

# A ten-step annual **CHECKUP**

## It's your business



Business owners and managers spend most of their time monitoring operations and dealing with everyday problems. But just as an annual checkup from your physician helps to monitor and manage your personal health, an annual checkup can do the same for your business.

Giving your business an annual checkup will improve the chances of its long-term success. Here are ten things that you should make time to do every year.

### **1 Review all systems, policies, and procedures**

Give your business a thorough exam to discover what's working and what's not. Don't keep outdated or unsuccessful methods just because they have become habits. Get out your business plan and measure your performance over the past year. Did you meet or exceed goals? Are the current systems, policies, and procedures improving or hindering your success?

### **2 Review your business insurance coverage**

Don't just automatically write a check to renew your insurance policies when they come due. Instead, sit down with your insurance agent every year. Review your business operations, focusing on any changes. Ask about new developments in business insurance. Use your agent's expertise to identify risk areas and suggest suitable coverage.

### **3 Review your business banking relationships**

Annually, go over your cash balances and banking relationships with your controller or CFO. Then both of you should meet with your banker. Ask about new products or services that could help your company. Address any service concerns or problems you might have had. Look for ways to reduce idle cash, boost interest earned, and improve cash flow.

### **4 Check the effectiveness of your marketing**

Are your current methods and channels working well, or are you simply doing what you've always done?

Your website is a part of your marketing program, so review it for any changes needed. Is the information about your company current? Do you have fresh, interesting content for viewers? Is the site easy to navigate? If you sell online, is ordering easy?

### **5 Examine all vendor relationships**

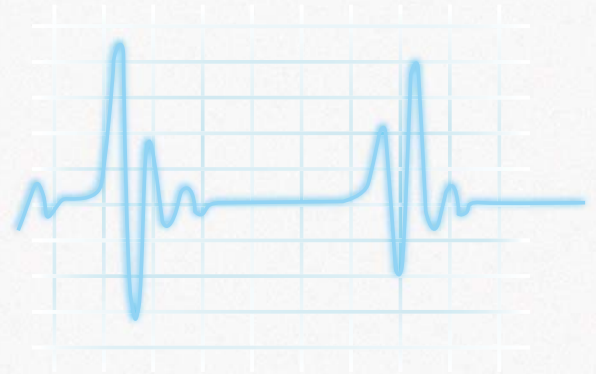
Don't let habit dictate your dealings with your vendors. Review how much business you do with each vendor and renegotiate agreements where appropriate. If a vendor is not meeting your needs, look for other sources. If your vendors are providing outstanding service, take the time to express your appreciation.

## 6 Evaluate your team

Are you turning your employees into a superior team? By letting employees use their unique talents and providing training where it's needed, you can add to customer satisfaction and company profitability.

## 7 Get a pulse on your customers

An annual customer satisfaction survey is a great way to assess performance, obtain insight on potential new products or services, and to let your customers know how much you value their business.



## 8 Review your business tax strategy

Meet with your tax advisor to discuss ways to minimize your taxes not only for the current year but long-term as well.

As your business grows, make sure you're using the most appropriate form of business – whether it's sole proprietor, S or C corporation, LLC, or partnership.

## 9 Clear out the clutter

Do a complete house cleaning once a year. Get rid of clutter that serves no purpose; throw out stuff that's not used and not needed. Tidy up both the inside and the outside of your business. Employees and customers will respond positively to a neater, cleaner environment.

## 10 Update succession planning for your business

Review your succession planning annually. You should have a specific plan for each key manager position, including yourself. Be prepared for a short-term absence or a permanent vacancy. Your plan might mean promoting from within or recruiting externally. An up-to-date plan can be invaluable if you have an unexpected vacancy.

*If you are serious about improving your business, consider a yearly assessment of your operation. For any assistance you need, contact our office.*

