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It's true that many factors contribute to an organization's success, but in the end it all comes down to this: how will your business be better, or different, than what is already available? Will you provide a better service than anyone else? Will you offer something that will improve your customers business and make them more money? The answers to

A Serial Entrepreneur's "Common"

**Sense Advice** 

**By Victor Green** 

LTUCK RECYCLETS

one - preferably both - of these questions should always be a resounding, "Yes!" This article assumes you have done the research and built the product. You have found a gap in the market that you can fill. Now, you're tasked with building or managing an organization that already exists. You may find the tips below are obvious or "com-

mon" sense. I would argue that these days, "common" sense is often "rare."

#### Promotion

Promoting your business: To me, the first priority is to clearly identify your audience. Who are your prime targets? Once you have determined who they are, then prioritize them in order of importance. Your marketing budget should be spent in accordance with these priorities, rather than choosing advertising and publicity avenues based on price.

Consider every marketing resource and evaluate which will give you best value. Seek out promotions that enable you to measure response. It is important to know if your marketing expenditure is producing results. One way to measure response is by using coupon offers. Another is to unique URLs to measure website traffic from a particular ad.

#### Service

Service is the most important part of your business. Today, everybody wants to be treated as a "special person." If you treat your customers well, your reputation will grow. This is the cheapest – and most effective – form of advertising.

Relationships with repeat customers are very important. Every effort should be made

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ASSOCIATION NEWS

#### From the President Benefits of a Roundtable By Brad Schwartz

Several years ago I attended the ARA convention in Kansas City. While attending one of the seminars, I learned about Roundtable groups designed specifically for the automotive recyclers industry. The Roundtable groups were coordinated and maintained by the Car-Part organization. I spoke with Jim Schneider, the person who created and ran the Roundtable groupings for Car-Part. We discussed the purpose of the meetings, and I expressed my interest in joining one of the Roundtables.

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The timing of my request was perfect. Jim had recently created the Southern Roundtable group and they had an anticipated slot opening on the near horizon. The group had only met twice since its inception; once to solidify and form the group, and then once to visit one of the recyclers facilities within the group. I believe that there are a total of six or seven Roundtable groups that exist through this program. Several weeks after my initial request, I received a phone call inviting me to join the Southern Roundtable group.

The purpose of the roundtable is fairly straightforward. We meet two or three times a year at recycling facilities owned or operated by members of our specific group. We review marketing, operations, finances,



and personnel. In essence, we have open and complete access to everything regarding that specific yard. Also, graphs are created comparing numbers within our own group, as well as the whole Roundtable organization. We are outside consultants who help each other find ways of improving business. I believe we are the best type of consultant because we actually own and run a business within the same industry, and therefore are the most knowledgeable about the realities of our industry.

Every member of a Roundtable signs a non-disclosure agreement, insuring that all information remains only within the group. The members of each group are selected from geographically non-competitive areas. Within my Southern Group I have no direct competitors, although other St. Louis Recyclers are in other Roundtable Groups. I have visited, critiqued, and learned from other yards in Louisiana, Idaho, Kentucky, Missouri, Texas, Arkansas, and Kansas. Our next yard visit is in Mississippi. When the group visited my yard, I received some great feedback and have implemented a number of the ideas and recommendations proposed by the group.

Joining the Roundtable Group allows me to step outside the daily activities of running my own business. It forces me to view my operation from an umbrella perspective; to come out of my shell and see how the rest of the recycling world operates. It opens a window of comparison with other recycling facilities, and therefore how I can improve and better my own business. Finally, it has allowed me to develop some very good friendships with other members of my group. We really have some great and memorable times together, and I always look forward to seeing the group at the next gathering. December 2012/January 2013

ASSOCIATION NEWS

## MATR Legislative Update By Brian Bernskoetter

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The 2012 election cycle featured a number of hotly contested statewide and local elections that will have a significant impact on Missouri.

The race for Governor was, as expected, won by current Governor Jay Nixon by a margin of 55%-43% over challenger Dave Spence. The Governor did well in St. Louis and Kansas City and held his ground in most of rural Missouri.

The nationally hyped race for U.S. Senate went to incumbent Sen. Claire McCaskill over challenger Rep. Todd Akin. Despite a strong ground game and late money coming in from national 3rd party committees, Rep. Akin could not overcome his own slip ups to win a race that was expected to shift the balance of power to the Republicans in the U.S. Senate.

