



A March Makeover Can Freshen Up A Stale Business

Have those good ideas stopped coming? Do your employees appear to be doing little more than going through the motions? Are your competitors making splashes in the media that you can't answer?

If so, a March makeover could be just the thing to re-energize your business. It need not be a major overhaul – some minor tweaks may be enough. What's important is that you recognize the need for action, and learn all you can to make informed decisions.

To identify where changes are most needed, dig for details about various aspects of your business. Remember to focus not just on the individual elements, but how they all fit together.

For example, has the company's customer base changed since it first started? Is it broader or narrower? Older or younger? More upscale or less? The company may

need a new image, revved-up branding or perhaps just a rewrite of marketing materials.

Take a hard look at whether your products or services are performing to customer expectations. Remember the goal should be to exceed expectations, not simply meet them. Perhaps competitors are doing a better job, or maybe they've created add-on products and services that you have not.

Your own customers can help with the makeover if you ask them for feedback.

If your marketing message has never

changed, perhaps it's time to re-evaluate and articulate a new one. Try revisiting the company's original business plan. You might be able to recapture some of the insight and enthusiasm. Think back to your most successful promotions, presentations

or sales efforts. Rather than reinventing the wheel, update and expand an already-proven approach.

Don't be afraid to seek out other perspectives. After all, you may be "too close" to the issues to understand the sources and solutions. Meet

and brainstorm with trusted advisors, mentors, friends, partners, employees and outside consultants. Ask customers for a

frank assessment of what you're doing, how you're doing it and what you can do to better serve their needs. The more ideas you receive, the more options you'll have for getting your business back on the fast track.

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