



Moving forward...  
**100 Top Tips**

sage

Welcome to **'100 Top Tips'** written by you, our customers. In it you'll find tips on everything from how to work to your strengths, e-marketing and customer services to business planning and the importance of cash flow.

Written by business people just like you. The hints and tips you're about to read are real life words of advice from those who've been there and experienced running a business first hand.

We were delighted by the amount of tips submitted. It made our job of deciding which ones to select a tough one. **But here they are and in no particular order... 100 great business tips to help you and your business move forward.**

# 1

**Expectation management.** If you set expectations correctly with your customers and then exceed them you'll always be the hero, even if these were set very low to start with. Think EasyJet.

**Jo Fulton**, Datel [www.datel.info](http://www.datel.info)

# 2

Don't be scared to say '**no**' to customers when they ask for credit or extended terms. Cash flow is the lifeblood of all SME businesses so, keep control, pay suppliers on time and don't let customers steal extra credit days.

**Colin Halligan**, Simple Solutions (Electronics) Ltd  
[www.simplesolutions-uk.com](http://www.simplesolutions-uk.com)

# 3

3 Hs: **Hardworking, Helpful** and **Honest** creates good working relationships throughout.

**Paula Corlett,**  
PDE Waste Technologies  
[www.pde.uk.com](http://www.pde.uk.com)

# 4

**People like to know they are being thought of.**

Immediately after a meeting (the same day) find contacts on Twitter and LinkedIn and connect to them and you will stick in their memory for longer.

**Dr Graham Clayton,**  
Intelligent Formulation Ltd  
[www.intelligentformulation.org](http://www.intelligentformulation.org)

## **Moving forward...**

Look after all of your customer information in one place with ACT! by Sage

Call **0800 694 05 69** or visit [www.sage.co.uk/store](http://www.sage.co.uk/store)

# 5

**Focus on what you do best.** Every business person has their strengths and weaknesses. Great sales people are not always the best at paperwork and administration. Recognise your weaknesses and think about how you can outsource those tasks.

**Jane Tomlin,** Adiuva [www.adiuva.co.uk](http://www.adiuva.co.uk)

# 6

Invest in your employees. A **happy workforce** is a productive workforce. Staff need to be kept motivated. Clearly define their role in the business and make them feel part of a team.

**Susan Nisar,** Swimshop  
[www.swimshop.co.uk](http://www.swimshop.co.uk)

# 7

**Cash is king,** keep it flowing. More businesses fail because of poor cash flow management than any other reason.

**Christopher Wakeling,**  
Asar Consulting Limited  
[www.asarconsulting.co.uk](http://www.asarconsulting.co.uk)

# 8

By all means, **utilise the web for e-marketing**, but get the balance right. Your Twitter and Facebook fans and followers don't want to see lots of similar updates from you in a small space of time.

**Scott Bridgwater**, Century Computing Software Services Ltd  
[www.centurysoftware.co.uk](http://www.centurysoftware.co.uk)

# 9

**Don't complain about competition.** Use it as a way to guide your business ahead. In particular, in the technology area, don't stand still. Constantly learn new skills and techniques and use these to create new products and services that your rivals are too slow to master.

**Stuart Barry**, Digital Dimensions Limited  
[www.digital-dimensions.co.uk](http://www.digital-dimensions.co.uk)

# 10

Instead of having a seminar that sells someone something, **educate them** on a subject that is relevant. Improving someone's knowledge is a more powerful tool than trying to sell them a product.

**Geoff Bowman,**  
ACA Financial Services  
[www.sjpp.co.uk/aca](http://www.sjpp.co.uk/aca)

# 11

With all of the noise around social media, it's sometimes easy to get lost in the sea of Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn. Try not to focus on what others are doing too much as it **takes the focus off you.**

**Laura Maddison,** Altitude Recruitment  
[www.altituderecruitment.co.uk](http://www.altituderecruitment.co.uk)

# 12

Last thing at night, before leaving your desk, make up **your "to do" list** for the following day. That way the day starts well organised.

**Brian Blacklaw**, Isoplan UK Ltd [www.isoplan.com](http://www.isoplan.com)

# 13

**Use Twitter!** Great for feedback, promotions, customer service, building a community for your business and many other things that you will not appreciate until you use it.

