

# Small Business Matters

**i** Want more information and resources on this week's topics, ideas and events? Go to [www.cose.org/smallbizmatters](http://www.cose.org/smallbizmatters).



52 TIPS FOR YOUR BUSINESS

## #5: Position Yourself as an Expert Through Lengthy Online Content

Online content development is a great way to gain visibility for your business, and while much of social media calls for short incisive posts, there is also the case for longer, more in-depth content in the form of articles and whitepapers that can help you establish yourself as an expert in your particular field.

"There's a place online for content of every type and length," says Anita Campbell, CEO of Small Business Trends. "While short 'snackable' content is good, don't forget to create lengthy in-depth content from time to time."

"People do read long content if (a) it's good and (b) it's on a topic they are interested in," says Campbell. "For those trying to position themselves as subject matter experts and



thought leaders, you won't get there by delivering short content all the time. In this context, long content is an article of roughly 1,000 words or more. So pick a topic that is

aligned with what you do, research it well, and start working on a lengthy piece."

There are proven rationales for why lengthy can be beneficial when it comes to online content. "A longer article will provide more information for search engines. It gives readers more opportunity to see and understand your expertise. It becomes the kind of piece that people bookmark and share. If the topic is somewhat evergreen (as opposed to something relating to a short-lived news story or event), it will work for you for years," advises Campbell. "As a reader once told me about length, 'If I'm not interested in the topic, even 400 words is too long. If I'm interested in a topic, then 400 words isn't long enough.'" **i**



ASK THE EXPERT

### "How can I be more effective in closing a deal?"

"First off, it's important to understand that closing the deal begins way before the final handshake and completed order form. One of the biggest mistakes a salesperson can make is to believe that there is a magical closing line that you can pull out of your hip pocket at the end of a sales event that will seal the deal. Dangling a deadline or offering to hold a price in exchange for signing that day are tactics that go against the grain of the sales techniques that we foster.

Developing a mutually beneficial relationship with potential clients is essential in sales. I always say, "We don't sell, the prospect buys." Following are a few examples of best practices that should define your sales process:

**Set proper expectations.** The most critical part of the sales process is how you structure a selling event. It's important to lay down ground

rules, or what we call an 'up front contract,' which can eliminate any surprises. It's always best to let the sales prospect know at the outset that the meeting will consist of a) things you will talk about, b) any topics or questions they want to talk about, and c) what decision will be made in the end.

**Introduce opportunities for incremental decisions.** If there is any hesitancy, let them know upfront that the decision today isn't necessarily a sale. The decision can be as simple as an agreement to "test drive" a product or service or meet a second time.

**Don't assume that price is the only issue.** Take the time to understand the needs of the prospect; don't just tout the benefits of your product or service. Understanding what is compelling them to do something different should be at the heart of every sales event.t



Every salesperson has their own style, but these proven sales techniques can help you successfully close the deal and establish an ongoing relationship built on trust. It's also important to understand that what you're selling won't always be a good fit for the prospect and that it's ok to have a no. "

DAVE F. HARMAN, *Director,*  
Sandler Training **i**

## Deadline Approaching for Goldman Sachs 10,000 Small Businesses

Looking to grow your business? Why not apply for Goldman Sachs 10,000 Small Businesses, a \$500 million initiative launched by Goldman Sachs linking entrepreneurs to education, capital and business support services in an effort to create jobs and economic opportunity? Applications for the next program series at Cuyahoga Community

College (Tri-C) are currently being accepted. The deadline for applications is February 17, with classes beginning May 14 at Tri-C's Metro Campus.

Participants benefit from practical business management education, peer learning, and one-on-one business advising from dedicated professionals to develop a strategic and tailored plan for growth. Businesses that have a minimum of four employees and have been in business for at least two years are eligible to apply for the program. For more information or to apply, logon to [www.tri-c.edu/10ksb](http://www.tri-c.edu/10ksb).

**"Anyone that can be your competitor can be your partner. I heard that in the Goldman Sachs 10,000 Small Businesses program. That quote was the catalyst for me buying out my largest competitor in the social events market."**

MATT RADICELLI,  
Rock the House Entertainment



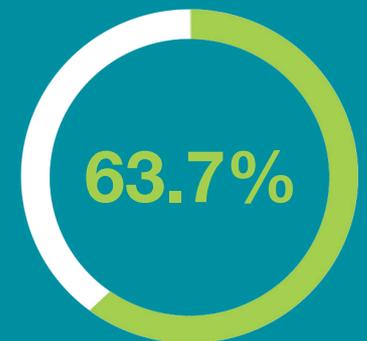
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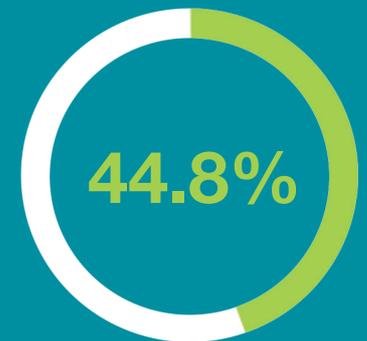
council of smaller enterprises

February 2

### By The Numbers Goldman Sachs 10,000 Small Businesses Initiative Impact



63.7%  
OF PARTICIPANTS INCREASED REVENUE  
6 MONTHS AFTER GRADUATING



44.8%  
OF PARTICIPANTS ADDED NEW JOBS  
6 MONTHS AFTER GRADUATING

SOURCE: GOLDMAN SACHS 10,000 SMALL BUSINESSES

### Connection Calendar

**COSE WEBED SERIES: HOW TO PITCH YOUR BUSINESS OR BUSINESS IDEA FOR FUNDING**

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 18  
11 AM - Noon

Practical advice on crafting the best business pitch.

Register at [www.cose.org/events](http://www.cose.org/events).

**PLEXUS ANNUAL MEETING**

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 5  
5:30 - 8:30 PM  
COST: FREE

Western Reserve Historical Society  
Register at [www.thinkplexus.org](http://www.thinkplexus.org).

**COSE ANNUAL MEETING**

A Celebration of  
Northeast Ohio's  
Small Business Rule Breakers  
THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 26  
4:30 PM  
Music Box Supper Club



Check out [www.cose.org/events](http://www.cose.org/events)  
for all the latest happenings.