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Doing business successfully in Maricopa

By Jim Rives

January 20, 2010

Maricopa is a community of 40,000 residents and a number of businesses – especially small businesses. The local culture has open arms for business, but it takes some unique attitudes and approaches to be successful.

As I share these with you I do so from the perspective of addressing those areas where you have control. While the current economy presents many challenges, it comes back to basics for most to enable their success.

Be the Expert: To allow others to come to you for business, they have to see you as an expert in what you offer. Can you imagine one seeking out a professional without consideration as to whether or not he or she is an expert? It actually applies to every business venture from retail to service, as well as professional services. There are those who have printed out business cards, perhaps purchased a business license and even joined the Chamber of Commerce with the expectation that "they will come." When they do not, often bitterness sets in and words begin to be uttered like, "Maricopa is a lousy place to do business!" Why should someone buy your goods or services? How have you set yourself apart from the competition?

Do you see yourself as an EXPERT? Until you see yourself in that frame, others will not see you as the expert either. Do not represent yourself as something you are not (i.e. doctor, realtor, etc., requiring a license). There must be an inner confidence steeped in humility for what you have to offer. If you are questioning your expertise, it will show in your attitude and actions, and others will pick up on it quickly.



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What you can do is begin sharing your passion for your area of expertise with others in the community. Develop a web site that hones in on your offer so that others can see that you have something unique. The candid fact is that very likely whatever passion you have enables you to research and know more about that subject than others. Write articles about your expertise from the perspective of the public and submit them to local media for publication.

Live your passion/expertise so that others begin to see you that way. When the need develops for your expertise/offer in the future, they will recall your value and contact you.

Network: Almost everyone I have met in business knows that they need to network. The challenge is they do not know what works. This is an easy one

for Maricopa as others have already paved the path for you. The number one way to network in Maricopa is to volunteer for one of the many non-profit organizations. Find one that is in sync with what you deeply care about and join to enable their mission to become a reality. A couple years ago I was asked to lead a project for a local non-profit. It was not an easy decision because we were experiencing a setback financially from the downturn in the economy. But I knew that I had the gifts and expertise to do the job well. I accepted and in the very first meeting in behalf of this organization, the other group recognized my leadership offer. Upon successful conclusion of the meeting, they asked about my leadership work. This led to my first major contract in Maricopa and the beginning of meeting other great people and business opportunities. Do not join a non-profit to promote your business! Volunteer and play a meaningful part, and the rest will take care of itself.

Be the person you want others to be!

Dig In: If you are an entrepreneur (Maricopa is filled with entrepreneurs) then you must be prepared to endure for at least two years in the start-up phase. It takes time to learn your competition, what customers want and how to shape your offer to match, and to become known as an expert for what you do. The challenge is how does one maintain HOPE during this enduring phase?

1. Create a business plan from day one. Most surprises happen in business because owners do not prepare for the "what ifs!" They happen – they always do. However, if one has a realistic business plan with benchmarks for monthly or quarterly goals, it enables one to not be drawn off course chasing "could be" scenarios. There are times to research the options, test the market, but to constantly be chasing rabbits is both tiring and draining of resources.

2. Limit usage of credit cards or lines of credit. There may be good reason to use them but make it the LAST resort and not the first. My suggestion is to have an unbiased, objective person with strong business savvy listen to your plan of using credit before you do so. They can provide many insights that perhaps you have not considered.

3. Build a board of advisors/coaches/mentors/champions. These are individuals who genuinely care about you and your success. They need to have traveled the road before you and be able to provide guidance that can save a lot of heartaches and financial loss.

You are not alone is the last item that you need to know about doing business in Maricopa. The Chamber of Commerce is an excellent organization with hundreds of others just like you. The city of Maricopa presents opportunities such as the Maricopa Entrepreneur Training Program that has another ten-week session beginning in late February. Many local business owners have a passion to make you successful. Reach out and find a supporter.

Maricopa is a wonderful city for doing business. As we come out of the economic downturn, I encourage you to be ready to take advantage of what is to come. The best is yet to come....

Jim Rives is an Executive Coach to individuals, small businesses and Fortune 500 companies as the CEO of Executive Leadership Institute LLC. He can be reached at 520.568.6442.

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