

# Passive businesses will surely die

At the risk of repeating myself, let me share one of my favorite quotes, from retired U.S. Gen. Eric Shinseki: “If you don’t like change, you will like irrelevance even less.”

All great changes are preceded by chaos and upheaval. You must be willing to sacrifice where you currently are for the vision of where your dreams can take you. I believe we are on the precipice of even greater and unprecedented change in the future. Will we manage that change on our terms or stand by and be acted upon?



**JOHN NEWBY**

Columnist

Local businesses must build or upgrade their websites without hesitation. It need not be expensive in today’s world of technology, but having a viable and working website is a critical component to your future business success.

Don’t fall for the hype that everything is being done online. Two years ago, more than 90% of retail was transacted within the walls of retail establishments. While COVID-19 changed that forever, as things are normalizing you can expect in-store shopping patterns will improve as we have come to find out that we humans seek interaction. That said, don’t get comfortable because there is a significant shift toward digital purchases, and that won’t change. Be aware of these patterns and alter

your strategies as needed to assure better store traffic and results.

Second, assure consumers can find you, both physically and digitally. Make sure you are active on social media and that everyone knows your operating hours. Does your listing show up on Google Maps? When people drive or walk by, are your windows and facade inviting? How does your business show up in the digital search world? Google a few of your key products or services and see where your business shows up or how far down the list you must scroll to find your shop. Make no mistake: While many are returning to brick-and-mortar shopping, they arrive there by searching online about where to spend their money.

Third, when you are online, consistently respond to interactions quickly. Just as we expect great customer service when in person, view this as your online customer service portal. While we are discussing online, avoid stagnation and rotate your web photos often.

Fourth, in addition to over-the-top customer service, make sure the inside of the business is warm and inviting. Are shoppers able to easily find what they might be looking for? Make sure it is easy to get around the store. Cluttered aisles are one of the biggest detriments to pleasant shopping experiences. Always remember that uniqueness provides ambiance. The ambiance you create today determines who comes back tomorrow.

Fifth, always seek ways

to communicate after your customer’s first visit. This is where a digital strategy can be king. Always have in-store and digital promotions, drawings, contests, raffles, surveys and games. With technology, this is now simple. I’m always amazed how people provide email and cellphone numbers with a chance to win something. I am also amazed at how many businesses don’t have a communication strategy. This should be at the top of any business plan.

Always think multiple visits. Few businesses can survive when customers only visit their location once. The most successful businesses always rely upon their best customers returning frequently. What is the lifetime value of a frequent customer? Every business should understand this number and the impact on their business. Frequent customers ultimately determine if a business has the sustainability needed to survive over the long haul.

Start with simple email marketing, it is the venue where the open and response rates are great. While it is getting less effective, use social media, tapping into large communities of consumers residing in your target area. Being aggressive, promoting or marketing your business is a must. The passive will surely die.

**JOHN NEWBY**, of Pineville, is author of the “Building Main Street, Not Wall Street” column dedicated to helping communities combine synergies with local media companies allowing them to not just survive but to thrive. His email is [john@360mediaalliance.net](mailto:john@360mediaalliance.net).

# Mercy Joplin names chief medical officer

**FROM STAFF REPORTS**  
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Dr. Jesse Hatfield, emergency department medical director, has been named Mercy Hospital Joplin’s chief medical officer, the hospital announced Monday. Hatfield, who has worked for Mercy for six years, will split his time between administrative duties and the emergency department. As chief medical officer, his responsibilities will include managing processes and policies while maintaining patient safety and quality initiatives.

“I’m a problem solver and I like the challenge of this new role,” Hatfield said in a statement. “One of my goals is to be a voice of the physicians. I hope to both provide their input to our administrative team and bring information back to physicians and other providers and improve communication all the way around.”

Hatfield holds degrees from the University of Oklahoma and the OU College of Medicine. He completed his emergency medicine residency at the University of Oklahoma at Tulsa.

“Dr. Hatfield has proven himself a leader,” said Jeremy Drinkwitz, Mercy Hospital Joplin president, in a statement. “His clarity, attention to detail and involvement in key areas of focus are vital to our highest priority — the patient experience.”

## Carthage chamber’s business expo set

CARTHAGE, Mo. — The Carthage Chamber of Commerce will host its yearly

business expo from 5 to 8 p.m. Wednesday and from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. Thursday at the Congregation of the Mother of the Redeemer auditorium, 1900 Grand St.

Area businesses will showcase their products and services. Attendees will have a chance to enter to win \$100 in chamber community gift certificates.

Details: 417-358-2373.

## Funding available for school ag departments

JEFFERSON CITY, Mo. — The Missouri Department of Agriculture is accepting applications for the Missouri Agriculture Energy Saving Team — a Revolutionary Opportunity grant, funded through the U.S. Department of Energy.

The MAESTRO grant was created to help small farming operations across Missouri reduce energy use. Funding will be used to assist K-12 school districts with agriculture programs. The department will grant awards up to a maximum of \$10,000 per approved school.

Allowable expenses include but are not limited to equipment, supplies and materials needed to increase energy efficiency in school agriculture shops, greenhouses or other agriculture facilities; training and educational workshops; contracting an organization to educate, train and assist students in conducting energy audits; materials needed to conduct energy audit; insulation, including labor needed to install insulation, in agriculture facilities; rehabilitating an aging greenhouse to be more energy efficient; heating, ventilation

and air conditioning updates to agriculture facilities; or upgrading lighting in agriculture facilities to be more energy efficient. Costs such as agriculture facility expansion, new construction, staff or faculty wage supplementation, and student payment are not allowed.

Proposals for the grant funding must be submitted by Sept. 1. The form and details are available at [Agriculture.Mo.Gov](http://Agriculture.Mo.Gov).

## Lyerla Heating and Air wins national award

Lyerla Heating and Air, owned by Kevin and Kim Brady, of Joplin, has been named a winner of the 2021 Extraordinary Outlook Award by Service Nation Alliance.

The award is given to two of the more than 450 member contracting companies in the U.S. and Canada that follow and implement best practices of a consumer-oriented contracting business. It was announced at a recent meeting in Palm Springs, California.

“This award is given to a remarkable small contractor on its way to accomplishing great things,” said Bob Viering, vice president of Service Nation Alliance, in a statement. “Kevin and Kim Brady, owners of Lyerla Heating and Air Conditioning, focus on customers to make their life easier and their home or business more comfortable. That is why Lyerla Heating and Air Conditioning is already successful and poised for even more success going forward.”

Lyerla has been in service in the Joplin area for more than 20 years.