Missouri's other statewide elections broke heavily in favor of Democrats aside from one race: current Lt. Gov. Peter Kinder (R) won re-election over Susan Montee, Rep. Jason Kander (D) narrowly beat Rep. Shane Schoeller (R) for Secretary of State, Attorney General Chris Koster (D) easily won re-election over challenger Ed Martin (R) and Treasurer Clint Zwiefel (D) beat Rep. Cole McNary (R) for another term as State Treasurer.

Another statewide vote that may be of interest is the defeat of Proposition B. This measure would have increased tobacco taxes to 90 cents a pack to provide more funding for education. This measure lost 50.8%– 49.2%. This is the third cigarette tax increase that Missourians have voted down.

In the Missouri Legislature, the Missouri Senate and House remain in strong control of the republicans. The republicans control the Senate with a 24 – 10 veto proof margin and the House picks up a veto proof majority with control at 110 - 53. This majority in the House is a high water mark for the republicans but down two seats for the republicans in the Senate.

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One of the more interesting side notes from this election is the strong democrat showing on state-wide elections coupled with the equally strong showing of more local races in the Missouri House and Senate by the republicans. Missouri is certainly trending very republican in polling and sentiment but democrats are able to make great strides on the strength of the voting bloc in the urban areas and traditional conservative rural democrat strongholds.

The legislative leaders for the House and Senate were chosen at caucuses after the election. Rep. Tim Jones (R-Eureka) was elected Speaker and Rep. John Diehl (R-St. Louis) was elected Majority Floor Leader. Rounding out the leadership for the House is: Speaker Pro Tem – Rep. Jason Smith (R-Salem), Assistant Majority Floor Leader – Rep. Mike Cierpoit (R-Lee's Summit), and Majority Whip – Sandy Crawford (R-Buffalo).

The Senate elected Sen. Tom Dempsey (R-St. Charles) as their President Pro Tem and Sen. Ron Richard as Majority Floor Leader.

The democrats in the House will be lead by Rep. Jake Hummel (D-St. Louis) as Minority Floor Leader and Rep. Gail McCann Beatty (D-Kansas City) will serve as Assistant Minority Whip. In the Senate the democrats selected Sen. Jolie Justus (D-Kansas City) to serves as the Minority Floor Leader.

## ASSOCIATION NEWS

#### Serial Entrepreneur...continued from cover

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BE SURE TO CONSIDER OUR ASSOCIATE MEMBERS FIRST FOR YOUR BUSINESS NEEDS VISIT OUR WEBSITE FOR FULL CONTACT INFORMATION www.matronline.com to make personal contact with your "base," whenever possible. Be honest, polite, and attentive. Don't rely on e-mails or social media to do this work for you. There is nothing better than doing business face-to-face.

Your staff will follow your example. If you portray professionalism and attentiveness, your staff will see this as the way you want your business to be run. If, however, you have a poor attitude, are a bad timekeeper, take extended breaks during the day, go home early, dress badly, then your staff will assume that this is how you want your business to be run. Never ask your staff to do something that you would not do yourself.

#### **Sales**

Selling your product at lower prices than competitors – many new businesspeople think this is the "secret" to business. But undercutting your competitors is only successful if it gives you a sensible return and a significant net profit. I call this "vanity versus sanity." Vanity is being concerned with your sales figure; sanity is being concerned with your net profit.

Build a relationship with all customers. You've caught me. This is a repeat of the advice above. However, it bears repeating. You must develop a loyal customer base to maintain reoccurring sales revenue. Then, and only then, can you start to branch out secondary audiences and those farther out. If you do not build a strong relationship that produces repeat business, you will effectively have to start your business over and over again every time you sell.

#### Finances

To manage a business successfully it is essential you have accurate up-to-date financial information. Each month you should produce a profit and loss statement, or a "P&L." When I mentor people, I always make this a strict requirement. If you don't have a P&L, you are effectively running your business in the dark.

Analyzing financial income versus expenditure is crucial. Your new P&L will reveal all sorts of things. You can obtain sales trends by tracking periods of higher and lower sales, which will help you direct your ad-

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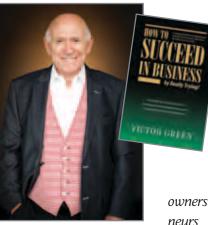
## ASSOCIATION NEWS

vertising and publicity expenditure at these particular times. You can also study your overhead costs to see if they can be reduced. Every dollar of overhead that you reduce goes to the bottom line.

