Andy Choi, welcome back to our Small Business Webinar Series. Each of these webinars of course will feature experts offering professional insights and ideas about coping with this current situation we're all in and how it's affecting businesses like yours. I'm excited to introduce our host and guests for today's webinar. Making a return as host today, we're lucky to have Mr. Ramon Ray once again. Ramon is an entrepreneur and an author. He's the founder of Smart Hustle Media, and he's, of course, also an excellent interviewer. Our guest for this webinar is Rieva Lesonsky. Rieva is the CEO of GrowBiz Media, and today, Rieva and Ramon will be talking about how to look at your business operations now, and how to pinpoint areas for improvement. It's going to be a really important topic as we move forward here.

So, without further ado, let's hand it over to Ramon and Rieva.

Ramon Ray

Andy, thank you so much. It's exciting to be here for another amazing Verizon Small Business Webinar Series all about keeping our business operating effectively in the new normal. Rieva, a longtime friend, a long time. I've watched your writings and insights, thanks for joining us today. As Andy said, author and CEO of GrowBiz Media. How're you feeling today, Rieva?

Rieva Lesonsky

I'm good, Ramon. How are you?

Ramon Ray

I feel fantastic. Always good talking to you. So, we'll dive into this, and again, Rieva, as I've done before, encouraging everybody, submit your questions. We're going to talk about 20 minutes, give or take. We want to hear your questions. We're here to serve you, and we hope you use the power of Twitter and tag @Rieva, tag me, @RamonRay, and definitely tag and thank Verizon Small Business Webinar Series I think on Twitter it's Verizon Business. So, let's jump right into it, Rieva.

We're talking about crafting the new normal. I think it's something many, many people talk about Rieva, but very few of us, including me, have any clue what that means? So, Rieva, for you, what does that mean, and what do we need to know about crafting the new normal?

Rieva Lesonsky

Well, I don't think you should feel bad because nobody knows what the new normal means. One thing we know, we're never going to go back to what it was if things are very different. So, a lot of people are talking about [how to] get ready for the new normal, or our friend Laurie McCabe says get ready for the new abnormal, which I think is actually pretty accurate. So, nobody knows what
that is either. So, I think this is a good opportunity for entrepreneurs and small business owners to do what they do best, which is take control and craft your own new normal. So, your future is going to be what you make of it, what you put into it. So, let's look at how you might do that.

You have to start by evaluating what your business is now, how are you doing, what's going on, and then I want you to focus on your back office operations, because those are the ones you're probably not paying too much attention to right now. You're looking at sales and marketing, but you're kind of ignoring your back office. And then apply the lessons that you're learning now, and put that into the formula, and then you'll come out with what you should do while creating your own new normal.

Ramon Ray

I like it. I think, Rieva, it's interesting because a lot of the events I go to— I know you travel across the country as well, when we were traveling, and everybody wants to know about marketing and how do I use Twitter better and all these things, which we're talking about on the Verizon Small Business Webinar Series, but I think that aspect of the back office, that core fundamental, is very important as well. Why is that so important, Rieva, that people do focus on the back office and then we'll dive into some of these back office elements.

Rieva Lesonsky

You're right, everybody pays attention to sales, marketing, and customer service, partly because those tasks are easy to measure. They're easy to monitor, you make a sale, you increase revenue, you can see it. You launch a marketing campaign, you know what the results are. You know with your customer service, are people satisfied or they not, but the back office operations, things like accounting, bookkeeping, IT, administrative, compliance, recordkeeping, support services, there's really no way to measure that. Back office operations are the ones that are not customer facing, but what they do do is support those customer facing jobs. They're the ones who are supporting marketing, supporting sales, and so that's why they're so crucial to a small business.

Ramon Ray

Yes, and I think that's why they shouldn't be ignored because I think you're right...[M]aybe this is a kind of...trivia, Rieva, for those who don't know, and we use this term a lot, back office, back office. Just curious, where did this come from? Why do we call it back office? It sounds like a bad movie or something. I don't know.

Rieva Lesonsky

I actually had to look that up. I was like, why do they call it that? So, back in the day, in old office layouts, when people would walk in the door, the customer facing personnel would be up front where people would come in and see them and meet them and talk to them, but all these other support services were buried in the back. Maybe they didn't even have windows, they were just... because people didn't want the customers either to see them or interact with them. So, for some reason, the nomenclature just took and it's the back office.