**Anthony Grady**, Quality Inks Ltd [www.wox4ink.co.uk](http://www.wox4ink.co.uk)

# 14

Everyone is a potential customer or knows one, building networks and friendships now may lead to paying customers later. Start your **excellent customer service** before they are customers.

**Louise Northwood**, Louise Northwood Introductions  
[www.louisenorthwood.com](http://www.louisenorthwood.com)

# 15

Never underestimate the **power of your website**. Managing and providing people with a valid information service through your website will not only minimise the number of phone calls you have to take but will also provide valuable leads on the ones that come through.

Sinead O'Connor, SO Web Design [www.sowebdesign.com](http://www.sowebdesign.com)

# 16

Always be on **top of your finances**, know exactly where your profit margins are highest and what your biggest expenses are.

Alison Harris, Transflor Ltd  
[www.transflor.co.uk](http://www.transflor.co.uk)

## Moving forward...

Sage Instant Accounts and Sage 50 Accounts offer great ways to stay on top of your finances

Call **0800 33 66 33** or visit  
**[www.sage.co.uk/store](http://www.sage.co.uk/store)**

# 17

Listen to your customers. Ask them what they love about your company and products, and what you could do to improve their **overall experience**. Act on the feedback.

**Steve Boyes**, MCS Ltd  
[www.mcsgroup.co.uk](http://www.mcsgroup.co.uk)

# 18

Integrate your eCommerce website with your business to **increase sales and to reduce costs**. When visitors arrive on your website you should offer them a free guide to your product or a case study whitepaper, something valuable enough for them to provide you with their contact details.

**Bill Duff**, Fusionsoft  
[www.fusionsoft.co.uk](http://www.fusionsoft.co.uk)

# 19

Treat your **suppliers like your customers**, they are the most important people in the chain.

**Justine Verwey**, Xtreme Graphics Ltd [www.xg-group.co.uk](http://www.xg-group.co.uk)

# 20

**Be proactive.** Give your clients the information they need before they ask for it. It's the main difference between an okay accountant and a good accountant.

**Gaynor Armitage**, Giess Wallis Crisp  
[www.gwc-accountants.co.uk](http://www.gwc-accountants.co.uk)

# 21

Start a Twitter account for your company and include all the **news about your organisation** as it happens - new staff, AGM, funding awarded etc.

**Darren Etherington**, Your Voice Counts  
[www.yvc.org.uk](http://www.yvc.org.uk)

# 22

Never lose sight of the fact that the purpose of your business is to **make money**. Never be complacent; stay aware and ahead of the competition; focus on your USPs; control costs; always know your financial position. Market, market, market.

**Prue Heron**, Commercial Finance People Ltd  
[www.commercialfinancepeople.co.uk](http://www.commercialfinancepeople.co.uk)

# 23

What would you do if (when) your main server fails? You obviously have backed up your data. But have you tested that you can restore your server to **full functionality**? If not DO IT NOW, and every 6 months!

**Roland Horwood**, TJ Crump Oakwrights  
[www.oakwrights.co.uk](http://www.oakwrights.co.uk)

# 24

Something I learned early on (and the hard way) is that it is always best to have a **contract or written agreement**

before starting any work. It also helps having a friendly solicitor if it all goes belly-up!

**Caroline Murphy**, cmdesigns  
[www.caroline-murphy.co.uk](http://www.caroline-murphy.co.uk)

# 25

"Well done. Brilliant job. I really appreciate it." can motivate better than any pay rise could ever do. Well **motivated staff** have positive influences on your business in more ways than you can imagine. So show you care.

**Sadie Lloyd**, Paull & Co Ltd  
[www.paulls.co.uk](http://www.paulls.co.uk)

### **Moving forward...**

Ensure your people are well looked after with Sage HRAdvice

Call **0800 33 66 33** or visit  
**[www.sage.co.uk/store](http://www.sage.co.uk/store)**

# 26

Respond to initial enquiries within two hours. That way, customers believe that you **want their business** and that you are efficient. Always offer them something when you respond.

**Paula Smith**, Occasional Harps  
[www.harpist.co.uk](http://www.harpist.co.uk)

# 27

Incorporate a **personal passion** into your business to give you an edge over your competitors. I love cycling, so we cycle to work meetings on smart fold-up bikes. Consequently we've developed a very valuable reputation as environmentally friendly designers.

