



Adapt and Thrive – Emerging Tougher from a Challenging Economy

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It seems that you can't avoid bad economic news these days. Newspapers, television and the internet are filled with stories of these challenging times and the hard choices that so many business owners are having to make. What you don't see are the positive stories of businesses that are taking this opportunity to retrench, regroup and retool to be ready to take advantage of the inevitable upturn.

Yesterday, we held a briefing for new members of the Tempe Chamber. Several of those attending had just opened their businesses. Others were from long-established firms. What they all were doing was getting back to basics. They were learning about the opportunities that surround them in the community. Making the connections that will help their businesses survive and thrive.

These are the times that challenge businesses to arrive at a new model for the future. The best of them are scrutinizing and streamlining internal processes. They are looking at the current market and market trends, and reformulating their products to meet those needs. They are cross training their staffs, developing their skills, and cultivating new leaders within their organizations.

Similarly, as individuals we need to make sure we're ready for whatever the next phase of this business cycle will look like. Dust off your networks – the fabled six degrees of separation can help you land a job, a promotion or a new client. Get out and meet new people -- enlarge your network. Ask folks how you can help them – you'll be surprised what you get in return.

Stay upbeat – people do business with people they like. Ask yourself the tough questions – where do you want to be in five years, and what's necessary for your success? Educate yourself for the future – whether it's learning about chemistry or Twitter, determine what

information you need to succeed. Do your homework – know what your prospective employer or customer needs and what you can offer them.

This, too, shall pass. And we all need to be ready for what comes next.