

# Top 10 Small Business Mistakes

SMB Quick Reference Series

## Avoiding Common Pitfalls When Running a Small Business

In today's economy, mistakes are costly. Costly in terms of lost opportunity and expense to the business. Avoiding common, and sometimes expensive, mistakes can set your business apart, create new opportunity and market advantage, and add significant value to your customers and employees.

Every business is unique and often faces different challenges. However, there are some common mistakes that happen in virtually every business, creating problems where there needn't be any. As you run your business watch to avoid:

1. Not Knowing Your Customers: Changes in your customers' preferences and your competitors' products and services can leave you at a disadvantage unless you get to know your customers well. What they want now and will likely want in the future, what their buying patterns are, and how you can be a resource for them, even if you don't have the right products or services for them now, are keys to success.
2. Selling to the Wrong Customers: While sales are important to the survival of any business, you don't need to push your business on everyone you meet, including friends and family. Furthermore, it's a waste of time to try selling to people who simply don't need what you're offering.
3. Ignoring Your Employees: Motivating, coaching and managing your staff is probably one of your toughest challenges as an entrepreneur/business owner today! Without your patience, persistence and "people skills," your problems can multiply quickly. Morale, productivity AND PROFITS can easily be destroyed! (See below for how to get your employees' full commitment to job performance).
4. Not Spending/Investing: It's a mistake to be stingy with cash. Don't let frugality get in the way of efficiency. Take advantage of skilled resources or technology that can accomplish certain tasks more efficiently than you can.
5. Ignoring the "Books" and Cash Position: The world (your customers) doesn't always respond to even superior products in the timeframe that you think they should. You'll need plenty of cash to sustain yourself in the meantime. This is especially true in uncertain economic times.
6. No Marketing Plan: A marketing plan creates the kind of attention you need to get in front of the right types of people, companies, etc. It is what attracts people to you! There may be as many as 25 ways to market your business at no or low cost. A good marketing plan implemented effectively, efficiently, elegantly and consistently, will eliminate the need for "cold calls!"
7. No Sales Plan: Without a sales plan, there's no serious way to gauge the financial growth and progress of your business. You need a realistic map for where the sales will come from, how they'll come and from whom.
8. Doing it Alone: You might be the key to everything BUT you cannot DO everything and grow at the same time. Even modest success can overwhelm you unless you hire the right staff and delegate responsibility. Make delegation a priority to accelerate your success.
9. No Accountability: Get an advisory board or a mentor. Don't think that small businesses need one? They do. The board can be family members that you trust, or friends. Ask them to be your board of directors and review your business plans and results with them. Having someone to bounce ideas off and get an objective opinion is critical.
10. Failing to Optimize the Business: Value creation is essential to a sustainable business. As a business owner, you need to find a way to deliver your value in a cost effective and efficient manner. Most likely first attempts are suboptimal. Look for ways to optimize communication, collaboration, productivity, and product/service delivery so that you're better and more cost effective than the competition.

So, how do you avoid these mistakes? By proactively looking forward and seeking out solutions that propel your business forward. What is one of the best tools available? The SMB Suite, from NextCorp. The SMB Suite helps you, among other things, manage your cash, learn about your customers, create marketing and sales plans, instill accountability, and optimize the business.

Discover how you can start avoiding common mistakes and beating the competition with the SMB Suite by simply visiting [www.getsmb.com](http://www.getsmb.com) or by calling 1-800-525-NEXT.

1-888-525-6398

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