**John Morse-Brown**, Morse-Brown Design  
[www.morsebrowndesign.co.uk](http://www.morsebrowndesign.co.uk)

# 28

Reconcile your bank account every day to successfully **manage your cash flow**. Any unrecognised transactions are resolved ASAP, you'll know if payments fail, and which customer invoices haven't been paid. Remember, it's cash flow that pays the wages, not profit.

**Catherine Segnatelli**, Bocard UK Ltd [www.bocard.co.uk](http://www.bocard.co.uk)

# 29

**Use your email signature space effectively**. You can use it in all sorts of ways to promote things - an upcoming event, new product launch, campaign, winning an award. Don't make it more than 1 or 2 lines though and make sure you have a weblink in there for further info.

**Carrie Brookes**, VONNE [www.vonne.org.uk](http://www.vonne.org.uk)

# 30

Allow at least two hours every week for **thinking and planning**. You run the business. Don't let it run you.

**Saleem A Choudhry**, Jobskin Ltd [www.jobskin.co.uk](http://www.jobskin.co.uk)

# 31

Reconcile your bank account, debtors and creditors first thing in the morning every day, and your **accounts will look after themselves**.

**Neil Gallagher**, P & K Recruitment Ltd  
[www.pandkrecruitment.com](http://www.pandkrecruitment.com)

# 32

Use **free advertising to promote your business** and help reduce costs. Small advertisers sometimes offer a free trial period so build up your business profile by taking advantage of free trials.

**Andrea Callow**, Dipec Plastics Ltd [www.dipec.co.uk](http://www.dipec.co.uk)

# 33

Never accept the first deal you are offered - there will **always be a better deal**. If you are currently with that provider tell them you will leave - remember, you don't actually have to.

**Robin Dinerstein**, Italguid Ltd  
[www.itguru.co.uk](http://www.itguru.co.uk)

# 34

When issuing invoices think about doing so on bright or fluorescent paper as they will **stand out on their desk** rather than be lost in the pile of paper that normally exists. If you then have to follow up with a phone call, it's also easier for them to find.

**Roger Weeks**, Jacksons Financial Services  
[www.jacksonsfs.co.uk](http://www.jacksonsfs.co.uk)

## Moving forward...

Stand out from the crowd with branded Sage Stationery

Call **0800 33 66 33** or visit  
[www.sage.co.uk/store](http://www.sage.co.uk/store)

# 35

Spend time working on an **effective cash flow plan.**

Plan for deficits, if they occur don't panic - prioritise, strategise and communicate with your suppliers and your bank. Equally plan for surpluses, make the extra cash you have work hard and gain a return for your business.

**Louise Rowe**, Hawke and Hunter Ltd  
[www.hawkeandhunter.co.uk](http://www.hawkeandhunter.co.uk)

# 36

**Motivate your staff with cream cakes** - the rationale

1. Encourages communication - buy a selection
2. Ensure production doesn't slow down due to drop in blood sugar levels - serve with morning coffee
3. Include chocolate in the selection - boosts dopamine levels therefore happier staff.

**Lynda**, Apollo Creative  
[www.apollocreative.co.uk](http://www.apollocreative.co.uk)

# 37

**Treat others as you wish to be treated...**

if everyone paid in a timely manner, life would be much easier.

**Matthew Wallace**, Adsensa [www.adsensa.com](http://www.adsensa.com)

# 38

Keep your **customers informed** - from new products to progress on their project (even if it's bad news!)

**Shona Penfold**, Thymebuild Ltd  
[www.dynamicwsidesign.com](http://www.dynamicwsidesign.com)

# 39

Information, information, information! Only with timely and **accurate information** on your business performance can you make the crucial business decision to ensure success.

**Nicola Langton**, Octagon Accounting Solutions  
[www.octagonaccounting.co.uk](http://www.octagonaccounting.co.uk)

# 40

When sending invoices, enclose a stamped self-addressed envelope. This way they can't say "I can't find a stamp or envelope just now I'll pay this bill later when I've found one".