Ramon Ray

Well, in my business, Rieva, I'm the back office and the front office—

Rieva Lesonsky

Yeah (laughs).
I know efficiency, Rieva, is so important for smaller businesses. I think again, it's important for all businesses, but I think for us smaller ones we have to squeeze every dime, every ounce of productivity and efficiency out of everything we're doing. Let's talk about a few of these points I know that are important for you, and important to think about. We can go through all of them..., but I think one, the first one I'm looking at here on the list – and we're providing this file, ladies and gentlemen, to you, we have it in the attachments of this webinar, so definitely the resources we're referring to, you will get that. But your list number one, your item number one, Rieva, is prioritize the task, and I know I have trouble with that sometimes. Why is that prioritization so important?

Because you don't know what to tackle first if you don't prioritize. So, the way you prioritize is you figure out what's most important to your business, and what's working and what's not. So, you have to prioritize it. So, kind of list all your back office tasks, and look at what's working, and who's doing that work. Who do you have assigned to that? Are they productive? Is it working? It's sometimes hard to know, again, because you're not tracking it, how that back office is operating. So, you might want to check with your front office employees to see is there a problem? Did something not go right because a check didn't get paid or a person didn't get paid, or a flight didn't get booked or whatever your front office people are dependent on the back office for, you need to make sure those tasks are happening, and then you need to ask yourself, do you have the right people in the right job. So, many business owners, Ramon, with so many parts of their life, as you know, create a business and it starts and it's like this, and then it grows, and maybe the employees you hired to do the job back then, before you grew, are no longer capable of doing that job. So, you want to make sure you have the right people in the right role, and if you don't, ask yourself, can I send them for training? Is there some way they can get better at it? Then ask yourself, do I need them to be in this office space? Like, do I actually need the back part of the office? You might not, and so then look at the employees that are doing it, look at their salary, their benefits, and how much actual physical space they take and can you do alternatives that are going to send you the money saving either their salary, their benefits, or the space they're taking? Can you cut rent by having a smaller in-office staff?

Sure, and I think these are common things... but I think important things that I think as we look at, I think the world forever will be changed. I think this is a fact that I think that definitely in developed countries, I think for sure. We're all more aware of it. Emotionally, mentally, we're trained [inaudible]. People who haven't been using different remote operations and virtual calls and things before, we're now used to it. I know that another part of this aspect of being prepared for the future, being prepared to work differently is outsourcing, Rieva. Now for some people that's scary. For some people, it's not scary. What does that mean to you and how can we do something like outsourcing well and make sure we do it right?

So, actually, you have two choices when you outsource. You can outsource to an individual, an independent contractor that you would just say here's the job, or you can outsource to a company. When you outsource to an individual, you have to be really careful. The IRS has like a 23-point checklist of what makes it legal to outsource and when do they think employers are trying to avoid paying benefits and that kind of thing by outsourcing, so you have to make sure you meet the 23-point checklist. The State of California in January instituted an even more stringent checklist on top of that, and other states are looking at that. So, you... a lot of business owners are worried about outsourcing because they are afraid of losing control, they're sending some of their secrets to people they may not know or trust that well—
Ramon Ray

Which are important considerations, which I think are legitimate.

Rieva Lesonsky

It’s very legitimate, and then you’re worrying about is this really an independent contractor? Am I going to get in trouble? So, your other alternative to outsourcing is taking your existing staff or new staff that you might hire and sending them home. Like, we’re all working virtually now, send them… let them work virtually on a permanent basis. This is going to have a few benefits for you. One, it’s going to open up the labor pool. If you don’t have employees who are considering, I don’t want to work there because it’s too far a commute, it’s too hard to get there, I don’t want to spend time on the freeway or on the train’, you now can include those employees. You can include employees across the state, across the country, anywhere and some of that might save you money because if you’re living in a city with a high cost of living, employees need so much money. If you hire someone in a more rural or remote area, they might not need as much to live and so that can save you on salaries. The other thing is survey, survey. Surveys have shown that employees who work remotely are happier and more productive.

Ramon Ray

Yes, no, listen, I’m a happy guy working from my home office as well. I think part of this new way of work and this new work that we’re in, …... which is a reality more and more, it’s going to get old, I think, Rieva, is that remember also that no longer I think – this has been the case, but I think people can think in new ways, that we don’t have to be so geographically segmented. There could be a good developer, a good programmer, a good speaker, a good executive, a good leader that you need in your organization, and we don’t have to, think, I think, in this closed way, they have to be near me, they have to be in my office, but I think this new way to work, to your point, (a) people don’t want to do it, but there’s talent in so many places. So, I think as we open our eyes, I think that’s a big thing as well.

