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THRIVE

MAGAZINE

Subscribing to business success



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recession-proofing
your business**

**Upskilling staff: An
investment, not a cost**

**Uplevel your online
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6 PRO TIPS ON RECESSION-PROOFING YOUR BUSINESS

The word “recession” can deliver a paralyzing jolt of fear to the body and brain, especially if you haven’t prepared your business for an economic pullback. While slowdowns are part of the normal business cycle, you can control your business’s readiness to ride it out—and even come out stronger on the other side. Don’t think of recession-proofing like digging a bunker. Think of it more like a smart business foundation remodel: tighten what’s loose, shore up what’s weak, and build in flexibility so you’re ready for whatever comes next.



1. Know your cash position

If you do nothing else, be crystal clear on what's coming in, what's going out, and how long your business can run if sales dip. Here are three ways to gain clarity:

- Track your monthly revenue, expenses, and profit (or loss) for visibility of your true runway. Aim for at least 6–12 months of expenses covered between cash in the bank and reliable income.
- Pull the last three months of bank and credit card statements and bucket every expense into fixed (rent, salaries, software) and variable (contractors, ads, supplies), so you can see what's essential and what's flexible should you need to trim costs quickly.
- If you're not yet consistently profitable, use this data to create a simple plan to cut nonessential spending, improve collections, and look for quick wins to boost margin before the economy forces your hand.

2. Guard your margins (even when it stings)

Top-line growth feels fun, but margins are what keep the lights on in a downturn. We've got suggestions on how to protect those margins:

- Audit your top five expenses and ask yourself: "If revenue dropped 20% next month, what could I reduce, renegotiate, or pause without breaking the business?" Then make at least one proactive change now, instead of waiting for a crisis.
- Take a thoughtful look at your team structure. Consider where roles could be part-time, contractor-based, or consolidated when people naturally move on, rather than rushing to rehire.
- Review your pricing to be sure rising costs aren't quietly eroding your margins. Small, strategic price increases or restructuring (like packages or retainers) can give you more breathing room.

3. Make revenue more predictable

When the economy gets shaky, one-and-done projects are usually the first to disappear. What steadies a business is recurring revenue. There are several ways to achieve that goal:

- Look for ways to turn one-off work into ongoing support: retainers, maintenance plans, monthly service bundles, or annual agreements with incentives for paying upfront.
- Build simple upsell paths. For example, when you wrap a project, offer follow-up optimization, ongoing check-ins, or a "lite" support package so you're not always starting from zero.
- Map your current offers and ask: "Where could I add a subscription, membership, or care plan version of what we already do?" Even one dependable stream can smooth out the bumps.

4. Double down on relationships

In tough times, numbers matter—but relationships often decide who survives. Here are a few ways to incorporate existing ties:

- Make client and vendor check-ins a weekly habit. A quick call or email to ask how they're doing, what they're worried about, and how you can help will keep you top of mind when they're making cuts or extending grace.
- Treat vendors like partners, not just price tags. Any goodwill you build now can translate into extended terms, referrals, or flexibility if cash gets tight later.
- With your best clients, lean into being a trusted guide. Share ideas, resources, and proactive suggestions so you're seen as essential, not optional.

5. Add revenue streams—without losing your focus

A slowdown in one channel hurts less if you have another you can lean on. Just be clear that you don't want to scatter your energy everywhere. Here's how to keep your streams manageable:

- Brainstorm one or two adjacent offers that use skills and systems you already have—a lower-cost version of your core service, a DIY resource, a workshop, or a new segment that's less sensitive to downturns.
- Pilot small. Test your new offer with a handful of existing or warm clients, gather feedback, and refine before you invest more time and budget.
- Keep your main engine protected. Your new streams should support and stabilize your core business, not distract you from it.

6. Tighten operations and use smarter marketing

In uncertain seasons, messy operations and random marketing are luxuries you can't afford. Some suggestions to keep things organized:

- Clean up systems so invoices go out on time, cash is collected promptly, and key tasks don't fall through the cracks. Even small process upgrades can free up capacity and reduce costly oversights.
- Instead of slashing marketing across the board, shift dollars toward the channels with the highest ROI and pull back on low-performing experiments until you're on steadier ground.
- Document the essentials—how you deliver your services, key workflows, and who owns what—so your business is less fragile if you need to run leaner for a season.



