

November 2011



INROADS

Paving the Way for Montana's Disadvantaged Business Enterprises



Montana Department of Transportation
DBE Program
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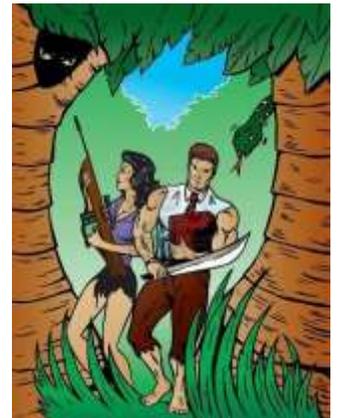
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Surviving Hard Times in Business

From: About.com

Most small business owners will tell you that being an entrepreneur is a lifestyle, something you commit to being/doing/living with every part of yourself. It becomes part of yourself. It becomes part of who you are, in the good times and in the bad. And there are inevitably going to be bad times.

Even the most organized, driven and forward-thinking small business owners face challenges in managing and growing their businesses. It's how you handle the challenges, how you bounce back from hard times, that often separates the successful from the not-so-successful.



For many, hard times in business means financial struggles – facing a down economy, frugal customers and tight budgets. Here is a survival guide for your small business:

Cut with Precision: The typical cost-cutting approach by corporations in hard times is to employ a wide sweeping cost reduction policy. For small business, cost-cutting needs to be implemented with the precision of a surgeon's scalpel. Cut too deep and your business will never recover. Cut too shallow and cash flow problems could force you to the back of the unemployment line. Exercise care and judgment in determining what and where to cut and by how much.

Look Outside: It's typical for the vast majority of small businesses to be local not only in location but in marketing focus. In hard times, looking beyond the regular boundaries of your business is good business. One such opportunity is international trade. During times of the U.S. dollar being devalued in markets around the globe, smart business owners have realized the growing demand for American goods and services.

Use Low Budget Marketing: When recessions and other difficult times hit, the marketing function of a business is the first to get cut. With less advertising and marketing, the funnel of incoming prospects is reduced creating even more revenue decreases and setting up a vicious cycle. The key to salvage any business in hard times isn't to reduce your marketing activities but to replace them with low-budget marketing. Low-budget marketing includes tactics such as PR, networking, public speaking, and more.

Connect With Peers: Hard times in the form of recessions or industry shakeouts impact more than just your business. Entire sectors of the market place can feel the heat. One useful approach to survive is applying in the wisdom of crowds. Using the crowd wisdom philosophy, your business can connect with industry trade groups or professional peer groups to extract the knowledge and best practices applied during a business slump.

Fundamental Focus: In good times, business comes easy. Your sales presentation or marketing may be less effective but will get results. Surviving hard times requires going back full circle to the fundamental principles of business. Doing regular financial checks, providing sales training, managing your customer relationships are some of the fundamentals that need to be re-learned and re-visited.

Process Don't Replay: It's easy to fall into the trap of replaying the situation that got you here today. If you had a failed partnership, replaying your mistakes is a mistake. Research published in the *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* by Lyubomirsky, Sousa, et al reveals analysis occurring during talking or writing is beneficial in difficult times while replaying negative events is detrimental. Learn from mistakes and move on.

Surviving difficult times whether personal or events such as a recession require a healthy outlook as well as good strategy. Remember bad times don't last forever.



MONTANA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
MDT holds two bid lettings each month.