Rieva Lesonsky

I’ve seen a lot of those best cities surveys to operate a business, and so many of them rank highly because they’re in a community with access to a lot of college graduates. What if your city’s not like that? Being able to work remotely gives you access to those people that you wouldn’t ordinarily have.

Ramon Ray

Sure. No, absolutely. I think it’s a good point. Let’s touch on, actually, as we’re thinking now about the back office, Rieva, what are some things we need to do to transform the back office as we look at this new way of normal? And to remind people, hey, please put your questions in the Questions tab. When Rieva and I wrap up here, we want to get your questions and answer them. We’re here to serve you at the Verizon Small Business Webinar Series, and remember, if you like what you’re hearing, tag us on Twitter, take a screenshot, say, hey, I’m listening to Rieva and Ramon, @Rieva on Twitter, @RamonRay, and definitely Verizon Business, tag them, tag them, tag them and let them know you’re listening.

So, Rieva, let’s look at a few key pillars as we’re looking at transforming the back office. I know one is this aspect of a tech checkup. Why is it so important? What does that mean to you? And I have a few things myself, but what does it mean to you, Rieva?

Rieva Lesonsky
Keeping your business operating effectively in the new normal

Well, the reason that we can do all this, the reason we can have employees work virtually, is because of technology. Technological innovations have really enabled us to communicate across thousands of miles, so you have to start with a tech checkup of your business. If you are taking a certain number of employees and sending them home, do they have the tools to (a) do the job in their home and (b) communicate with you and the rest of the team? So, you might want to survey your employees to find out are they having any problems now. We’re all working at home right now. How is that working? Are machines crashing? Do you have the right software? The first thing you have to do, you have to work in the cloud. You have to have good, updated software that enables you to work in the cloud, and then second, you have to check your hardware to make sure it’s capable of operating this software at peak efficiency.

Ramon Ray

Yes, and I think, Rieva, sometimes people try to save so much money, I’ve been in conversations helping people, my family, my church, I’m not a tech consultant, but people, I’m sure like you, know what we do and they pull us into help. So, they’re like, no, I just want to get the cheapest. No, my computer can have one megabyte of RAM or something like that. I’m like no, so I think budgeting for this, Rieva, as you’re saying, is very important because not that we’re saying you have to expend the wazoo, but I think it is important that you have the right technology, have the right framework, because as we’re all working new, as it were, the technology is going to have to evolve and go along with it.

Rieva Lesonsky

Exactly, and you might need a little more powerful computer to run the new software to be able to communicate with your employees on video conferencing apps and other communication apps, and of course, broadband, right? You have to have a really good internet connection for this to work. So, you your employees, you want... and this is... again, this is what we’re talking about checking the lessons that we’re learning now, is anybody having a problem with that and what can you do about it?

Ramon Ray

Yes, so true, and I think that even as we’re speaking right now, it brings me to another bullet point, and this is the aspect of collaboration and communication. I think, Rieva, we all know this, most of America is using some sort of video collaboration tool and that’s great at this time, but I think that for businesses, it’s careful, Rieva, right, to know what are you using? How does it work? Is it secure? Talk about the aspect of the collaboration, communication tools. We’re doing it now. You’re located zillions of miles away and I’m located somewhere else, so why is that important for business?

Rieva Lesonsky

We are coast to coast, right? You’re on the east coast, I’m on the west coast, but it’s seamless and smooth, and that’s the goal, especially for your back... if you’re going virtual, you might have employees scattered all over the country, so you want to enable them to talk to one another. There are a lot of tools, some free, some cheap, some freemium, where you get this many services for free, and then if you want more, but none of them cost a lot of money and so it’s certainly affordable and likely less. Let’s say you’re renting a 1,000-square-foot office, if you send even 30% of your workforce home to work, you can rent a 600-square-foot office and you’re going to save money on that rent, so whatever you’re costing for the tools, it’s going to be less and chances are you have these tools anyway, or you’re going to need them in the office. So, the key is security. You want to use tools that you feel secure about, that people can’t hack into or pop into conversations. You might want to have a VPN, a private network so people can’t see it; antivirus programs, anti-malware programs, and a list of rules and regulations for your employees so they know what to do. A lot of people, if you send them home, let’s say, with company issued laptops, and the laptops open, and little Johnny comes
by cut to look up something for his homework, or play a game, it's so easy then for malware to get into your computer. So, you need to make sure your employees know who can touch their devices. Passwords should be changed every three months, minimum, and make sure your employees understand what they need to do and do it because otherwise you're opening up your business to a lot of problems.

