



## Tough Times Require More Planning – Now!

Right now the worst thing a CEO can utter is “let’s wait and see what happens.” In challenging economic times waiting just makes matters worse. Tough times require reallocating your resources wisely, recognizing that it may not be *business as usual* for the next year or two. The smart CEO will reassess the market, his or her customers, and assemble the management team to plan for the next year or two. Do it now, don’t wait.

### **Do you know the two major ways to sustain your business in a struggling economy?**

- You can either retain your current customers and/or steal someone else’s customers. Too often businesses focus more on the “stealing” instead of “retaining,” so while thousands of dollars are spent on advertising, your customers are slipping out the back door because of cutbacks in customer service. A rotating door is extremely unprofitable.

### **Do you clearly understand who are your most profitable customers?**

- Once they are clearly defined you can make certain you retain those you have and target your marketing to attract more of them.

### **Do you know the real impact of staff reductions?**

- Reducing the number of staff often impacts more than just payroll; it generally has an impact on office morale. If your staff is not feeling positive about their and the company’s future they will consciously or unconsciously convey this to your customers. This creates a downward spiral of customers leaving, cutbacks, lower morale.

### **How can SMS help?**

- **We can help you prepare for, facilitate and write up your planning session.** Doing it yourself will not bring forth the level of discussion and insights required for a successful plan. An SMS plan is based on quantitative market and customer assessments, and, is action oriented with detailed steps, assigned responsibilities and timetables. We also work with clients to establish clear success measures and times to evaluate and fine-tune your plans.
- **We can identify ways to improve customer retention.** If you have email addresses for your customers, an e-survey is an excellent cost- and time-effective measurement means. Otherwise a telephone or mail survey can be undertaken.
- **We can work with you to analyze your customer base to identify those customers with the highest profitability** – then we can survey just those customers to develop a more targeted retention program. We can also identify the best means to find potential new customers that will also be profitable.
- **This is a good time to conduct an employee survey.** Using the e-survey method can be a quick, effective and confidential method for measuring employee sentiment today and identifying where action needs to be taken to keep morale high during these tough times.

For more information about better preparing for the future please contact:

**Faith Sereno Rex, President, SMS Consulting at (808) 440-0702 or [fred@smshawaii.com](mailto:fred@smshawaii.com).**