

Ian M. Berkowitz

Licensing may be answer to global marketing

Whether you believe it or not, spring is in the air. For us-Floridians, knowing when spring kicks in is strictly a function of moving our clocks ahead. We are limited with our changes of seasons, and our leaves are certainly less colorful than they are up in the North-east.

However, when spring comes, so does spring cleaning. As a business owner, you and your business should take advantage of getting your house in order by doing a little spring cleaning. A good spring cleaning can lead to a more efficient, effective and well-run business. A few good areas to start your spring cleaning are with employees, operations, and your business relationships.

Check employees

Spring cleaning of and with your employees can sometimes be the one most effective way to improve your business. The first few months of the year, you are able to see how your employees reacted to the holiday bonus or raise, and whether or not they still have that drive and energy to be part of your team.

Statistically, the beginning of the New Year is the time that employees will often revisit loyalty and dedication to their job. They evaluate the pros and cons of being your employee over the course of the previous year, and often decide whether or not they are staying or beginning search for a new position.

So you too should take this opportunity, to recap on the effectiveness of your employees, and each of the contributions to

your company. If someone may not be pulling his or her weight, or you've noticed a slide in productivity, it may be time to have a heart-to-heart conversation with that employee about his or her future with the company.

Get organized

On the operational level, spring cleaning is sort of like organizing. How often do you find yourself turning your office upside down looking for that one piece of paper, folder or business card that you need, and simply can't find? Your spring cleaning should be about developing and implementing a system to be more organized which translates into putting things in place. In life, everything has its place. You should look to abandon the method of placing stacks and stacks of paper on your desk in order to have everything in your reach.

Committing to a filing system, where the essential things are at your fingertips, and the things that are completed or used less often are tucked away somewhere out of reach, will give you a fighting chance of being more productive. The less time you spend looking for things, the more time you have to do the things that earn you revenue.

Spring cleaning of and with your business relationships is somewhat similar to what you do with your employees. This is the time to look through your business cards and your database to determine the purpose and use of each of your contacts. What is the likelihood of you doing business with someone that you haven't



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spoken to in five to 10 years? Do you really believe that one deal is going to come around, and that one contact will be your best bet?

Your best business relationships are those that you interact with often. Those contacts that you see at church, synagogue, sporting events, chambers of commerce, the grocery store, the mall or just around town are the best bets to do business with. Relationships that are current are productive.

So instead of simply holding on to a business card or contact information, why not pick up the phone and plan to go to breakfast or lunch with an old contact in order to reignite a relationship that you think will have some value in the future.

Ian M. Berkowitz is a former attorney/advisor with the United States Small Business Administration in Washington D.C. During his tenure with the Federal Government he specifically worked in the areas of disaster relief for homeowners and businesses and government contracting. He is currently a practicing business and real estate attorney in Boca Raton. In addition to his law degree, Ian also holds a Masters Degree in Government from The John Hopkins University.