GROWING YOUR BUSINESS
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Growing your Business

Growing your business means more cash for you now plus a higher sale price in the future when you decide to eventually sell your business. We have put together Four key information areas for you.

Key Information Area 1.
FOCUS ON EXISTING CUSTOMERS

Target your best customers with offers
Identify the customers who generate the most profit for your business or who have the most potential for additional sales. Actively engage with these customers to gain more sales. Find out how you can utilise the 80/20 rule in business.

Research what else you can sell
Conduct online surveys or ask customers directly to discover what other products or services they might be interested in. For example, if you own a convenience store, ask staff to informally question customers at your checkout and to take note of what else they would like to be able to buy. Add some of these suggestions to your product or service line. See our advice on the best approach for following up with your customers.
Building a loyalty system with points or loyalty cards is a great way to encourage more frequent purchases and track your customers so each time they visit they can gather credit towards a free bottle of wine. This can also help identify sales opportunities.

Create a customer database to target offers
Collecting customer emails or addresses enables you to contact them with special offers, new items or useful information. For example, if you had your own taxi business, you could

email discounted fares to customers at slower times of the year. Learn how to start doing business online.

Train staff on ways to improve sales conversions

Ensure your business has friendly, helpful staff that are well trained to take advantage of converting enquiries into sales. Run in-house sales sessions or employ a sales consultant. Read our article covering tips about how your business can get more conversions.

Offer incentives for your staff to sell more

Help your staff on-sell to existing customers by offering incentives. For example, if you operated an adventure tourism business with multiple activities you could offer bonuses for selling certain products or increasing the average sale. Learn more about how to build a strong team.

Build a community through social media

Start a Facebook, LinkedIn or Twitter campaign (whichever is most relevant to your business) and talk about your business and its customers to increase the profile of your business and encourage additional purchases. Find out more about the growing role of social media in business.

Identify any cross sell opportunities

List the products or services your customers have previously bought and then match complementary items that you could sell to them. Contact them with offers. Always encourage customers to consider buying a higher net margin product or service. Learn about the art of cross-selling.

Review your business plan

Go over your business plan to evaluate and update anything that's recently changed. Check you're still on track for your growth goals and make any necessary adjustments.

FIND NEW CUSTOMERS (WITHIN THE CURRENT MARKET)

Use direct marketing that gets results

Measure the response rates to each area of your direct marketing campaign, whether it be email advertising, direct mail, or online click-throughs. Invest more of your marketing budget into what gets results. For example, if you're an electrician, consider doing a mail drop in your local area, advertising your services.

Find ways to generate word of mouth

Build up positive word of mouth referrals by getting testimonials from customers, encouraging regulars to refer their friends or family to your business, speaking at events,

and networking inside chambers or business associations. For example, if you own a travel agency that offers escorted tours to Europe, get feedback from your customers and ask to use some of their quotes on your website.

Create exclusive offers

Create an introductory offer for new customers only. Sacrifice your regular profits to gain loyal customers that will buy again on a regular basis. Consider what the Australian Government's business website has to say about finding new customers.

Increase your profile through online directories

To increase your online presence, list your business on the most popular online directories, such as Yelp. Alternatively, use these resources to uncover potential new customers (especially through industry directories).

Increase web traffic by improving your search engine optimisation (SEO)

SEO will help increase your website's traffic leading to a growth in your customer base. Spend some time determining your site's keywords and keyword phrases so it attracts the right traffic for your business.

Purchase search keywords to improve your online exposure

Consider paying for search engine marketing (SEM) so that when customers search for your business products your web address is more likely to come up than others. For example, if you're a Lawyer catering to small businesses, you might find there's a lot of competition so think about paying for an ad that appears on the first search page.

Use Instagram to display your business

Instagram allows you to visually tell the story of your business and its offerings through images. When potential customers like your product or service images (which can be linked to your other social media accounts), you might get an avalanche of views.

Create regular blogs

Keep your content fresh and updated by writing regular blogs (informal content posted online in a chronological order) about your business, your people, and successful case studies. Regular blog content can be important for increasing your SEO and driving traffic to your website.

Run demonstrations or workshops to educate clients

Run demonstrations, workshops or events to showcase your business to existing or new customers. For example, if you're a martial arts instructor going it alone, create a series of workshops to show potential clients the skills and benefits of learning through you.

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Network by joining business associations

Networking with like-minded business individuals is crucial to managing the right business contacts in your industry. Uncover potential customers by attending industry events.

Create a targeted marketing plan

Outline a specific marketing strategy that's aimed at new customer segments. Then develop a precise advertising plan to build awareness and encourage purchases. For example, if you're targeting truck drivers, create a billboard theme that plays on words and back that up with occasional radio adverts.

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How *to increase your market share*

Key Information Area 2.
HOW TO FIND NEW MARKETS

Create a video channel to increase your profile
If you want to get your goods or services out there in front of a worldwide audience, think about creating a YouTube channel for your business. This is a great way to demonstrate products or share tips with your customers. For example, if you have a background in carpentry and a small business that makes wooden furniture, display some of your products on YouTube to gain a following.