#### Failure

It is easy to deal with success, but how do you deal with failure? Thousands of businesses fail for a variety of reasons. Most fail due to in adequate research, not clearly identifying a gap in the marketplace or determining their potential customers before starting out.

Every successful entrepreneur has had business failures. I have had several business failures. When I realized a company would not succeed, I accepted that the first cut is the cheapest and moved on. I had no problem in closing down businesses that were not going to succeed. Too many people let ego and pride get in the way and continue to run a business that is not profitable. Be ready and willing to cut the cord, and you will set yourself up to succeed.



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V i c t o r Green has a long record of founding and growing businesses in a variety of industries. Now retired, he lectures and mentors small business

owners and new entrepreneurs in conjunction with SCORE and the US Small

Business Administration. In How to Succeed in Business By Really Trying! (Amazon, \$16), Green shares more than 40 years worth of practical business advice. For more information, visit: www.howtosucceedinbusiness.com.

# What good is a part if it's not the right part?

7



## **Reliable, High Quality Recycled Auto Parts**



### Shocking Secret Managers Keep By Christine Corelli

8

Perhaps it isn't meant to be a secret, but a recent study revealed that an overwhelming majority of employees do not know their organization's competitive strategy. The reason is simple, their managers have not told them. Doesn't it make sense that employees should know the strategy their executives and managers have created to outperform their competition?

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Clearly communicating and consistently reinforcing your competitive strategy to your entire team is an important role of every manager. Better they should be involved in creating that strategy. How else will they



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employees feel important and understand the role they play in helping their company grow and prosper?

Hopefully, and regardless of the size of your business or what industry you're in, you have already started to create a smart competitive strategy and business plan for 2013. Share it with your team and ask these questions:

- What will make it work?
- What needs to happen?
- What should we change?
- What idea of ideas do you have to dramatically differentiate our business from our competition?
- How can we better support sales?
- What ideas do you have for sales strategy?
- How can we improve customer service?
- What service flaws exist that need to be eliminated?
- How can we put up the "wow" factor?
- What do you need from management to make it happen?

Add questions, listen, and use their ideas for your strategy. It's called "employee involvement." Then, make sure your management team knows how to manage and motivate employees and establish an environment to make your strategy work.

#### Does your management team know

- What employees want for doing a good job?
- What the younger generation wants?
- What is most important to employees?
- The Number One cause of job dissatisfaction?
- How to eliminate major causes of job dissatisfaction?
- How to manage and motivate three types of employees?

- How to handle problem employees and "correct" behavior or performance?
- How to motivate your sales team?
- How to bridge the gap with the younger generation?
- The five keys to effective communication?
- How to bring out the best in average performers?
- How to "correct" performance and inspire high performance?

Questions to ask on a regular basis, questions that win the hearts of your employees, and answers to five questions that reveal the level of job satisfaction in your company?

Simple and affordable ways to reward and recognize employees?

Do you need help in this area? Who doesn't? In today's business environment employees are expected to do more in less time, with less resources, all while providing the highest levels of customer service. Stress levels are high and morale is low. Smart companies are equipping their managers with methods, techniques and skills to effectively manage their teams and keep them motivated under challenging conditions.

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## **MATR Dates of Interest**

#### January

9 Legislative session begins

#### October

17-19 NACE Expo Las Vegas, NV

#### November

6-9 **ARA Annual Convention & Expo** Phoenix, AZ

## **ARA's Saftey Tips**

Reading this Could Save you Thousands!

#### **ARA's Safety Tip #1:** OSHA Approved Gas Cans

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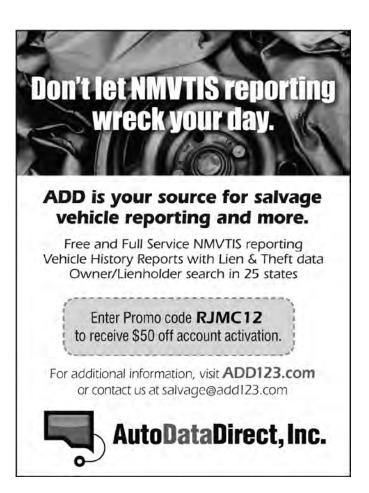
Auto & Truck Recyclers



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According to OSHA, a facility should only use gas cans holding 5 gallons of gas or less with a springclosing lid and spout cover, a means to relieve internal pressure and a flash-arresting screen. The spring-

closing lid and spout cover is designed to keep liquid and vapor from escaping at ordinary temperatures and



to lift slightly when exposed to excessive outside heat. The most common safety can is the short and round red metal can with yellow labeling. Some however, are now available in high-density polyethylene plastic.