Recession-proofing isn't about fear; it's about steady, deliberate moves that make your business more resilient every month. Start with one small action this week—tighten your numbers, tweak an offer, or schedule three check-ins—and let those small steps create the kind of foundation that helps your business not just survive a downturn, but thrive through it and beyond.



UPSKILLING YOUR TEAM: AN INVESTMENT, NOT A COST

Upskilling team members isn't just a simple line item on your budget. It's one of the smartest long-term investments you can make—both for your team and your business. Spring into action this year with a training strategy focused on helping your staff (and your business) grow, excel, and succeed over the long term.

Why upskilling matters now

Your team already shows up with talent, experience, and heart—that's why you hired them in the first place. But if you only ever draw from the skills they had on day one, you cap your company's growth and limit innovation. Upskilling keeps your business nimble, competitive, and ready for whatever tech or market curveball comes next.

When you treat learning as an ongoing practice (not a one-and-done workshop), you help employees develop new strengths, solve bigger problems, and feel more confident in the value they bring to the table. That confidence fuels better ideas, stronger execution, and a culture that can handle change without burning out.

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Upskilling: more than just "more skills"

Think of upskilling as a full-body workout for your organization—not simply a quick fix for a single weak muscle. True upskilling includes:

- Technical training so your team can keep pace with the tools, platforms, and processes your industry relies on.
- Human skills like communication, critical thinking, adaptability, and emotional intelligence—the same qualities that make for transformational leaders and the "people you want in the room" when things get tricky.

When both sides grow together, you get a more agile, collaborative, and creative workforce—and that shows up in better service, smoother operations, and happier clients.

Investment vs. mere cost

It's easy to see training as just another cost center, but that's short-term thinking. It deserves a prominent and long-term place in your plans, because upskilling your team fuels the growth of your business in countless ways:

- Increases retention because people stay where they feel seen, supported, and developed.
- Helps you future-proof operations by building a team that can flex with new tech, regulations, and customer expectations.
- Reduces the indirect costs of constant rehiring, onboarding, and lost productivity when people leave.

Employees notice when leadership puts real time and budget behind their growth. That sense of "my company is in my corner" builds loyalty and motivates people to go the extra mile for the business.

Build a learning-first culture

The most effective upskilling strategies don't live in a single training day; they're baked into everyday work life. Building a learning-focused culture brings with it many benefits:

- Normalizes asking questions, trying new things, and learning (without blame) from what didn't work.
- Encourages knowledge-sharing through mentoring, peer coaching, lunch-and-learns, and cross-team projects.
- Puts communication, feedback, and adaptability at the center of how teams operate, not just on performance-review checklists.

When learning is part of everyday operations, the whole organization becomes more resilient—and a lot more fun to work in.

Leadership's role in setting the tone

Leaders are the pace-setters. So, if you want a learning culture, it has to start at the top:

- Lead by example by showing up prepared, curious, and open to feedback—the same things you'd ask of your team.
- Talk openly about rapid changes and why continuous learning is the way to stay relevant, together.
- Back up the talk with real support such as a budget for training, time blocked for courses and workshops, partnerships with learning platforms, and space to practice new skills without fear of "getting it wrong."

Training thrives in cultures where leaders show they care about it. They recognize effort, celebrate growth, and make it clear that smart risks and honest mistakes are part of the path forward.

Investing in your team is about so much more than advancing individual talents. It's about instilling a life-long learning mindset, building a culture of innovation and collaboration, and augmenting the stability and success of the entire organization.





UPLEVEL YOUR ONLINE PRESENCE WITH GOOGLE BUSINESS PROFILE

A Google Business Profile (GBP) is one of the easiest, highest-impact ways for a business to show up where customers are already looking: Google. When your GBP is set up and optimized, it can drive more calls, clicks, and foot traffic—without costing a dime.