Doing this **increased the speed my account customers paid me by upto 20 days.**

**Jennie Chappell**, Willowbrook Farm Feed & Equestrian  
[www.willowbrookequestrian.com](http://www.willowbrookequestrian.com)

# 41

Think - every single pound. Here at Aqueduct we have encouraged our staff, when ordering supplies, to always ask for a discount from the supplier. We estimate that this will reduce our costs by 1% in the current financial year equating to £40,000. **If you don't ask you don't get.**

**Ronan Phillips**, Aqueduct Design & Advertising  
[www.aqueduct.co.uk](http://www.aqueduct.co.uk)

# 42

Look after your cash flow and it will look after you! Bill regularly and chase outstanding bills promptly. **Take time to do your administration** - it's as important as the "selling".

**Elizabeth Baxendale**, Winter Scott [www.winterscott.co.uk](http://www.winterscott.co.uk)

# 43

Always be **enthusiastic** about your product/ service, because if you're not no-one else will be!

**Emma Ball**, Emma Ball Ltd  
[www.emmaball.co.uk](http://www.emmaball.co.uk)

# 44

Sort out priorities, and follow the plan. **Do not jump from one topic to another.** Be consistent with numbers and documents.

**Elena Waller**,  
Wilson Phylaktis Architects Ltd  
[www.wparch.co.uk](http://www.wparch.co.uk)

# 45

**Set a realistic and achievable budget,** set your cash flow forecast accordingly and stay as close as possible to the budget throughout the year. It should be used as a guidance tool.

**Anne Newton,**  
Royal Ocean Racing Club Ltd  
[www.rorc.org.uk](http://www.rorc.org.uk)

# 46

The best way to deal with stressful situations successfully is to tackle the cause of that stress - so open those bills, make that phone call, have that meeting. **Get it over with and you'll feel so much better afterwards!**

**Lyndsay Waymont,** Acies Group LLP  
[www.aciesgroup.co.uk](http://www.aciesgroup.co.uk)

# 47

**Every morning, walk your turf.** Speak to everyone who works for you. Let them know you know them - preferably by name, if not, by what they do. A smile, a joke and a compliment will do wonders for their morale.

**Nigel Chilcott**, Independent Healthcare Advisory Services Ltd  
[www.independenthealthcare.org.uk](http://www.independenthealthcare.org.uk)

# 48

Two simple maxims to advance a business. If you cannot measure it, how can you manage it? Management is doing things right; leadership is **doing the right things.**

**Ray Richardson**, Neobium Ltd [www.neobium.co.uk](http://www.neobium.co.uk)

# 49

Learn from your experiences and improve everytime you do something - **don't stop improving.**

**Tim Holton**, Uniq Systems [www.uniqsystems.co.uk](http://www.uniqsystems.co.uk)

# 50

Tap into your own resources and **innovative ideas.**

**Laura Flynn**, Davison Flynn Duke

# 51

**On a job by job basis.** Don't pay your suppliers on that job until you have been paid by your customer... so you always keep a positive cash flow.

**John**, Clayton Creative Ltd [www.claytoncreative.co.uk](http://www.claytoncreative.co.uk)

# 52

## **Listen to your customers.**

If you can't hear them, ask them. They are the ones spending money and in the current climate, will only buy what they need. Find out what they need and then give them what they need.

**Kieron Moran**, Epsilon Test Services  
[www.epsilontest.com](http://www.epsilontest.com)

# 53

Your existing clients are your best source of referred business, a great Customer Relationship Management system will keep you in touch and strengthen the relationship. **Always ask clients for feedback**, positive feedback makes a great testimonial and negative feedback should create your action plan.

**Grahame Johnson**, Opus Accounting Ltd  
[www.opusaccounting.co.uk](http://www.opusaccounting.co.uk)

# 54

When submitting quotes or proposals to a potential new customer, add their company logo to the cover page of the document (which can easily be obtained from their website). This is a **nice personal touch** and ensures that your document stands out from the pile of competitors.

**Richard Foster**, BlueMoon Solutions Ltd  
[www.bluemoonsolutions.co.uk](http://www.bluemoonsolutions.co.uk)

# 55

There is **always something new to learn**. Never be afraid of opening yourself up to new ideas. Exploit the free resources that are out there like Business Link or free business mentoring schemes. It can help you take your business to new heights.