#### ARA's Safety Tip #2: OSHA Approved Fire Extinguishers

Follow P-A-S-S and save \$1000s!

OSHA requires that you know what kind(s) of fire extinguisher you need, where to place them



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and how to maintain them. Your employees must know how to P-A-S-S for you to avoid fire extinguisher use violations. OSHA fines are minimal however compared to losing your business to fire damage because of out of date extinguishers and lack of training on their proper use.

#### **ARA's Safety Tip #3:** OSHA's Hazard Communication Plan



If your shelves look like this, you may be fined by OSHA!

Ensuring that your facility has a complete and updated Written Hazard Communication Plan which includes

MSDSs and a training program for your employees could save you thousands of dollars in fines!

OSHA requires that chemical manufacturers must identify the potential hazards of each chemical product and how to work safely with that product in a document called a material safety data sheet (MSDS). Manufacturers or suppliers then must ensure that their customers - YOU - are provided a copy of the MSDS for each chemical product you use. As part of your written hazard communication plan, you must make these sheets readily accessible during each work shift to employees when they are in their work area(s). Many employers keep their MSDSs together in a large binder/spiral notebook and/or in an electronic format.

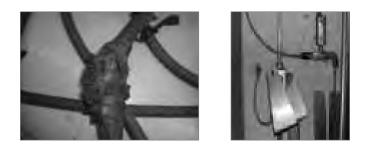
#### **ARA's Safety Tip #4:** OSHA's Electrical Panel Requirements



If the area around your circuit breaker box looks like either one of these pictures you will be fined by OSHA!

Ensuring that your facility has a minimum of 36" (3 feet) of clearance around electrical panels serving between 120 and 250 volts could save you thousands of dollars in fines. Many use colored tape to mark off the required clearance space as well as wall and floor signs.

#### **ARA's Safety Tip #5:** OSHA's Extension Cord Requirements



If your extension cords look like this or are running through walls, you will be fined by OSHA!

Check all your extension cords today to make sure that they are not frayed, repaired with tape or are running through windows, doors or holes in the walls.

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Automotive Recyclers Association Selects Mike Swift as Executive Secretary Nominee

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**Co-Owner of Trails End Truck and Auto Salvage Possesses an Unwavering Commitment to Ensure a Fair Marketplace for Automotive Recyclers** 

MANASSAS, VA – The Automotive Recyclers Association (ARA) announced today the selection of Mike Swift, co-owner of Trails End Auto and Truck Salvage, Inc. as the Nominating Committee's choice to serve as Executive Secretary for 2012-2013. A longstanding ARA member, Swift brings extensive industry experience to the position. Swift will be formally confirmed by ARA's Board of Directors at their annual meeting held this October during ARA's Convention and Exposition in Orlando, Florida, October 24-27, 2012.

Swift has been actively involved with the ARA, spending the last five years as an ARA Regional Director, and this past year as the ARA Chairperson for the Regional Directors. He received the ARA Regional Director of the Year Award in both 2009 and 2011. In addition, he has spent countless hours working on the ARA Government Affairs Committee and takes an active part in the legislative side of the industry. Swift has not only assumed leadership roles on the national level within the ARA, but has served locally in Iowa, his home state, serving as the President of the Iowa Auto Recyclers (IAR) association in 2008-2009.

A third generation auto recycler, Swift has been in the auto recycling business all of his life. After managing Swift Auto Salvage for 20 years, he and his brother, Steven, bought Trails End Auto and Truck Salvage, Inc. in 1999 (www.trailsendauto. com). Leaning on experience and skills he learned from his father and grandfather, he and his brother took a flailing business and turned it into a robust and thriving business. Trails End Auto and Truck Salvage, based in Des Moines, Iowa, offers full service truck and auto recycling. It also features its own crushing and scrapping operation.

Since Swift's grandfather started the family business in the 1940's, the Swift family is well recognized and respected. Swift feels that he brings experience as a third generation business owner and a passion about the industry to the ARA Committee Secretary position. "I have enjoyed my time as Regional Director during the last five years and I'm looking forward to my new role," he says. "I'm passionate about dealing with the legislative issues facing the automotive industry. I believe it's time that the manufacturing industry embraces us instead of trying to discredit us. I plan to continue working hard on issues that affect our industry."