If you're not leveraging the power of Google Business Profile to get seen, heard, and to differentiate your brand, now is the time.

What is Google Business Profile?

Google Business Profile is a free tool that enables you to control how your business appears on Google Search, Maps, and even Shopping. With one dashboard, you can manage key details like your business name, address, phone number, website, hours, photos, services, and posts. Even service-area businesses (like plumbers or cleaners) can use GBP to appear in local searches, not just brick-and-mortar locations.

Why it's valuable

A well-built GBP delivers real, measurable value for businesses of all sizes. Some of the biggest benefits include:

- Better local visibility: A complete, verified profile helps you show up in the "3-pack," the top three local results and map where customers are most likely to click.
- Built-in trust and social proof: Ratings, reviews, and photos make you look more credible and can strongly influence buying decisions.
- More actions, fewer clicks: People can call, get directions, visit your website, or message you directly from your profile, which shortens the path from search to sale.
- A free marketing tool: You can post updates, offers, events, and photos regularly, giving you a simple way to keep your audience informed without paid ads. Google's social function also allows you to post anything you would on other channels like Instagram or Facebook.
- Useful insights: GBP shows how people find you, what they search for, and what actions they take (calls, direction requests, website visits), helping you refine your marketing.



How to find and claim your GBP

One of the most common questions we get is: “How do I even find or claim my Google Business Profile?” To help, we’ve created this concise step-by-step guide.

Step 1: Check if a profile already exists

- Go to Google (or Google Maps) and search your exact business name and city (add address if needed).
- Often, a profile has automatically been created by Google Maps for your business, but has not yet been linked to your Google account.
- If you locate a GBP for your organization, click it and look for options like “Own this business?” or “Claim this business.” If a GBP does not exist, you can create one.

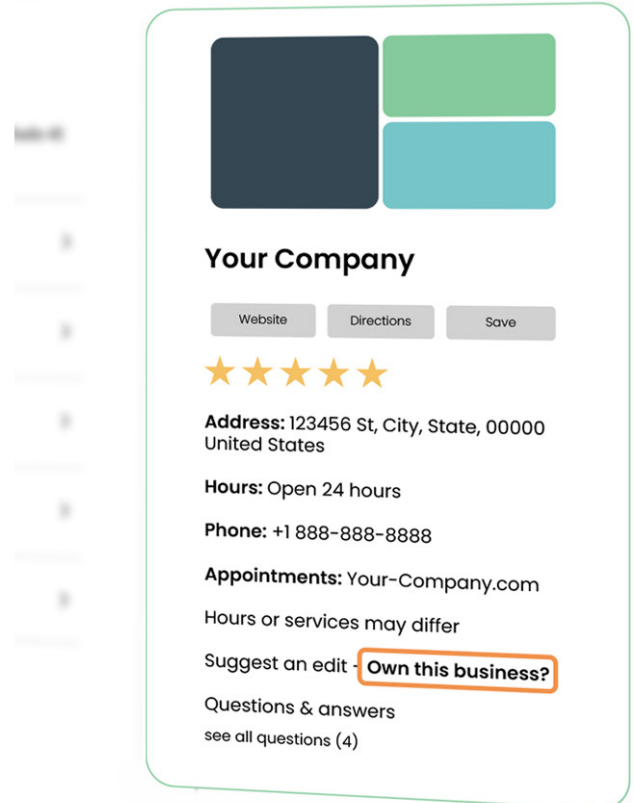
Step 2: Claim or create your profile

- Go to business.google.com or google.com/business and click “Manage now” or “Add your business to Google.”
- Enter your business name and choose the correct category.
- If Google shows an existing listing that’s yours, select it and choose “Request access” or “Claim this business.”
- If no listing appears, continue adding your business details (address or service area, phone, website, hours).

Step 3: Verify your business

- Choose a verification method (postcard, phone, email, video, or Search Console—options vary by business).
- Enter the code or complete the steps Google provides.
- Once verified, finish filling out your profile with photos, a clear description, and accurate information.