**Steve Taylor**, Fab Frocks Ltd  
[www.fabfrocks.co.uk](http://www.fabfrocks.co.uk)

# 56

## Remember that business is all about people.

Take your time building the right team and finding the right partners. When you have them, don't let them get away.

Jonathan Grubin, SendSocial [www.sendsocial.com](http://www.sendsocial.com)

# 57

Where possible collect payment before dispatching an order. This will **reduce bad debt** and it means you have cash to pay suppliers.

Marie O'Connor, Cadet Direct Ltd  
[www.cadetdirect.com](http://www.cadetdirect.com)

# 58

Always be **courteous but persistent** when chasing clients for payment.

Margaret Keane, Conference Consultancy  
[www.conferenceconsultancy.com](http://www.conferenceconsultancy.com)

## Moving forward...

Sage Instant Payroll and Sage 50 Payroll can help ensure your people get paid correctly and on time

Call **0800 33 66 33** or visit [www.sage.co.uk/store](http://www.sage.co.uk/store)

# 59

**Know your customers.** Keep the ones who are good payers but if they begin to delay payment to you check if there is any problem and don't let them run up a large bill, as there's always the risk you won't get paid.

**Patricia Hunter**, Hunters Coaches of Daventry Ltd  
[www.rayhunterscoaches.com](http://www.rayhunterscoaches.com)

# 60

**Forward thinking...** assess the future not just the now.

**Karen Morrison**, GJ Creative Ltd  
[www.gjcreative.co.uk](http://www.gjcreative.co.uk)

# 61

**Time management.** Read emails at set times in the day, they can be very big time wasters if you are not very careful.

**Carol Denton**, Extracair Installations Ltd [www.extracair.co.uk](http://www.extracair.co.uk)

# 62

Make your staff feel appreciated and acknowledge their service by **celebrating their anniversary in your company.** If you have numerous staff simply put a notice up for that calendar month i.e. this April we celebrate Natalie's 4th Year with the company. Thank you for your hardwork.

**Esther Beresford**, Miller & Isaacs Dental Surgery  
[www.cleevedental.co.uk](http://www.cleevedental.co.uk)

# 63

Know your business better than anyone else and you will always have a **competitive edge.**

**Marc Lovatt**, RPLovatt [www.lovattinsurance.co.uk](http://www.lovattinsurance.co.uk)

# 64

**Leaving your comfort zone is important.** You should never think that, this is the way we've always done it so this is the way it should be. Never think that new ideas and technology could not work for you.

**Farhana Roked,**  
Roked Filling Stations Ltd

## Moving forward...

Our SageCover services can offer you practical advice on all areas of your business

Call **0800 33 66 33** or visit  
**[www.sage.co.uk/store](http://www.sage.co.uk/store)**

# 65

Wage war on complexity; **create simplicity** everywhere you go.

**Michael Cousins,** Triaster  
[www.triaster.co.uk](http://www.triaster.co.uk)

# 66

**Always phone your customers back** when you say you are going to.

**Sophie Shepherd,** Proactive Technical Training Ltd  
[www.proactivetechnicaltraining.co.uk](http://www.proactivetechnicaltraining.co.uk)

# 67

Your accounts aren't just for the taxman, they should be used as a **tool to help you manage your business!**

**Graeme Loveland**, Thurrock Enterprise [www.tlea.org.uk](http://www.tlea.org.uk)

# 68

**The 6 "P"s** - Proper Planning Prevents Poor Performance and therefore Profit. Or on the same vain Fail to Plan, Plan to Fail.

**Roy Smith**, Frank Marshall & Co  
[www.frankmarshall.co.uk](http://www.frankmarshall.co.uk)

# 69

Make use of the various **on-line** comparison sites and portals for travel, hotels and utilities. They can be just as useful to businesses as they are for consumers.

**Kevin Ross**, Geomant UK Ltd [www.geomant.com](http://www.geomant.com)

# 70

If you cannot take a client's telephone call, always **call them back within 1/2 hour**. If you can't, then have someone call them, apologise and give them an idea of when you are able to call them. Nobody likes being ignored!

**Ely Davis**, AB Accountancy  
[www.abaccountancy.co.uk](http://www.abaccountancy.co.uk)

# 71

**Ensure all staff are focused on improving cash flow**, tight controls are kept on debtors, credit limits are reviewed regularly, robust stock control is maintained to reduce unnecessary stockholding and all cost centres are reviewed to eliminate wastage and overspend.