Use Google Global Market Finder to identify customers in similar markets
Look for customers you're interested in targeting in markets that are similar to yours. Google's Global Market Finder generates a spreadsheet based on monthly keyword searches that ranks the opportunities of doing business in certain geographical locations.

Use Facebook and LinkedIn to grow your connections
Once you've connected with your customers on Facebook or LinkedIn, find people in their networks who are interested in your offerings. For example, if you're starting up a small business making jewellery from your garage, a Facebook page showing your offerings is a logical and cheap place to start advertising. Find out about how to market on Facebook.

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Exhibit at trade events or conferences
Build connections, demonstrate new products and develop stronger relationships with new markets by presenting your business at trade shows. See what trade events are in Australia over the coming year.

Investigate opening in a new location
Research the feasibility of successfully opening a new store, office or branch. For example, if you already own a successful wholesale outlet on the western side of your city, think about the value of opening another on the east.

Bid for Government contracts to secure long term sales
If your products or services are suitable for government agencies, departments or larger corporates that release tenders for work, you might be able to find a totally new market you hadn't considered before. For example, if you run an IT company that looks after the electronic data and security of small businesses, are there opportunities to tender for government work? Please contact us if you need assistance to bid for Government contracts.

Investigate wholesaling and retailing
If you're a wholesaler, consider opening a retail outlet. Or if you only sell through retail channels, investigate entering the wholesale industry. Take a look at https://www.business.gov.au/Planning/Industry-information/Retail-and-wholesale-trade-industry

Hire sales reps
Hire sales reps in other regions of Australia to help your business branch out into different markets. If they're only on commission, it's a results driven tactic. For example, if you have a growing business in Sydney that manufactures and leases vending machines, is it worth hiring some sales reps in other cities to broaden your potential client base.

Export out of Australia
Develop an export plan to identify the feasibility of selling outside Australia. For example, you might cure meats and distribute them around Australia to various supermarkets. Have you considered exporting your cured meats to parts of Asia?

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How to open new markets with fresh new products

Key Information Area 3.
DEVELOP NEW PRODUCTS OR SERVICES

Conduct customer research to identify new ideas
Ask your customers about what new products or services they would like to see added to your range. Brainstorm ideas with your staff, along with which new markets to target. This article has some advice on how you can unlock innovative ideas.

Check financial feasibility of any new product or service
Calculate whether you can make a profit from your planned new product or service. Carry out some market research to be sure of demand. For example, if you're a manufacturer of sports goods and you've created a prototype for a new style of cricket bat, get opinions from a whole range of cricketers, from kids up to professionals.

Test new offerings with your customers
Before introducing your new product or service to the market, make sure you test it first. Listen to consumer responses and take on board any advice before going to market.

Protect your Intellectual Property
Once you've developed some intellectual property (IP), it's vital you protect it. Have a look at the IP Australia website for detailed information on what you need to do to protect your business ideas.

Licence other products

Consider licensing another business's products or services as a way to extend your product or service range. It's especially effective if they're complementary to your own offerings. Read our article about some other profitable ideas you can learn from larger companies.

Look to joint venture with other businesses offering different products

Keep an eye on other successful businesses within your industry, or those targeting markets that you're interested in, and look at how to develop a strategic alliance.

Import products unavailable in Australia

Search out products that aren't available or are difficult to obtain in Australia, but will potentially open up new domestic markets.

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How to improve profits – 7 practical ways

Key Information Area 4
IMPROVE PROFIT

Automate processes to save time

Look at current processes you could change to save you time or money. One way could be changing from manual systems to automatic ones to free up time for more important tasks.

Lower energy use

Look at each area of your business separately and come up with ways to reduce energy use. For example, if you're a supplier and you hold your inventory in a warehouse that's busy 24 hours a day, lighting and heating may be major expenses. Can you switch to cheaper sources?

Reduce operating waste

Identify how to produce more efficiently to reduce left over materials, which will lower your cost of goods sold. For example, if you manage and own a large department store, are there ways you could reduce total staff hours to lower costs.

Investigate ways to improve your output

Improve your output to deliver your products or services faster. Add staff, upgrade to the latest equipment, or change software; try anything to speed up production.

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Negotiate ways to improve your margin

It sounds obvious but whichever way you choose to increase prices it all goes straight to your bottom line. Consider the impact on demand if you have price-sensitive customers. For example, you might be a goat farmer selling high quality meat, cheese and milk. Does your product have any leverage to negotiate a higher price?

Identify what overheads you can lower

Audit all your expenses to see what can be lowered without affecting your business operation. Re-negotiate with suppliers and reassess any subscription services or set pricing plans.

Build a process to collect money owed to you faster

Take a close look at your debtors to establish which ones need extra motivation to pay you sooner. Consider changing your policy towards new debtors by tightening payment terms or adding a discount for quick payers. Make sure you have Internet Banking as an option