Google Business Profile offers a powerful, free way to stand out in local (and even long-distance) search, earn trust, and make it easier for customers to contact or visit you. By claiming and optimizing your profile—and keeping it updated with fresh info and responses to reviews—you turn casual searchers into loyal, paying customers.





SUBSCRIBING TO BUSINESS SUCCESS

From streaming and SaaS to wellness boxes and memberships, subscription models are now a major growth engine for businesses of all sizes. If you've been thinking about a subscription model—or layering it onto what you already sell—this guide walks you through what a subscription-based business is, why it's a powerful model, and how to decide if it's a smart move for your organization.

What is it?

At its simplest, a subscription business is one where customers pay a recurring fee (monthly, quarterly, or annually) for continued access to a product or service, instead of making one-off purchases.

The subscription-based model now spans everything from digital platforms like Spotify and Netflix to software, fitness, curated boxes, and even traditional services that have shifted to membership or plan structures.



Why are subscriptions so popular?

The subscription economy has exploded, with global subscription revenues projected in the hundreds of billions of dollars and expected to keep growing strongly through 2030. For small and midsized businesses, that growth reflects several core benefits:

- **Predictable cash flow:** Recurring payments make revenue more steady and forecastable, which helps with budgeting, hiring decisions, and inventory planning.
- **Stronger customer relationships:** Subscriptions create built-in, ongoing touchpoints, so you stay in front of customers regularly instead of starting from scratch with every sale.
- **Upsell and cross-sell potential:** Because you interact with subscribers more often, you can introduce higher-tier plans, add-on services, or complementary products that increase revenue per customer.
- **Lower acquisition cost over time:** While it may be expensive to acquire a subscriber initially, their recurring payments and higher lifetime value can more than offset those upfront marketing and sales costs.
- **Better data and personalization:** Subscription usage and engagement patterns give you rich data to tailor offers, refine pricing, and improve the overall experience.

Is a subscription model right for your business?

Not every business needs a subscription, but there are clear signs it might be a good fit. Use these questions as a quick gut check:

- **Do you (or could you) offer ongoing value?**
Subscriptions work best when customers have a continuing need—like recurring services, replenishable products, or content that’s updated regularly.
- **Is there real demand?**
If customers already come back repeatedly for the same thing, or say they would love a “set it and forget it” option, a subscription structure may make sense. Surveys and simple market research can confirm interest.
- **Does the math work?**
You’ll need to factor in product or service delivery, technology, marketing, support, and fulfillment to see if recurring payments at your target price can deliver healthy margins.
- **Can you handle recurring billing and support?**
A subscription model requires reliable systems for automated payments, renewals, failed-payment handling, and customer account management.
- **Is it scalable?**
If demand jumps, can you increase production, service capacity, or staffing without costs spiraling at the same rate?
- **Can you adapt your offer?**
You may need to repackage existing services into tiers, bundles, or memberships that deliver ongoing value rather than one-time outcomes.
- **Can you keep quality consistent?**
Subscribers expect a reliable, repeatable experience. If quality slips, churn usually follows.



Making the shift to subscriptions

If you answered “yes” to most of these questions, layering in a subscription could be a smart next step for your business. Before fully committing, however, consider a few insights:

- **Start small with a pilot:**
Test a limited-scope subscription or a single tier with a subset of customers so you can validate demand, pricing, and operations before rolling it out widely.
- **Watch the right metrics:**
Track churn, average revenue per user (ARPU), customer lifetime value, and acquisition costs so you know whether your subscription offer is actually driving sustainable growth.
- **Iterate based on feedback:**
Use customer input and behavior data to refine what’s included, how you price, and how often you engage with subscribers to keep the offer valuable over time.

Handled thoughtfully, a subscription model can be a powerful way to build steadier revenue, deeper loyalty, and a more resilient business in 2026 and beyond.



GET THE DIRT ON EARTH DAY

Every year on April 22, people around the world come together for Earth Day to show some love to our planet and take real action to protect it. Today, Earth Day continues to rally more than one billion people globally around environmental awareness and sustainability.

Dig into more facts about Earth Day—how it all started, the UN’s take—and get insight on how to celebrate it at home and at work.