"ARA looks forward to the dedication and passion that Mike Swift brings to the position," says Michael E. Wilson, ARA's CEO. "His involvement, especially in the area of industry advocacy, is an example of the excellence of ARA members and shows his commitment and belief in the automotive recycling industry as a whole. The Association will benefit from the experience that he brings to his important role in leading our international organization in this crucial economic and legislative climate."

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December 2012/January 2013

INDUSTRY NEWS

## Widespread Damage from Hurricane Sandy Results in Thousands of Flood-Damaged Vehicles

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**Only a Fully Functioning NMVTIS System Can Adequately Protect Consumers** 

The staff and members of the Automotive Recyclers Association (ARA) send their thoughts and prayers to the thousands of people directly impacted by Hurricane Sandy. In the wake of historic damage produced by the storm, ARA is once again urging Congress to review implementation and enforcement of the National Motor Vehicle Title Information System (NMVTIS) to ensure all flood-damaged vehicles are appropriately tracked and not sold to unsuspecting automotive consumers.

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Record rainfall and flooding from the Carolinas up into Canada has resulted in vehicles all over the East Coast being submerged in water. The depth of flooding and length of time cars are left under water has the potential to increase the number of vehicles damaged beyond repair. Now more than ever, it is essential that NMVTIS be fully implemented and the underlying statute enforced to help prevent the sale of these flood-damaged vehicles to the unknowing consumer.

NMVTIS, a national electronic system that provides consumers with valuable information about a vehicle's condition and history, must be fully enforced so that it can play its crucial role in helping to ensure that these flood-damaged vehicles are not sold to unsuspecting consumers in the used-car market. "According to the Department of Justice (DOJ), after Hurricane Katrina in 2005, law enforcement and insurance crime experts reported truckloads of flooded vehicles being taken out of Louisiana to other states where they were dried out, cleaned, and sold to unsuspecting consumers in other states," said Michael E. Wilson, CEO of ARA. "NMVTIS must be fully implemented and utilized to prevent this activity from happening again," added Wilson.

ARA believes that such fraudulent and unsafe practices can only be stopped if all states participate fully in

> NMVTIS and all "individuals" and "entities" that are required to report to the system are held accountable. "Regrettably, DOI has limited resources to do this. ARA has urged Congress time and time again to intercede and appropriate sufficient resources to DOJ to implement the program, increase state participation, and efficiently enforce violations. Only with sufficient resources can DOJ and the appropriate state law enforcement entities target all businesses/individuals who are operating under the radar and force them to fulfill their obligations under the statute," Wilson asserts.

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## **ARA Launches ISO 9001 Research Project**

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Ginny Whelan, a Senior Consultant to the Automotive Recyclers Association, Will the Lead Project

The Automotive Recyclers Association, Manassas, Va., has announced plans to develop a process through which CAR (Certified Automotive Recycler) and Gold Seal members can achieve ISO 9001 certification.

Several CAR/Gold Seal facilities will participate in the first pilot program that will quantify the cost and effort necessary for CAR/Gold Seal members to secure and maintain ISO 9001 certification, the ARA says.

The International Organization for Standardization's ISO 9001 certification demonstrates a company's compliance with a set of guidelines that outline a quality management program. This philosophy results in optimal products and/or services, which result in high levels of customer satisfaction, the ARA says. With the introduction of ISO 9001:2008 several years ago, small businesses now have a more members on the most economic and efficient pathway to ISO 9001 accreditation. With information obtained from the pilot, ARA says it will develop a broad automotive recycling model for securing ISO 9001 accreditation, which can serve as a road map for professional automotive recyclers during the application process. "Achieving ISO 9001 certification does not need

research pilot is designed to provide comprehensive

assistance and analysis to participating CAR/Gold Seal

RUI

Auto:&:Truck/Recyclers

to be complicated or expensive," Whelan says. "Nononsense, step-by-step instructions and guides, easy-tocustomize documentation templates/forms and convenient online training using a secured cloud shared data platform will be used, and ARA will be able to determine the best methodology by which CAR /Gold Seal facilities can attain ISO 9001 certification."

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economic and plausible avenue to meet ISO certification requirements, the group adds.

Michael Wilson, ARA CEO, says the quality recycled parts market could capture substantial growth in the collision, mechanical and do-it-yourself markets with an enhanced product assurance program. "The sophistication of today's vehicles necessitates that professional automotive recyclers elevate their product quality and procedures to successfully compete in today's market," he says.

The research pilot is being directed by Ginny Whelan, ARA senior consultant. ARA's educational





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