

MEET THE EXPERTS

Alan Backman, president of Backman Foundry in Provo
Carin Maurer, CFO for Family First Federal Credit Union in Orem
Debra Lund, spokeswoman for FranklinCovey in Salt Lake City
Jeff Rust, president of Corporate Alliance in Provo
Jon Startup, president of Startup Candy Factory in Provo
Kerry Patterson, co-founder of VitalSmarts in Provo
Phil Rowley, president of South Ridge Farms in Santaquin

4

Be willing to play Mad Hatter.

There will likely be a time in your company history where you will be required to wear a lot of hats — office manager, accountant, marketing consultant, computer technician. Embrace the challenge.

5

Keep up with the Joneses and their technology.

It isn't necessary to rush out and melt plastic on the latest and greatest. But it is crucial to stay on top of advances and improvements that will benefit your business.

6

Encourage freethinking.

Companies looking for a competitive edge should create a forum where employees can contribute ideas for improvement without fear, says Kerry Patterson, author of the New York Times bestseller, "Crucial Conversations: Tools for Talking When the Stakes are High."

"Having the skills to get the best ideas out becomes a competitive edge in many organizations and gives them longevity they couldn't have imagined," Patterson says.

7

Build customer trust.

Do what you say you're going to do, when you say you're going to do it. 'Nuf said.

8

Be nice to the neighbors.

You don't have to bring your neighbors cookies or invite them to a company barbecue, but it is important to play nice with the businesses (or residents) next door, Backman says.

"When this facility was first commissioned, downtown Provo was a ways away," he says. "Now, we're in the middle of a residential area. So we found a process that is environmentally friendly and doesn't smell, and we stuck with it."

The trade-off for being a courteous company? No one will want to run you (or your business) out of town.

9

Create corporate culture.

Your office needn't resemble the set of "Cheers," but it is nice to work where everybody knows your name. Consider company retreats, parties or contests if your office could use a little more conversation.

10

Always do your best.

Sure, it's trite, but it's true.

"What really has kept us in business all these years ... is that we focus on producing the best possible product we can," Backman says.

11

Just say no.

Have the discipline to say no to opportunities that won't work for you.



This Old Startup

Founded in 1874, Startup Candy Factory has survived deaths, wars and the Depression. If you want to last a long time, be prepared for adversity, President Jon Startup says.