



Systems Thinking Drives Small Business Success

Imagine for a moment that you're sitting in a meeting and you look down at your cell phone to discover that several people just signed up for a workshop you're hosting four weeks from today.

Each person that signed up immediately received an automated message from you with details on the workshop and automatically directed them to a page with downloads to the course materials and additional information. At the same time, your social media status was updated and your weekly electronic newsletter complete with information-rich content is sent to your list of 5,000 prospects and customers. A few minutes later, you receive another notification that you just made over \$900 effortlessly because someone purchased your audio product from your online store and the customer got access to the product immediately.

After you get out of your meeting where you just sealed another deal, you receive another notification that someone wants to set up an introductory meeting and hire you to help them. You look down at your business blueprint and realize you've just exceeded this month's objective and know exactly the next steps you need to take to meet next month's targets.

Does that sound like something out of a sci-fi movie? Not if you're taking a systems approach to profitability it isn't. Systems thinking is a process of understanding how things influence or fit together within a whole rather than in isolation.

The mistake a lot of small business owners make is that they set up their business in uncoordinated pieces. They take out ads that cost thousands of dollars without one customer coming from it, spend time marketing in places that won't get them in front of their ideal clients, then wonder why they aren't creating momentum and results. These activities are often done in isolation without a real strategy with how it affects the whole business.

One small business owner had many of the pieces working in her business, but her process of securing the client wasn't working. In some areas, she was ahead of many small business owners because she had a lead generation system that brought in prospects on a regular basis and automatically surveyed them so she knew exactly the products and services they were seeking. This is where her system broke down. While prospects were signing up for a strategy session, she was not enrolling her prospects into clients. She would meet with people over and over, give away a lot of her knowledge for free, invest a lot of time in a strategy session, only to have the person walk away with her ideas and not sign up.

When she looked at her business as a whole system, she realized that there were gaps. While she had part of a sales funnel, it was not complete. She was not pre-qualifying her clients forcing her to spend a lot of time educating prospects about her services and even more time answering the same questions



over and over. This lack of a system to pre-qualify and pre-educate her prospects also put her in a position where she felt like she was selling her services rather than reversing the sales cycle and having her clients select her. She also offered only one choice for her clients to work with her. This resulted in the “yes OR no-and-go” option. It wasn’t an option at all, rather it only gave people she talked with only one choice – either work with her at a certain price point or go away resulting in lost revenue.

Once she set up her systems in a certain order, got clear on her ideal client, created targeted marketing messages and inserted those messages in her systems, she began to pre-qualify her prospects. She invested her energy with interested prospects ready to buy rather than those just shopping around.

She also looked at the options or choices she offered to prospects. When she offered more choices to her pre-qualified prospects, these ready buyers signed up with her. When she learned the behavioral types and observed how people needed to receive their information, she delivered the choices in the way they wanted to receive it resulting in her enrolling her new client authentically and consistently. In one month, she closed business not 50% of the time but over 98% of the time.

Interested in closing up the gaps in your business? Start with these steps:

- Identify a specific period of time and identify all of your marketing, networking and advertising during that timeframe. Assess your return on investment for those activities.
- Draft the step-by-step process your clients take to do business with you. Where are they hearing about you? When they find you, is the first step to doing business clear to them? Do you see any gaps between your marketing activities and the process your clients are taking to do business with you? Do you know where you can find your clients in large numbers?
- Outline what part of the process is breaking down. Is it at the beginning (having them find you or closing the sale) in the middle (when you’re working with them) or having them return for more?

Once you look at the entire business and become aware of the gaps, make it a priority to close the gaps. Set specific objectives outlining what specifically needs to be improved. Prioritize those areas of improvement and assess alternatives. Involve others and invest in yourself and your business to close the gaps. Continuously assess your outcomes to determine if the systems or process improvements need to be updated or modified.



When you take a step back and look at your entire business, you can start to fill in how all of the systems and activities fit in. With a systems approach, you will also notice how much easier it is to achieve new levels of income and outcomes for your small business. You'll begin to increase efficiencies and effectiveness making growing your dream business a reality.

Lisa Mininni Best-Selling Author and President of Excellerate Associates, home of the sought-after Entrepreneurial Edge System, showing small business owners how to bring in continuously clients and cash flow by taking a systems approach to profitability. Pick up your free Ebook, Get Ready, Get Set, Go! at <http://www.freebusinessplanformat.com>.