



Gavan Doherty, 247meeting

communicated to all staff, as never before has the need for effective change management programmes been so important. However companies should not be afraid to aggressively tackle market expansion, as consumers still need products and services.

Value for money should be the key issue in every aspect of business, coupled with targeted direct consumer marketing. External advice for internal effectiveness is also essential. Anything that is not core should be farmed out to get the best service for the best value.

Diarmuid Smyth

Managing Director, Sword Event Guard

In a good or bad economic period, a sound principle of running any business still applies. That is maintaining a good reputation. A good reputation for how you handle your clients or customers, how you complete your projects and how you professionally operate your business will always pay dividends. Every facet and department of your business should be stringently analysed to ascertain how it reacts with your public, how efficiently it completes a project and how professionally it maintains your high standards.

Customers are key to the survival of any business. By constantly striving to ensure that you provide the most efficient, reliable and professional service compared to your competitors, you will go a long way to ensuring the viability and success of your business in these challenging times.

Eoin Blacklock

Managing Director, keepITsafe

It's crucial to examine your current customer database and make sure that they are happy with the products and service you are offering. If they are not, you need to know why. Find out why they are purchasing elsewhere and fight hard to get them back. More than ever, companies should have in place a clear set of aims and objectives. Where is the company now? What are the medium and long-term plans? How are we going to put the stepping stones in place to get there? Looking internally at the structure of your company is also another area for consideration, from people management to motivational assessment. Company owners rely on their staff to push the company forward. Therefore staff investment and incentives need to be carefully considered.

Gavan Doherty

Managing Director, 247meeting

We'll all be going back to basics in 2009. The question on every purchaser's lips will be: does this product or service fulfil a need, and is it a fair price? If there are tough times ahead, don't just plough on with blind optimism. It's better to make fundamental changes in the early stages of a problem, when things are still in your control. Internally, be open about your company's finances. It can be a great motivator for people to know that what they're doing really counts, and that there's a clear path to stability. Be upfront about your payment terms, both with customers and suppliers. Go after your cash politely but firmly. Equally, be sure that you can meet the terms you negotiate with your suppliers.

Ken Bagnall

Managing Director, Clean Communications

I feel sorry for 2009, as never has a year had such a bad reputation before it even started. However there is no escaping the reality that the country as a whole will have to work hard to make this reputation ill-founded. It may well sound trite to say people should cut costs. However how they cut them could be important. There are multiple new technologies available to help companies become more efficient. There are a lot of applications now available as a service now and which can be paid for per user and monthly.

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Ken Bagnall