

TIPS *from* LauberCFOs

Thrivers VS. Survivors

I am sure as the economy continues to rebound, many business feel like survivors. They made it through some difficult times and are breathing a sigh of relief. In that context it might be good to be a survivor.

On the other hand, over the years we have observed that while there are many businesses that fit into a survivor category there are a few that are not just survivors but “Thrivers”

Here is a list of characteristics we see separating the “Thrivers” from just survivors.

Sales & Marketing

- Create value for customers by solving problems.
- Provide information to customers along with the product or service.
- Know and capitalize on their competitive advantage.
- Diversify products and customers.
- Alert to new ideas, trends, competitors and technology.
- Calculated response to select opportunities.

Finance & Administration

- Timely internal information.

- In-depth knowledge of costs.
- Understand the relative profit contribution of different jobs, products and customers.
- Projections and other metrics used to determine need for corrective action.
- Understand impact of decisions on cash and profits.

General Management

- Maintain a long range strategic perspective.
- Embrace the concept of continuous improvement.
- Willingness to take calculated risks.
- Attract and retain good people - Hire smart then empower.
- Decisive leaders who set the expectation for success.
- Able to react quickly to problems, opportunities and changing conditions.
- Foster a sense of partnership with customers, suppliers and other stakeholders.

Not every “thriving” company will exhibit all of these characteristics and I am sure there are a few that we have missed. However, I am confident a company that follows this road map will meet with success.

Guiding Principles

- An initial meeting with a prospective client, to determine how we might be of service, is always free.
- We will always specify our fee arrangement in advance.
- We will only accept assignments where real benefits can be provided.
- We will disclose any current or prior relationships with competitors.
- We will always put the client's interest ahead of our own.
- The experience of our people makes a difference.

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