**Christopher Andrew Doan**, Murray Taylor  
[www.murray-taylor.com](http://www.murray-taylor.com)

# 72

On your website and business cards, add an invitation to join your business network at Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn. This helps to expand your virtual networking group and **raise your business profile.**

**Ian Cunningham**, ISC Bookkeeping & Business Solutions  
[www.isc-business-solutions.co.uk](http://www.isc-business-solutions.co.uk)

# 73

Set standards which make **'Getting it right the first time'** the platform to build from.

**Abdul Qureshi**, Alpha Adhesives & Sealants Ltd  
[www.alpha-adhesives.co.uk](http://www.alpha-adhesives.co.uk)

# 74

One of the most **important skills is imagination.** Imagine yourself where you want to be - believe in it so strongly, make it as real as you can in your imagination and it will become reality.

**Sally Rowe**, Marchant IT Solutions (Mitsol) Ltd [www.mitsol.co.uk](http://www.mitsol.co.uk)

# 75

Always treat your customers (our case donors) with respect. They bring the business to you - so give them the time and attention they deserve, **no matter how small or big.**

**Charmain Dellow Meghjee**, The Desk & Chair Foundation  
[www.tdcf.org.uk](http://www.tdcf.org.uk)

# 76

Be passionate about your work but **be cautious** if you are led by your heart.

**Lindsey Peter Paxton**, Chadcraft  
[www.chadcraftuk.co.uk](http://www.chadcraftuk.co.uk)

# 77

**Always be patient** with people on the telephone, if they feel you helped them they are more likely to pass your name on to others.

**Mary Kidd**, South Lincs Consulting Ltd  
[www.southlincsconsulting.com](http://www.southlincsconsulting.com)

# 78

Happy employees and a good atmosphere in the work place make it extra special. If your employees are happy the better and more efficient work they'll do. **Therefore everything comes in smoothly.** The best way to go forward according to me.

**Ludi Mercy**, Northfield Hydraulic Services Ltd  
[www.nhs.co.uk](http://www.nhs.co.uk)

## Moving forward...

Get the most out of your software with Sage Training

Call **0800 33 66 33** or visit  
[www.sage.co.uk/store](http://www.sage.co.uk/store)

# 79

**Learn how to use your software and applications properly.** Advancements in technology and equipment will always be a step forward in terms of improving efficiency. Then use training and assisted learning to allow you to practice tasks and develop new skills.

**David Auld**, McKinnon Bros Garage  
[www.mckinnonofdalry.co.uk](http://www.mckinnonofdalry.co.uk)

# 80

**Always be honest.** It sounds simple but can be hard at times to admit to clients that you've made a mistake, however if you are honest and make amends, those same clients can be your most ardent supporters and clients for life.

**Alex Gage**, Alex Gage Optometrist  
[www.alexgagevision.co.uk](http://www.alexgagevision.co.uk)

# 81

**Streamline your business** and cut down any needed overheads so that you have the resources, money to invest and systems in place ready to take on the new economy at full pelt. Sage can help you do this.

**Simon Pashley**, BIGDECS  
[www.bigdecs.com](http://www.bigdecs.com)

# 82

Look at your business through your customers' **eyes, ears and all their senses**. Prioritise your list and change everything that might put a customer off.

**Nigel Arnold**, The Swan Pool & Spa Centre Ltd  
[www.swanpools.co.uk](http://www.swanpools.co.uk)

# 83

**Always be prepared** to do the things everybody hates doing yourself, that way you will always stay in charge.

**Kevin Warburton**, Forward Autos Ltd  
[www.forwardautos.co.uk](http://www.forwardautos.co.uk)

# 84

Always try your very best to keep your employees happy. A happy workplace goes hand-in-hand with **a happy homestead**.

**Glyn Robertson**, T&N Joinery Ltd [www.tnjoinery.co.uk](http://www.tnjoinery.co.uk)

# 85

## **Monitoring downtime closely.**

To maximise our income we need to maximise the number of chargeable days worked. By planning and allocating work closely with this in mind, any gaps in work programmes can be filled, and gaps in funding targeted.

