



EXPERTS TONY GATTARI

15 TOP TIPS TO SAVE MONEY IN YOUR BUSINESS

“The best scrutiny of costs comes from employees, who quickly pick up on any abuse or wastage – especially money.”

The author is founder and Chief Energy Officer of Achievers Group. He is a much-in-demand, passionate professional speaker, business educator, author and corporate, business advisor. He has worked with over 140 businesses around the world.

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Controlling costs is an essential business discipline. Here are my 15 favourite ways to save money.

- 1. Good processes** – When setting up your business system ensure that your processes don't create one way to update business records and another way to do things like comply with accounting and taxation regulations. Have a system that works for the business by touching each piece of paper once and use electronic interactions with banks, suppliers, customers so that manhandling of documents isn't required.
- 2. Be on time** – Time is money to everyone, both management and entry-level staff. So if you say you are going to meet someone at a certain time, be there. If you can't make it on time, ring them to reschedule and stay honest.
- 3. Book your own flights** – The cheapest flight is not always the most convenient flight, so always book your own flights so you can make the decision about convenience vs. cost. On average you will be well ahead.
- 4. Fire fast** – Stop procrastinating about removing poor quality staff. 'Free up their future' and save a heap of money.
- 5. Ask your team to fight waste** – The best scrutiny of costs comes from employees who see any abuse or wastage of valuable resources – especially money. Assistants, clerks and accounts payable staff can be resentful of obvious abuse of company funds by their managers when they are denied the little things that help them do their jobs. Consider a policy of allowing any employee to present a business case regarding any wastage of resources, including alternative solutions and the cost savings that will result from a change. Give your team an incentive: 10 percent or 20 percent of the cost savings they generate works well. This kind of scheme also pays off with increased employee trust.
- 6. Ask your team for better ways to do business** – Ask your employees whether they know of a better value way to do something. Ask for ideas that aren't just cheaper, but also more efficient. Give your employees hints and tips on marketing every now and then. This inspires them to think on their own.
- 7. Cut IT costs** – Two of your biggest expenses are hardware and software. You can save a bundle on both by exploring free software and second-hand hardware. You'd be surprised at the quality and variety of no-cost or low-cost alternatives out there.
- 8. Always behave like a start-up** – Remember your start-up phase. When just starting in business you juggle money and find alternative ways around spending all the time, as your budget is so small. Reliving those days and practices can save you at any time.
- 9. Write your own training courses** – A great way to save money is to bring development of training packages in-house. By harnessing expertise from your own team, you can develop others' skills without paying extra for it.
- 10. Set terms of trade up front** – I have found people say they have constant cashflow problems. We have always been up front with customers by setting terms of trade, as this helps to spot potential slow payers before you start doing business.
- 11. Make your own website** – Instead of paying someone to create a website for you, try to do it yourself first. There are many DIY websites out there, get one with a free trial so you can get the hang of it before committing and if you don't like it, it doesn't matter as you haven't spent a cent.
- 12. Don't read irrelevant email** – Don't read email promotions that do not contribute to your ability to service your customers' needs.
- 13. Work from anywhere** – Set up remote access for all your employees and provide them with a salary sacrifice laptop purchase plan. Employees will be more happy and more productive with the flexibility a laptop computer provides.
- 14. Sign your own cheques** – Don't delegate cheque-signing and electronic payments. Fraud is prevalent and losses can be significant, not to mention unpleasant to deal with if is someone you trusted perpetrates a fraud.
- 15. Sell more to your current customers** – Use the sale of one product to sell another. Every first sale is an exercise in, and proof of, trust development. Once trust has been established, follow-on sales are far less expensive. Get two sales over the line and you have a client, not a customer. Spend time creating attractive special offers to buyers and have your despatch team pack the offer tailored to what the new customer bought. Remember when you got a new gizmo in the mail? It's the moment you want to consolidate and hold on to the joy of acquisition. It's also the time people are most apt to repurchase, so make your offer time limited, make it attractive and make them feel special as only you can with a new customer! **mb**