Proposed for letting December 2011

UPN/UNIT	PROJECT ID	FINANCIAL DISTRICT	PROJECT DESIGNATION	TYPE OF CONSTRUCTION	LENGTH MILES
6972 000	NH 62-1(13)0	4	CULBERTSON-SOUTH	RESURFACING-ASPHALT (THIN LIFT <=60.00MM)(INC. SAF IMP)(PAVE PRES)	11.8
7444 000	NH 16-2(11)38	5	S OF ROUNDUP-SOUTH	RESURFACING-ASPHALT (THIN LIFT <=60.00MM)(INC. SAF IMP)(PAVE PRES)	8.1
4059 000	STPP 14-6(10)259	4	FORSYTH-NORTHWEST	MINOR REHABILITATION	11.8
6950 000	STPS 205-1(41)12	2	THROPE ROAD-WEST	RESURFACING-ASPHALT (THIN LIFT <=60.00MM)(INC. SAF IMP)(PAVE PRES)	2.6
7428 000	STPU 0204(13)	2	4 TH SYCAMORE TO HICKORY ANACONDA	RESURFACING-ASPHALT (THIN LIFT <=60.00MM)(INC. SAF IMP)(PAVE PRES)	0.8
7407 000	UPP 0206(5)	2	7 TH ST-ELM TO CEDAR ANACONDA	RESURFACING – SEAL & COVER	0.5
7408 000	UPP 0299(15)	2	CITYWIDE CRACK SEAL ANACONDA	RESURFACING-SEAL & COVER	2.1
7405 000	UPP 0204(14)	2	4 TH -HICKORY TO PARK - ANACONDA	RESURFACING – SEAL & COVER	1.2
6737 000	HSIP 41(56)	1	SF 089 RAVALLI CO GUARDRAIL	ROADWAY & ROADSIDE SAFETY IMPROVEMENTS	
6693 000	HSIP 15(89)	1	SF089 WHITEFISH-KALSPLL GUARDRAIL	ROADWAY & ROADSIDE SAFETY IMPROVEMENTS	
6419 000	HISP 15(89)	1	SF079 SIG HEADS – COL FALLS	TRAFFIC SIGNALS & LIGHTING	
5879 000	HSIP 5-3(94)97	1	2003-TURN LANES-S OF LAKESIDE	ROADWAY & ROADSIDE SAFETY IMPROVEMENTS	0.6
6689 000	HSIP 0601(20)	2	SF089 LGHTING SIGNING THORPE RD	SIGNING, PAVEMENT MARKINGS, CHEVRONS, ETC.	
6698 000	HSIP 518-1(8)2	2	SF089 E OF MONTANA CITY GUARDRAIL	ROADWAY & ROADSIDE SAFETY IMPROVEMENTS	
6694 000	HSIP 90-9(108)481	5	SF 089 HARDIN-ROADSIDE IMPROVEMENT	ROADWAY & ROADSIDE SAFETY IMPROVEMENTS	
7818 000	BH 9049(30)	5	YELLOWSTONE-GREYCLIFF SCOUR	MINOR BRIDGE REHAB	

BREAKING NEWS...
U.S. Transportation Secretary LaHood Announces More Than \$215 Million for Repairs to Damaged Roads and Bridges

WASHINGTON - The U.S. Department of Transportation will provide more than \$215 million to states across the nation to cover the costs of repairing roads and bridges damaged by a variety of natural disasters, U.S. Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood announced.

"Communities suffering from disasters have been hard at work restoring vital transportation links so that people can resume daily activities as soon as possible," said Secretary LaHood. "They did their part, and now it's our turn to give the states the money they were promised to help pay for that work."

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) will provide a total of \$215,198,775 from its emergency relief program to 34 states, Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, American Samoa, and federal lands agencies to reimburse them for repairs to roads and bridges caused by storms, flooding, hurricanes and other natural and catastrophic disasters.

"States and communities can continue counting on our support in times of need," said FHWA Administrator Mendez. "Everyone pulls together when disaster strikes and we are committed to help as much as we can now and in the future."

The money will reimburse states for fixing or replacing highways, bridges and other roadway structures. Costs associated with detours, debris removal and other immediate measures necessary to restore traffic flow in impacted areas are also eligible.

The FHWA's emergency relief program reimburses states for the repair or reconstruction of federal-aid highways that were damaged in disasters and catastrophic failures.

Montana received \$2,564,893 for the Spring flooding, so watch for projects coming soon!

DBE participation for MDT Awarded Contracts for August and September:

Prime <i>DBE</i>	Location	Project	DBE Participation
Knife River – Belgrade <i>Arrow Striping</i>	W Main-Bolinger to Jr Ln – Belgrade Belgrade – West	UPP 0605(2) STPS 205-1(43)16	6.40%
Knife River – Belgrade	Livingston Wye-Park Street	STPP 11-1(60)54	0.00%
Knife River – Belgrade	Bozeman – E & W	IM 90-6(313)301	0.00%
Montana Lines Inc	Huffine Ln & Cobb Hill-Signal I-90 Amsterdam Signal	STPP 50-2(76)83 IM STWD (055)	0.00%
Nelcon Inc <i>Quality Landscape Seeding</i>	7 KM East of Windham-East	NH-HSIP 57-2(24)47	0.42%
Oftedal Construction Inc	Slide Repair – E of Lame Deer	NH 37-2(31)52	0.27%
Riverside Contracting Inc – Msla <i>Crooked Fork Fencing Highway Specialties</i>	I-15 Augusta Interchange – Craig	IM 15-4(129)229	4.32%
Riverside Contracting Inc – Msla <i>JCT Construction Arrow Striping</i>	Slide Repair – 3m NE of Nashua	STPS 438-1(18)1	7.14%
Riverside Sand & Gravel Inc <i>JCT Construction</i>	Battlefield Int Fld Rpr	IM-SFCI 90-9(116)506	0.16%
Schellinger Construction Co Inc <i>Fencecrafters-Helena</i>	Helena Valley Canal Br – Custer Ave Custer Interchange-Helena	BR 5802(15)	0.66%
Sletten Construction Company <i>Gaston Engineering</i>	Wm Springs Ck-5m SW Hilger	BR 43-1(34)10	1.32%
Sletten Construction Company <i>JCT Construction</i>	Structures – NE of Mildred	BR 9040(13)	0.43%
Tamietti Construction Co <i>Gaston Engineering Mueller Consulting Land Survey JCT Construction</i>	Musselshell R-2 KM NE Cushman	BR 9019(12)	14.9%
United Materials of Great Falls Inc <i>Highway Specialties</i>	2002-10 th Ave So/Fox Farm Rd	HSIP 60-2(69)96	7.51%
Wickens Construction Inc <i>Arrow Striping</i>	11 Km N of Harlowton-North	NH 63-1(12)7	0.67%
Average Participation			1.28%