Digging into Earth Day

Think of Earth Day as a worldwide check-in with our home planet—a chance to focus on cleaner air, healthier water, thriving wildlife, and smarter ways to live and work. It’s all about moving from simply being eco-conscious to actually changing habits, systems, and communities so the environment can not only recover, but thrive.

How Earth Day got started

After a catastrophic oil spill off the coast of Santa Barbara in 1969, U.S. Senator Gaylord Nelson pushed for a national day of environmental teach-ins to make pollution and ecosystem damage impossible to ignore. That first Earth Day took place on April 22, 1970, and sparked landmark environmental protections in the U.S., including the Clean Air Act, the Clean Water Act, and the Endangered Species Act.

From one country to worldwide

By 1990, Earth Day had evolved into a truly global movement with an international campaign that mobilized about 200 million people across 141 countries to stand up for the planet. Today, Earth Day is observed in more than 190 countries and is considered one of the largest civic events in the world, connecting local action to global impact. The United Nations formally joined in on the celebration in 2000 and, in 2009, the UN General Assembly designated April 22 as “International Mother Earth Day.” The name emphasizes our deep interdependence with Earth’s ecosystems and calls on every country to promote harmony with nature, not just short-term economic growth.

Quick Earth Day facts

More than 1 billion people now participate in Earth Day activities each year, from neighborhood cleanups to policy advocacy.

The official Earth Day song, “Earth Day Anthem,” was written by Indian poet Abhay Kumar in 2013 and is used around the globe at Earth Day events.

Google rolled out its first Earth Day Doodle in 2001, and continues to feature Earth-themed designs each April 22 to raise awareness.





IN THE MOMENT

Easy ways to celebrate at home

You don't have to overhaul your entire lifestyle to make Earth Day count—small shifts add up fast when millions of people do them together. Try one or two of these at home:

- Head outside and pick up trash in your neighborhood, along a trail, or at a local park.
- Hang laundry to dry in the fresh air instead of running the dryer.
- Buy seasonal foods from nearby farms, markets, or Community Supported Agriculture (also known as CSAs) to cut down on transport and packaging.
- Go geocaching or take a nature walk and learn the names of local plants and birds.
- Plant native flowers, grasses, or shrubs to create a pollinator-friendly patch for bees and butterflies.
- Change to reusable or low-waste kitchen and cleaning products to reduce plastic and chemicals.

Simple ways to celebrate at work

Workplaces can turn Earth Day into a team effort that boosts morale and does some real good at the same time. Here are a few easy ideas to get started:

- Plant native trees or shrubs around your building or in nearby community spaces.
- Organize a lunch-and-learn or workshop on sustainability topics like energy use, recycling, or climate action.
- Set up or refresh an office recycling and composting system with clear, simple signs.
- Host a fundraiser, volunteer day, or donation drive for an environmental nonprofit your team cares about.
- Plan a walking meeting outdoors or a group outing to a local trail, park, or waterfall to reconnect with nature.

Earth Day 2026 gives us another chance to remember that every action—no matter how small—can help restore and protect the only home we have.

Rights women gained over time

- Until the Equal Credit Opportunity Act passed in 1974, many women couldn't get a credit card in their own name without a man (often a husband or father) cosigning, which limited their financial independence.
- Wyoming Territory granted women the right to vote as early as 1869, but the 19th Amendment in 1920 still left many women of color blocked by discriminatory laws and practices.
- Only after the Voting Rights Act of 1965—signed by President Lyndon B. Johnson—were all women truly protected in exercising their right to vote nationwide.



Women across time: Education, work, and using their voices

- Eleanor Roosevelt held an incredible 348 press conferences exclusively for female reporters over 12 years, ensuring women in journalism had access and a platform.
- Women now make up more than half of the college-educated labor force in the U.S., a shift that began in 2019 and has held steady as women outpace men in college completion.
- Recent data shows that women's employment rates have hit record highs, with about three-quarters of women ages 25 to 54 employed in 2023—even as they continue pushing for equal pay and leadership opportunities.

Her-story is still being written every day—and chances are, you're already part of it.