**Ramon Ray**

Yes, and I think underpinning all of this, Rieva, we have the right technology in place, the hardware and software, we have our collaboration, communication, we're secure and underpinning all of this, and I know you know, we have to make sure our broadband [connection is]....... stable, and as high a speed as you can get internet connection.

**Rieva Lesonsky**

And it's really... when you speak... I'm personally a Verizon customer, and so I feel secure that nothing is going to... it's not going to break, right? It's going to be there, it's going to work, and if I have a problem, there's somewhere to go, and that's really key. Don't do business with companies that don't offer support, because as a small business owner, you know you're going to need support, and you want to work with a company that you can do it.

**Ramon Ray**

That's important, and I think also going back to that aspect of free or not, I think that, listen, I'm a firm believer, Rieva, I invest in technology, so we all want to save money, but sometimes it's OK to spend $49 a month, 500 a month, whatever the thing is, it's something that works well for business.

Rieva, we're going to dive into questions and answers, the most exciting time, so send your questions, send your comments, feel free to shout out and say what state you're from, but as we wrap this up, Rieva, why don't you recap. I know I've heard quite a bit today, and I think really for me, it's learning about the technology, the people, changing our mindset as leaders. What do you want to leave us with today before we dive into questions?

**Rieva Lesonsky**

I think that's key. I think right now take the time to examine how your business is doing, how is your back office operating. People are working at home, how's that going? Do you have the right tools? Can you let this happen permanently so you can save money on rent and overhead and even providing coffee for your employees? Employees are going to be happier. They're going to be more productive. They're going to save money, and do a prioritization of what you need, and I think the best solution is, take the employees you have that are loyal, that are smart, they have the corporate knowledge, send them home with the right tools, and you'll save money and be more productive, and that is your new normal.

**Ramon Ray**

I love it, Rieva. Let's dive into the questions and here we go.

**Rieva Lesonsky**

Can't wait to hear.

**Ramon Ray**
So, here we go. We've got a few questions. I'm just going to go from top to bottom, I guess, or,... newest to last, whatever you want to call it, Rieva, and let's do it. There we go.

Why will this be the new normal or abnormal as opposed to the new COVID-19? Interesting, I think. That was more of a theoretical thing, Rieva, so [inaudible]. Thank you, point taken. That is a good point as well. Why is that?

Rieva, is the new tech setup something my company should be looking at for the long term? It sounds like what you're talking about is much more than just a 90-day plan. Great question. Rieva, is this temporary? Like, you know what, next year, we're all going to go back to the same way we were, or should companies think about no, no, no, this is how it's going to be? What do you think, Rieva?

Rieva Lesonsky

Well, I think that this is a good time to actually consider doing this permanently. If it's working, why not let it keep having, because, ultimately, our goal is to help you save money, so if you can send your back office staff home and everybody can talk and is connected through technology, then it works. You can get a smaller office, you don't need to have that footprint, you're going to save money and not lose anything. So, I think it's worth looking at as a permanent solution.

Ramon Ray

Love it, and Rieva I get this question quite a bit. As you know, I love video, that's just what I do. Somebody says here, the basics of their question, what if I'm not comfortable with video, if I don't want to show my face, I'm shy, whatever the thing is. For me, Rieva, I tell people there's a lot you can do without video, podcasts and article writing, which you know so well and things of that nature. Video is powerful, but any thoughts, Rieva, for those who say, Rieva, for me... this is beyond just video conferencing, but marketing overall, for me Rieva, don't know if I want to have that camera there. What do you say, Rieva?

Rieva Lesonsky

I think if you're not comfortable and you're the boss, just be honest with your staff. Tell them, I'm not comfortable being on camera, though with your staff they know what you look like, so I'm not quite sure why you wouldn't be comfortable, but just don't... you can use video conferencing tools without accessing the camera and you don't lose anything in the communication. People just can't see your face.

Ramon Ray

Even my wife is not an executive, but her, as an example, she's just not comfortable. For her, it's a variety of issues, I'll leave it at that. It's not for her.

