

Business

Want economic improvement? Make it happen

Take a leadership role in improving your bottom line

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by Mary Bruce, For The Charlotte Post

Reading the business news recently, I was reminded of a famous Yogi Berra quote, “The future ain’t what it used to be!” Consumers are growing more pessimistic because things haven’t gotten better fast enough. Businesses are holding off on commitments due to uncertainty about the future of government regulations. The main product of 2-plus difficult years seems to be a really bad economic attitude.

In reality, the future never has been what it used to be. In 2008, our future was to fall off a big economic cliff – we just didn’t expect it. Do you remember days of wondering whether your bank was going to fail? Whether your 401(k) balance was going to drop all the way to \$0? Luckily, Yogi was right – today’s future isn’t what it was two years ago.

We all face uncertainty every year, every month, every day. If entrepreneurs waited until all the signs were positive, new enterprises would never get off the ground. Confidence comes from forward motion – visioning something positive and taking action to make it happen. In the case of economic activity, things can get much better if everyone makes just a few small changes. Unfortunately, too many are waiting to see if others have taken the plunge first.

Is your organization taking a leadership role in economic improvement? Find out with the following quiz. Check each item that applies to you and your team:

We demonstrate our confidence in the future by making appropriate commitments to our enterprise:

1. Investment in infrastructure upgrades that will improve our efficiency and competitiveness.
2. Expansion of our skill base and capabilities through training associates and/or hiring new talent.
3. Time and funds dedicated to refresh our marketing presence and build our brand.
4. Initiatives focused on the development of new products, services or programs.

We maintain positive energy and contribute to our business community’s upbeat mood with:

5. Measurement systems that focus more on short-term gains than long-term losses.
6. A vehicle by which all employees can tell the entire organization about their “wins.”
7. Proactive distribution of information on others’ successes and improving economic indicators.

We support our customers’ participation in economic recovery by:

8. Conducting marketing research to clearly understand how their needs have changed.
9. Creating lower cost offerings or more efficient ways to gain value from our products/services.
10. Supporting their positive mood by sharing good news, humor and fun times together.

Scoring: Give yourself one point for every check above, and then see which role your organization is taking in making the economy better.

8 to 10 – Leader. You are out ahead of the pack and pulling your weight! Thanks!

5 to 7 – Contributor. Improve your momentum by adding even more initiatives.

0 to 4 – Observer. You risk being left behind when the overall economy gains steam.

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