

# Strengthening Your Business

In her book, *The Small Business Owner's Guide to a Good Night's Sleep*, Debra Koontz Traverso lists some actions that a company can take to strengthen itself. We have paraphrased and annotated some of these reasons to show how these ideas can be carried out.

<b>What Can be Done</b>	<b>How to Do It</b>
<b>Be a good boss</b>	Don't be a buddy, but do be a role model for your employees. Be a decisive leader, honest and forthright in your dealings with everyone in the organization. Treat every person fairly and handle situations consistently. Realize that employees want to make a contribution to the success of your company; respect their time and their judgement. Solicit suggestions from each and every employee at some time.
<b>Empower employees</b>	Give your employees the time, the best tools, the responsibility, and the authority to get a job done. Be clear in your instruction; be quick to praise; and be slow to admonish.
<b>Know your customers</b>	Gather and analyze information about your customers and develop and maintain a useful "customer care" profile.
<b>Know your industry</b>	Gather and analyze information about your industry (what others are doing and how). In that way, you can focus on your company's niche and what it does best.
<b>Know your market</b>	Gather and analyze information about current market trends, sharpen your marketing skills, and target your marketing to a clearly-defined customer base.
<b>Network</b>	Develop relationships by attending chambers of commerce events and club meetings. Volunteer your time with charitable organizations. Always carry business cards, handing one to everyone you meet for the first time and asking for one in return. Remember names!
<b>Know when to change and do what it takes</b>	Accept that change is inevitable and use your knowledge of current market and industry trends to adapt quickly. Adopt a positive approach to change; rather than looking for faults in employee behavior, try to "catch an employee doing something right!" Praise them on the spot. Eliminate waste and make process improvement an ongoing activity within the organization.
<b>Know your limitations</b>	Admit that you may not have the skills or motivation to accomplish certain tasks or projects. Develop and cultivate a good relationship with professional persons on your board of advisors, as well as your attorneys, CPAs, bankers, and business consultants. Use professional help whenever necessary.

Let us help you identify what actions need to be taken and help you establish effective systems that strengthen your company's operations. We stand ready to work with you to achieve your short- and long-range goals.

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