Another kudos, I'm going to read the kudos here too. Thank you for joining us, Verizon Small Business Webinar Series. Somebody says, “Singing my song here, I'm helping small businesses establish standard operating procedures”, so they're saying thank you. Let's see. What's the best approach, Rieva, to keep our communication safe? Again, this is a big question, Rieva. There's a thousand different things you could say, but at a high level, why don't you underline some security best practices that you might have.

Rieva Lesonsky

My first thing is do business with a company that you trust, that you know. Whatever that is, it's a company that has a great support system and that you know is not some fly-by-night thing that may or may not be there tomorrow, so that's number one. Read
reviews. I'm a big, big fan of... so go on... there's a lot of websites that do the best, the best web communication tools, so go read those and almost all of them have free trial periods, try it out, try somebody out for seven days and try somebody else and take maybe three weeks or so to test who you feel comfortable with and then go ahead and use that system. Make sure that you're secure and safe. I know a lot of small businesses, if they're doing it, prefer to have a VPN, a virtual private network in place, so it makes it impenetrable, not completely of course, so that would eliminate a lot of the possibilities of getting hacked.

**Ramon Ray**

For sure. I think that VPN, Rieva, just underlying that virtual private network. To put your data – it still out in the open, but it's like a hidden tunnel, and even if people get the data itself, Rieva, it's that hackers can't do much with it. In a normal world, it will take them 100 million years to get into a VPN for sure.

Rieva, are you ready for a political question, can you handle it, Rieva? Are you ready? Here we go, Rieva, a political question. I'm going to ask you. They say, “my employee wants to work from home, so should I reduce their salary, Rieva, because the costs are lower, they have no commute, their expenses…” so Rieva, what do you say, should we reduce the salary if somebody is working from home or not?

**Rieva Lesonsky**

No, because that person will go find a job somewhere else. We're in a situation right now where there's a lot of people unemployed, and so sometimes business owners get a little hottie here and think, 'oh, I'm in charge’, but it flips. It's a cycle and at some point the employees are going to be in control again, and if you're going to reduce somebody's salary, you're saving money too, you're not paying for that person's space in your office, you're not buying them coffee or whatever you might provide in the breakroom, so you're saving money as well and if you try to cut down their salary by saying, we're letting you work at home, the whole point of this is to have productive, happy employees and you're not going to have that. That's not going to help you at all.

**Ramon Ray**

Rieva answered the political question just fine. She navigated the read through that.

**Rieva Lesonsky**

I was panicked for a minute.

**Ramon Ray**

Come on, Rieva. Somebody, “I'm the only salaried employee, the rest of the team are independent contractors". Thank you for that. Rieva, people are saying about the 23 check marks. Listen, Verizon has the slides and all the information you want in the attachments. You can look at the BrightTALK system, we'll send that to you, but all the great nuggets Rieva has, we're giving that to you, so don't worry about that.

**Rieva Lesonsky**

Also, Ramon, if people have questions, I'm happy to field them offline, so you can hit me up on Twitter, @Rieva, or just send me an email and I would use my Gmail because sometimes my regular account filters things, so it's my full name, you can see it on the screen, Rievalosonsky@gmail.com, and if you email me, I will get back to you.

**Ramon Ray**
Keeping your business operating effectively in the new normal

That is a generous gift, because Rieva is one busy lady, so thank you Rieva for that.

Rieva, here’s another tough question-ish, this gentlemen or lady is an IT manager, they’re in charge of tech, they know what we’re talking about Rieva, but there’s a problem, how do I convince my CEO to allow people to work from home when the crisis ends. Rieva, people are getting it. Even people in my community and my private life and church and things, they’re like, ‘well, this is today, but after this is over, we’re going to go back’. Rieva what’s your advice for the IT manager and others who are like they want to keep doing the good stuff we’re doing now. Any guidance of how they can tell the higher ups here is why we should keep doing some of these good things.

Rieva Lesonsky

I think it’s actually just create a list, here are the advantages, here are the disadvantages. So, you go to your CEO and you say we have this many people who are in the office that could work remotely. They take up this much space. We can find a cheaper building or less overhead within the building if you let them work at home permanently and present that number. That number could be thousands and thousands of dollars. I saw some company they didn’t – or somebody tweeted about a company, it’s a midsized company in San Francisco who was against remote working, and after three works said we’re done, we’re closing our whole office, we’re going virtual and we’re going to save thousands and thousands of dollars every month.

Just do an accounting kind of activity and show them how much money they can save.

