



The Voice of Your Customer

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Starting a business can be an overwhelming task! In addition to being a subject matter expert, entrepreneurs must also develop their business savvy, organizational skills and procurement acumen. Studies show that as many as 50% of all new businesses fail in the first twelve months of operation. Regrettably, the statistics for minority and women owned businesses are even higher.

Although there is a great deal of documentation designed to support start up organizations, every entrepreneur has different challenges with varying degrees of resources. Through our professional and community involvement, *The Voice of Your Customer* routinely assists small businesses to develop and implement marketing and business plans using a *Checklist of Success* that includes:

- ✓ Identify core competencies and realistic target market
- ✓ Develop a networking strategy, elevator speeches and business prospecting opportunities
- ✓ Create media kit to include brochures, press releases and stationary
- ✓ Establish telecommunications networks, data security plans and a web presence
- ✓ Obtain required compliances, insurances, certifications and memberships
- ✓ Complete competitive analyses and needs assessments
- ✓ Secure customer references and recommendations
- ✓ Outline leadership and employee training opportunities
- ✓ Establish internal policies, procedures and required statements
- ✓ Select vendors, strategic partners and support services

Although these tasks can be lengthy and sometimes costly, successful implementation of the *Circle of Success* has resulted in increased profitability, recognition and extended contracts for many small and emerging businesses. The key to success is to spend sufficient time “in your business” and “on your business.”

Crystal L. Kendrick is the President of The Voice of Your Customer, a consulting firm specializing in survey research, market assessments, business trainings and social marketing campaigns named the 2007 SCOMBC Emerging MBE of the Year. For more information, visit www.thevoiceofyourcustomer.com.



Do you offer EXCEPTIONAL customer experiences...or simply good products and services?