**Judith Holland**, The Dyfed Archaeological Trust Ltd  
[www.dyfedarchaeology.org.uk](http://www.dyfedarchaeology.org.uk)

# 86

Try to stay original and fresh while going the **extra mile for your customers.**

What has been done before works but it's the little touches that customers remember and that can turn a one off sale into a valued regular customer.

**Stephen Wright**, Pharmavet Ltd  
[www.petremedies.co.uk](http://www.petremedies.co.uk)

# 87

Business energy contracts are automatically renewed. Make a note of contract dates and give the required notice to **allow room for negotiation.**

**Robert Harper**, A Coombs Ltd [www.acoombs.co.uk](http://www.acoombs.co.uk)

# 88

Do not be afraid to use **old fashioned methods** e.g. a cash book to combine with Sage accounts. You make your mistakes in the cash book but Sage is always perfect.

**Jenny Gomm**, GHT Engineering [www.studio-sixty.co.uk](http://www.studio-sixty.co.uk)

# 89

**Never delay in delivering bad news** and always do it in person never by email. You can often defuse a bad situation by dealing with it early and in person.

**Jim Newbigging**, Capital Vehicles

# 90

Any UK business operating in profit must pay UK taxes. However rather than hand over all that loot without question. If they sponsor a small local charity they can put that against that ugly tax bill and get some wonderful warm fuzzy feelings from the good they do with their choice. Who knows how much **good can come from good deeds.**

**Roy J Peckham**, Pit Pony Sanctuary  
[www.pitponies.co.uk](http://www.pitponies.co.uk)

# 91

Many businesses appear profitable with good order books and supply chains, but do not analyse if their cash inflow will coincide with their planned cash outflow. The result of this is defaulted supplier payments, deterioration in supplier relations and **uncertainty of future supplies.**

**Kiran Pancholi**, RKL Care Ltd  
[www.autumn-care.co.uk](http://www.autumn-care.co.uk)

# 92

**Know your audience** and position yourself accordingly to that audience.

**Mary Pomfret,**  
Leonard Pomfret & Son Ltd

# 93

The job's not finished until all the **paper work's done.**

**Chris Griffiths,**  
J C Rogers Electrical Contractors

# 94

Never pretend that you can know everything about everything - but **know how to find out.**

**David Way,** Present Days  
[www.presentdays.co.uk](http://www.presentdays.co.uk) (Going Live Soon)

# 95

**Keep spirits up,** the best sales people are not the ones who get all the deals, but the people who can pick themselves up and carry on when things fall down.

**James Esom,** Patchsave Ltd  
[www.patchsave.com](http://www.patchsave.com)

# 96

Customer service is paramount. Resolve issues as they happen and apologise. Give your customers a **pleasant shopping experience** that will make them want to return and recommend you to others.

**James Brown**, J Brown Newsagents [www.jbrownnews.co.uk](http://www.jbrownnews.co.uk)

# 97

**Businesses are made of people.** Excellence in business means securing excellent people and investing in excellent training and development to support them to realise their full potential.

**Ben Thomas**, Coachmatch [www.coachmatch.co.uk](http://www.coachmatch.co.uk)

# 98

Always build a cash flow with no income, this then shows you what you need to breakeven - always work in reverse with sales as it is too easy to over estimate, **go with your head not with your heart.**

**Richard Wain**, Hive & Co Accessories Ltd

# 99

If you are being asked to pay upfront for goods, you should be **asking for a discount** of at least 2-3% for this. Most companies will give you this discount and over a year the savings can far outweigh overdraft costs.

**Maria Whitehead**, Hawkshead Relish Company Ltd  
[www.hawksheadrelish.com](http://www.hawksheadrelish.com)

# 100

**Smiling to all customers**, makes them happy and they come back. I burn essential oils in my pharmacy and the fragrance always brings customers back. Keep shop tidy at all times and do not stick posters on windows keep it clear at all times.

**Kamal Nathwani**, Sanjivani Pharmacy  
[www.sanjivani.co.uk](http://www.sanjivani.co.uk)



Once again,  
we'd like to say a  
huge thank you to  
everyone who  
submitted a  
Top Tip.

**Moving forward...**

...to buy our **software** and **services** call us on **0800 33 66 33**  
or visit [www.sage.co.uk/store](http://www.sage.co.uk/store)

**sage**