Ramon Ray

Rieva, I think that is so smart, because sometimes I know even I get caught up in this, you and I and those who already know what to do, we’re like dah, we should have better video cameras, or lets upgrade broadband or you need a new computer. For those who don’t know, in fairness, even though we may want to – in a friendly way – tap them on the side of the head, that I think people don’t know and we need to present it in their language, so Rieva that’s spot on by showing the executives, those who are looking at the budget, ‘hey, if we do this, it will help our company this way’, so that’s smart Rieva.

Rieva Lesonsky

I will tell you one more thing, just go online, or just email me and I will send you some there. There are so many surveys that show employees who get to work at home are more loyal, more productive, and happier workers. They work longer hours at home.

Ramon Ray

Rieva, here’s another one of those tough questions, which I know you can handle, and you’ve touched on it, but somebody here writes about they’re in the fitness industry, gymnastic schools, restaurants, they’re hard hit. Rieva, as you know, many are just done and closed, so any words of advice, Rieva, and I know for me my word of advice is I wish I had a smart word to say, except for me, Rieva, my answer to people like that is you just have to hold on, get all the loans and money you can smartly. Talk to your lawyer and accountant because you want to read the fine print and we hope that you’re able to talk to your existing customers Rieva, so when you bounce back... that’s my kind of two cents, but what do you say, Rieva, anything else to the restaurants and others who had to close.

Rieva Lesonsky

I think if you’re a restaurant, look into delivery. If you are in a smaller town that does not have access to the big delivery services and almost all of the big ones have deals during this time to make it easier to cut their fees to the restaurants. So, look into getting
delivery. If you can’t, if you’re in a smaller town, maybe somebody in town wants to start a delivery service or you can start your own. Think about supply... this is not going to end in 30 days, so if you can start doing delivery or curbside pickup, I would start advertising that.

If you’re a retailer, build out your website and do it now. Make sure that you offer ecommerce, again, for curbside delivery or even... for delivery or even curbside pickup. If you are a fitness company, you should be doing your classes online. I know a woman who does that, and she just said, ‘OK, everybody, we’re going to be doing this yoga class online and she does an online session’. Is her business the same? No, but she’s not sitting there not making any money.

Ramon Ray

That is smart, Rieva. I must say to people who have not... it’s not too late to start these things that Rieva is saying. Definitely check out Rieva’s blog, SmallBizDaily and other things like that. As you know, Rieva, I’m really into personal branding. I’m telling people build a fan base build a community, this is why, for me, Rieva, you do this stuff, because then at least you can reach out to customers and I hate to use the word, pivot.

Let’s move on. A couple of questions coming in. Keep the questions coming. Don’t forget, use Twitter, take a screenshot if you want. Tag @Rieva, tag me, @RamonRay on Twitter, we’re going to retweet and see this stuff afterwards, definitely. Give some love to Verizon Business on Twitter as well, let them know you’re watching this and that this was the best session.

Rieva, there’s a few questions coming in on PPP and tax. If you don’t mind, unless you want to address it, I would like to not address those today, they’re important, but in this forum, I think I would like to—

Rieva Lesonsky

Yeah.

Ramon Ray

OK, good. Thank you all for asking that. I see a few questions about tax, PPP, and finance. One, it’s not my strength and, two, we have other sessions that we’ve done or coming up where we can answer that.

Rieva Lesonsky

We also have a lot of stuff on that on our website.

Ramon Ray

Somebody asked the question, so this is good Rieva, I love these questions – and keep them coming – should business owners set up a daily calendar with remote workers? I don’t want to seem like Big Brother and that’s a good point, we don’t want to feel that way, but I need to hold them accountable. Rieva, the question kind of is asking, how do I hold people accountable but yet I don’t want to seem, what are you doing?

Rieva Lesonsky

I think you can hold them accountable, but holding them accountable is not every day saying, have you done your job today. Holding them accountable is giving them a task, giving them a deadline, and maybe give them the deadline a day before or two days before your actual deadline and seeing if they meet that deadline. If they don’t, then you can be Big Brother. If they do, don’t worry about it. You shouldn’t care if an at home worker is working at 10 a.m. or 10 p.m. if they don’t need to be front facing. If they’re back office,
chances are they don’t. not that they can’t be on-call, that you have to call them. if somebody in the front office needs a question, but if they’re doing some task at night, because remember, right now the kids are at home too, nobody is at home alone unless they live alone. People are trying to function at this time, and i think it’s helpful to give them a little bit of flexibility. if you want to check in every other day and just go, ‘hey, how’s it going, do you need anything?’ ask it as, can i help you with anything, then no one is going to resent it.

