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Financial dos and don'ts lead to better business

Ready to make more money? Do and don't do these things:

Do understand that you are in business for the money.

Don't be ashamed about that.

Do run a balance sheet, income statement and cash flow report every week. Once a month is not enough. The game is over by the time you get the score.

Don't trust industry averages for budget and performance comparisons. If most businesses stink, and they do, what can you learn from industry averages?

Do base your selling price on your costs of doing business.

Don't pay any attention to what your competitors are charging. What do they know?

Do understand that the proper selling price is the first and most important step in making more money for yourself and your employees.

Don't spend money on marketing, uniforms, new trucks, computer systems and new employees until you have raised your prices to cover the new costs.

Don't tell yourself that you can't raise prices in your neighborhood.

Don't forget you live in the greatest country in the world, in the most fortunate time in history. This is a renaissance age. What are you waiting for?

Don't forget Warren Buffet's rules for business. Rule No.



BARE BONES BUSINESS

Ellen Rohr

1: Never lose money. Rule No. 2: Never forget Rule No. 1.

Do something no one else does ... and charge a lot of money for it.

Do pay your employees much better than anyone else.

Don't forget that there is more than one way to make a living.

Do whatever it takes to make a customer happy, even if it means giving them all their money back. If you honestly think you are being taken advantage of, then ...

Don't work for that customer again.

Do spend more time asking questions than pitching your product.

Don't make a sale if it isn't in the best interests of the customer.

Do ask the customer for feedback. Send a report card, or follow up with a phone call.

Do ask for the sale every time.

Don't worry when they say no.

Do ask if you can ask them one more question.

Do ask, "What made you say, 'No'?" and see if you can fix it.

Do feel free to say no to customers who won't let you make a profit.

Don't use low prices as your selling advantage. The advantage disappears the moment someone dumber than you offers a lower price.

Do offer service with a smile. Look around at all the wrinkled, frowning faces in this world. Smiling is a nice thing to do. Customers will respond to it.

Do keep score in the sales game. Competition is good fun and good for you.

Do listen to old people. You are going to be old someday, if you're lucky. And you'll want people to listen to you because you will have learned a few things worth sharing.

Do work on your own attitudes toward work and life.

Don't discuss anyone else's attitude with them. 1.) It's none of your business. 2.) There is nothing you can do to change someone else's attitude.

Don't assume that telling someone to do something means it will get done. Put it in writing and follow up.

Don't assume anything.

Don't reward every employee the same way regardless of performance.

Don't give raises every year just because.

Do create a compensation plan that combines hourly wages with bonuses for "Sales Above Goal" performance.

Do apologize if you are wrong.

Don't hold a grudge.

Do more of what works and less of what doesn't.

Ellen Rohr is an author and business consultant who offers systems for getting focused and organized, making money and having fun in business. Her latest book is "The Bare Bones Biz Plan." She can be reached at ellen@barebonesbiz.com.