

# Jump-Starting Your Business

**Are you feeling beaten down by the news?** Are changes in the marketplace, labor costs and even availability of labor starting to affect how you operate and more importantly your view of your business future? So now you find yourself at a crossroad ... how can you get back some of the energy to move forward — one direction or another?

Some of the things that might help you start moving positively again are:

- Attend a field day at a university or open house to see new plants. This is always exciting if you are a plant person and new always presents an opportunity.
- Go to an educational meeting — not just for hours but for new ideas. Get your people out there to meet others and exchange ideas. This may be even more important than learning new things.
- Find a business retreat and attend, you usually come back with new information.
- Take some time every week to sit down with your employees in a relaxed way to share good news — whether it is in your business or the industry as a whole.
- Reward employees with new ideas on solving a problem with a special gift card. Implement incentives, and set goals for employees or your company as a whole. Set up different reward amounts for the different goals. Your employees are your eyes and ears out in the greenhouse/nursery. Investing in them has proven to be rewarding for both you and your employee.

## FRESH PERSPECTIVE

If you have vacation time, take it. Come back to work refreshed. Make sure your employees have time off to refresh themselves too. This could be especially important during critical times like spring, holidays like Easter, Mother's Day and end-of-the-year celebrations.

Maybe start a new procedure by walking around your business and looking for things that need repairing. Once fixed you might start saving money every month, and that's always a good feeling. I often notice leaking hoses, poor weed control and large puddles (even lakes) full of algae. All of these things promote diseases and insect pests. Just keeping these

kinds of areas clean will reduce insecticide/fungicide usage and save you money.

Look at your greenhouse water filters, do they need replacing? I've been in some greenhouses and seen these filters so clogged up that the water is not flowing down inside, it's flowing down over the side because of algae clogging. You have lost all the efficiency of the filters and they are now most likely costing you more money every month to operate. Look at your air conditioner/cooler filters, do they need changing? It's really not very good when you have hot or warm air blowing out.

**You might find you could start saving money by eliminating something you don't need anymore.**

Look into all the light bulbs, are any of them burned out? You may want to change over to the newer type of bulbs that take half the wattage, although they can be costly.

Doing a lot of little things makes everyone feel better when their work area looks clean and neat. And at the same time everyone functions better.

It might be a good idea to work "on" your business instead of in your business. Sit down with your area/department managers and go over everything from A to Z. You might find you could start saving money by eliminating something you don't need anymore. Look into your insurance plans, what would a plan change do to provide a better experience for your employees and lower your overall cost? Find out if you're receiving the maximum discounts available. If not, find out what you need to do to get those.

No doubt you may find you have to spend money to get things up to par, but in the end you will start saving on a monthly basis, hence annually.

If you don't have one, think about having a clean up day — company wide, all departments. All employees on deck, take a couple hours. When's the last time the front reception had a good vacuuming and dusting? After it's all done, isn't it a good feeling to look around and see everything clean?

Finally, it's proven that if you act positively even when you don't feel like it, you end up feeling better. If you feel better, then people around you feel better. Keep in mind that bad attitudes or negative feelings only draw more bad. Go forth positively and good should follow you into the future. [gpn](#)



*Chase Agricultural Consulting, LLC was formed in 2011 by Ann (A.R.) Chase and Mike Zemke. Ann has more than 35 years experience in research, diagnostics and practical consulting in plant pathology. She has been retired from the University of Florida since 1994 but remains on staff as a Professor Emeritus. Mike holds an Associate of Applied Science in manufacturing drafting and started his education in horticulture when he and Ann were married in 1995. He specializes in communications of all sorts within the industry.*