Ramon Ray

That’s powerful and i think it’s so true. I learned this from Entrée Leadership, because I’m going to try my own business and exactly what you said, they said measure the results. It’s helped me Rieva, because instead of my own little team that I have, following up, following up, I’m like, ‘you know what, let me leave Becky or John alone, I said give it to me by Wednesday, it doesn’t matter how they’re working on it’. I’ve had to just slow my own self down.

Another question here, we have about 10 more minutes to go Rieva and the questions are flying fast and furious, so keep them coming. Another question here, Rieva, this is interesting, how to handle people, Rieva, quitting, quitting the job, leaving the employer to draw the enhanced unemployment. Basically, how I’m reading this, as we heard in the news, sometimes the unemployment is better off as far as financial than working for a job, any advice to those employers, Rieva, who are like, ‘I’m trying to keep my employees, but they’re like, no, I can just file for unemployment’. What’s your advice?

Rieva Lesonsky

If you’re asking it in the context of the loan programs, you don’t have to keep that person, you just need to keep a person. If that’s the context. With the PPP program, you have to have... if you had five, you need to have five. They don’t care that it’s Ramon, it could be Judy. If that’s what your concern is, you should know that.

From what i understand and I don’t know the circumstances here, even with the enhanced unemployment, because unemployment does not pay your full wage, so someone collecting unemployment is not collecting what they made and getting the enhanced unemployment on top of that, they’re getting less than they made and getting that, so that might equal what they make.

I think you have to think about that, if that’s it, OK, you just need to replace that body and it will be a lot easier right now to find a new body than it was before, and even easier if you tell that person, ‘hey, we’re a remote company’, that’s a plus to a lot of people who are looking for jobs. If you’re in a panic because this person is saying I’m quitting, then go back to what we talked about before with outsourcing. Maybe you can find a temporary independent contractor or a company to outsource that to until you can find a new employee.

Ramon Ray

Awesome, and Rieva, we’re getting thank you so much and I see one person is even, I think in a fun way, Rieva, I have a feeling I know who it is heckling me, but I see those chats coming in. We have a few more minutes to go, Rieva, and we’re having a good time here and the questions are still coming in. I think one thing I want to add to that Rieva, about the employees leaving, I’m not an expert in leadership or HR, but I think you will be able to understand what I’m trying to say, Rieva, is that at the end of the day, also, people leaving and things like that, oftentimes as a leader people are not always open with us, so this is a leadership opportunity. Are you paying good wages if you’re able to, even if you’re not paying good wages, are you sure you’re being a good leader? Is somebody being harassed, and you didn’t know about it. Oftentimes, we think people are leaving for money, but they were too afraid to talk to you or things like that [inaudible], Rieva?
Rieva Lesonsky

That's a very good point, Ramon, and I think this is a good time to connect with your employees, because you're not doing it in an office in full view of everybody, so maybe schedule a little one on one time with each employee and say, 'how are you doing through this?' I think we forget the personal costs that people are experiencing right now. Part of it is some people are lonely, some people are lonely, some people feel really isolated, so check in with your employees and go, 'OK, I just want to know how you're doing on a personal level, what can I do for you?'

It's really interesting. There are some new surveys out there that I just wrote about that just went on my site on Tuesday that small business owners tend to think of their team as a family, and they do, they take a personal interest in them, so just do that. You will make your employee feel better and make them more loyal in the long run.

Ramon Ray

For sure, and those who are asking about how to connect with Rieva. Listen; if you just go to the BrightTALK page, no need to spell it out right now, but if you go to the BrightTALK page where you got this email, you will see Rieva's full name or just SmallBizDaily, she is on all platforms. Rieva's a woman of her word, she wants to help where she will.

Rieva Lesonsky

Yes, I will, I promise.

Ramon Ray

R-I-E-V-A. Moving along here, so many things. Somebody said it's about the investment and training that they're afraid of losing too, good point. Rieva, another question here is about mindset. We have only six more minutes to go, but we're going to help. Those who want to reach out to me, of course, www.ramonray.com, you can just check that out and I'm happy to help as well, but talk to Rieva first, she is much smarter.

What about mindset? Rieva, working from home can present a problem also, like never shutting it off, and I want to expand the question, people who are not used to it Rieva, you never shut it off, maybe you feel lonely, can you just talk overall Rieva, the hither concept of the mindset of working from home. What have you learned? How do we address that?

