Business: Now that you've established your company, make sure you protect it. For most businesses, data—whether it's a customer database or documents stored on a hard drive—is essential to survival and growth. Make sure you use secure connections and anti-spyware software to prevent hackers from accessing your valuable information. Furthermore, don't forget to regularly backup your data. Keep in mind that if you lose data in a natural disaster such as a fire or flood, you will probably lose any backups stored in the same location as your computer, so make sure you backup all of your information online as well.

Running your own business can be an exciting undertaking if you follow the right steps to safeguard your investment. After all, many of today's large companies started out as small businesses housed in garages and makeshift offices. With the right strategy and drive to succeed, you will be on your way to achieving your goals—and perhaps even become the next household name.