Does your business card pass the trash test?

Taken from About.com

Your business card is often the first impression a potential client has with your company. The business card design and message will ultimately determine whether it gets thrown in the trash or filed for contact later. Reach in your wallet and pull out your business card to see if your card will pass or be trashed.

Size: Does your business card conform to the traditional size of 3.5" by 2"? Anything greater will not fit in wallets or most business card holders. End result trash. **Paper Quality:** Is your business card design of professional quality or is it flimsy with perforated edges? Cheap cards are trashed. **Ink:** Drop some liquid on your business card. If the ink runs, it's in the trash. **Color Test:** Colorful cards can add to your professional image. Too much color can be detracting. Trash your card if it is black and white or has more than 3 colors unless it's a photograph. **Message Design:** Your business card should clearly tell people what you do and offer a meaningful benefit. No message adds confusion so your card ends up in the trash. **Image Match:** Your business card design should match your business image. If you're a designer, then the card should be creative. If your card is out of synch with your image, time to toss it. **Font Size:** Is your card crammed with information? White space on the card will make it easier to absorb your message. If you have a lot to say, add it to the back of the business card. Is the print so tiny you have to squint to see it? This one is heading for the trash. **Contact Information:** Your clients or potential clients should have as many means as possible to contact you based on their preference. Your business card design should include: voicemail, phone, fax, email, and website. Lack of contact information puts your card in the trash.

You only have one chance to make a great first impression. Make sure you invest in the best business card design you can afford. The business card is your introduction to a client, for the low cost per card that is money well spent.

MDT Civil Rights Bureau Directory

Wendy Stewart DBE Program Manager/Certifications	westewart@mt.gov	(406)444-6337
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Andy Hyatt-Marcucci Compliance Technician	ahyattmarcucci@mt.gov	(406)444-6331
Alice Flesch ADA Coordinator	aflesch@mt.gov	(406)444-9229
Bill Anderson Title VI & EEO Compliance Specialist	bianderson@mt.gov	(406)444-6334
Kathy Terrio EEO & Labor Compliance Specialist	kterrio@mt.gov	(406)444-9270
Patti McCubbins Civil Rights Bureau Chief	pmccubbins@mt.gov	(406)444-6042

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NOVEMBER



Take a class anywhere, any time with the **Small Business Training Network (SBTN)**. The SBTN is a virtual campus offering online courses, publications and other forms of technical assistance. Courses are self-paced and take about 30 minutes to complete.

Some classes they have available include:

Strategies for Growth
Construction Safety & OSHA Compliance
IRS Resources for Small Business Owners
Recordkeeping

Access these and more at:

<http://www.sba.gov/category/navigation-structure/counseling-training>

December

12/1	TechRanch After-Hours Networking Bozeman Pub 317 at 321 E Main After-hours networking event to meet and mingle with TechRanch http://techranch.org staff, entrepreneurs and other business and community leaders. RSVP: techranch@techranch.org
	Montana Business Assistance Connection (MBAC)
12/13	* How to Start a New Business
12/20	* How to Prepare a Business Plan
12/27	* ABC's of Marketing Contact MBAC at 447-1510 or visit the web site for more information at www.mbac.biz
	Montana Contractors' Association (MCA)
12/1	* Legal Issues for Construction Industry
12/8,9	* ACI Flatwork Finisher
12/15,16	* ACI Field Testing Technician Contact MCA at 442-4162 or visit the web site for more information at www.mtagc.org/training

ON-LINE Training

Montana Small Business Development Center Offers On-line training for FREE

- **Starting Your Business**
 - **Developing a Business Plan**
 - **Analyze your Competition**
 - **Creating a Strategic Plan**
- **Managing Your Finances**
 - **Preparing a Cash Budget**
 - **Managing Your Cash Flow**
 - **Partners and Investors**
- **Foundations of Marketing**
 - **Pricing Products & Service**
 - **Building Your Brand**
 - **Building a Web Site**

Contact anyone of the SBDC's at 847-2747 or visit the web site at

<http://sbdc.mt.gov/onlinetraining.mcp>