Rieva Lesonsky

My company has been virtual for the last 10 years, so I have worked from home and I have experienced that problem and I still experience that at times where I will find myself at 10 o'clock at night trying to watch a TV program with my husband and he says all I see is the screen, I don't see your face. Sometimes it happens, but I think you have to have a really good conversation with yourself. Some people are doing that because maybe you didn't get done during the day what you need to. Sometimes people work better at night when it's quieter, if you have kids, when the kids are in bed. So, just kind of try to have a conversation with yourself and assess why you're doing that and there are a lot of tricks that people play in terms of working at home, getting up, getting dressed as if you were going to work, though, almost every woman that I've talked to who is working at home said I haven't taken the yoga pants off in months now. There are tricks.

When home-based work started being talked about way back in the 90s, there was one entrepreneur that we interviewed who every day left their house, walked around the block and came back into their house and at the end of the day, left the house and
walked the opposite way back to their house and they said, I was just able, at that time, to just change my mind, to just clear my mind, to say, ‘OK, work is done, now I’m going home and I’m not going to think about it until tomorrow morning’. Try it.

**Ramon Ray**

I love it. This is a very personal question, I’m just going to fire it out, no answer needed, Rieva, but I’m going to answer the person on your behalf. Rieva, can I work with you remotely?

If I can just take the liberty to answer that. My challenge to who are asking it, find Rieva, you can find her online, send her a pigeon, contact her. If you want to say something else, Rieva, go ahead, I’m asking because we’re all in need. Do you want to work with Rieva, make her a pitch? Tell her you met her on this Verizon webinar, so that’s my challenge. Was that cool, Rieva?

**Rieva Lesonsky**

Absolutely. I approve.

**Ramon Ray**

Rieva, we’ve got so many questions coming in and somebody, Rieva, from a non-profit asked a question and I’m more acknowledging them, just CEO of Voice Consulting, I hope you’re true to what you say you are and one of the organizations, from me to you, out of school programs. So, I wanted to shout them out, Rieva, and acknowledge them, thank you for the work you’re doing. The question, Rieva, you’ve answered it, but just really – for non-profits, budgets are small, and they are asking, particularly, how to establish a VPN. For that question we can help you, feel free to email me and Rieva and put –

**Rieva Lesonsky**

Yeah.

**Ramon Ray**

—the team, but Rieva address non-profits. I find often, Rieva, there’s not much difference between non-profits and for-profits, but maybe you have some guidance for that particular sector, non-profits who are doing good, any thoughts for them?

**Rieva Lesonsky**

Yes, for non-profits whose budgets are generally smaller, so I think the chance to save money on rent and that kind of thing is actually even better for you. I think the thing for non-profits is when you work remotely, you expand your talent pool, you can hire people who maybe have the same passion for that cause that don’t live in your area, so it’s opening you up to far more people who can work for you thousands of miles away and as we talked about, maybe they don’t need as much money, because they don’t live... I live in a suburb of Los Angeles, it’s expensive, so if I were going to hire somebody locally, it would cost me a lot of money. If I were going to hire somebody, I don’t want to insult any state, but in the middle of maybe a farming community or a rural community, their overhead is not as much, maybe I can get people for less, particularly if they’re devoted to the non-profit cause.

**Ramon Ray**

Rieva, this has been amazing. Again, we got so many questions, but we’ve got to wrap up. I have a message I want to play, Rieva, from Verizon, which is important to listen to. Again, Rieva with a V, Lesonsky, you can look her up. Go to the BrightTALK platform,
Company Name
Keeping your business operating effectively in the new normal

look at her full name, email her, Rievalesonsky@gmail.com, check out SmallBizDaily, a big thanks to Verizon Small Business Webinar Series. I'm Ramon Ray, you can look me up at www.ramonray.com, but check out this message. Rieva, thank you for joining us.

Rieva Lesonsky
Thank you, Ramon. Thank you, Verizon.

Ramon Ray
Indeed, before people go, check out this message.

Andy Choi
That’s it for today’s webinar. Our thanks to Ramon and Rieva for sharing their insights. In the “Attachments” tab, you will see that we are sharing the presentation slides from today. You can check out all of our webinars in this series on our BrightTALK channel page. You can register now for our next webinar, that’s next Tuesday, May 5, we hope you will join us then for more in our Small Business Webinar Series. Thanks so much for joining us. Have a great day. |

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