

Small Business Matters

i Want more information and resources on this week's topics, ideas and events? Go to www.cose.org/smallbizmatters.



52 TIPS FOR YOUR BUSINESS

#13: Share Your Expertise with the Community

As we celebrate National Volunteer Week April 12-18, it's the perfect opportunity to take a moment to recognize the importance of engaging in the community. When you decide to volunteer on a project committee for a community effort or serve on the board of trustees of a local non-profit, both the business community and the community-at-large reap the benefits.

Volunteerism and professional development are not just for our friends in the corporate world. There are many opportunities for small business owners and their employees to lend their talents and connect with the community. Business Volunteers Unlimited (BVU) in Cleveland and the Center for Non-Profit Excellence (CNE) in Akron, provide a number of ways to get involved, including a nationally recognized board matching service, skill-based pro-bono volunteer opportu-

nities, and Done-in-A Day volunteer project opportunities.

When local employees connect with community organizations, they develop leadership skills as well as expand their professional networks. One of the drivers business owners often cite for taking the leap into entrepreneurship is that they want the freedom to "do their own thing," and becoming involved in the community and lending your skills to help make a difference is a great way to take advantage of that freedom.

Celebrate Service

National Volunteer Week
April 12-18, 2015

i To find out more about business volunteer opportunities, contact BVU or the Centers for Non-Profit Excellence at www.bvuvolunteers.org.



RULE BREAKERS

Going Against the Grain by Over Servicing Clients

As automation progresses, more and more companies are jumping on the technology bandwagon; however, many lose sight of personalized service along the way. Technology is great for data management, trending finances and shopping services, but it stands as a limited tool in times of crisis. When issues arise, who is there to help?

Group Transportation Services (GTS), a third-party logistics provider in Hudson, has brought technology in new ways to shippers – but they also take the personal approach to customer service seriously. "Freight doesn't sound complicated," says Curt Gonya, Vice President of Sales for GTS. "It's moving product from point A to point B. However, there are many unforeseen factors like weather and transportation complexities that can arise. In those situations, our customers need more than an e-mail that tells them there is an issue."

Gonya describes three ways that they bridge technology with high-touch service.

1. When we set up a new client, we have a detailed conversation on goals and sensitivities. Knowing what they are trying to accomplish allows us to have a bet-

ter sense of what kind of corrective action to take when things don't go as expected.

2. There is always the ability for a customer to get a live person – 24/7. Clients trust us with shipments both routine and sensitive. Their shipment can be supercritical to them, so we have to be super-responsive.

3. Exception reporting helps keep a problem from becoming a crisis. Whenever a shipping activity goes outside of norms – longer than expected pickup confirmation delay or longer than planned time in transit—our systems kick out exception reports that prompt us to look a little closer at what is going on. It helps insert our experts in the process where we can change an outcome for the customer.

By elevating customer service and delivering real solutions in times of crises, businesses bring added value to clients beyond its products or services, and that can go a long way in building customer loyalty. What are you doing to over-serve your customers?

i To learn more about GTS, visit www.onestopshipping.com.

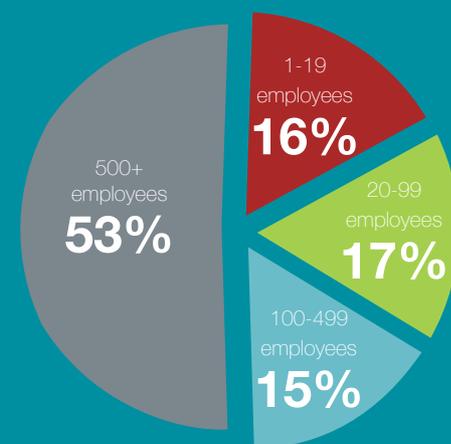


Curt Gonya,
Vice President of Sales for GTS

March 30

By The Numbers

Ohio Employment
by Size of Firm



Ohio's small businesses (1-500 employees) employed about half of the state's private workforce in 2013.

SOURCE: STATISTICS OF U.S. BUSINESSES, U.S. CENSUS BUREAU, PUBLISHED 2015.

Connection Calendar

COFFEE WITH COSE

Grab a cup of coffee and join your peers at this informal networking event.

TUESDAY, APRIL 7

8:30 – 10 AM, \$5

Panera, North Olmsted

Register at www.cose.org/events

BEST OF TECH AWARDS DINNER

Honoring the top technology companies in our region.

THURSDAY, APRIL 16

5:30 – 9:30 PM

Red Space at HotCards, Cleveland

Cost: \$35 OHTec Members,
\$75 Non-Members

Reserve your seat at www.cose.org.

LINKING IT TALENT TO OPPORTUNITY

Presented by the Greater Cleveland Partnership (GCP), this event connects job seekers to opportunities in the tech space.

THURSDAY, APRIL 16

1 - 4:30 PM

Independence Civic Center

Cost: Free for GCP, OHTec and COSE Members; Non-Members \$150

Reserve your space at www.gcpartnership.org.

Check out www.cose.org/events for all the latest happenings.



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