



# Seven surprising sources

BY MICHELE MEYER

WISDOM CAN come from surprising sources—people who have business savvy matching the usual business experts. Here's a look at a few surprising fonts of wisdom.

**Reality TV star.** “If you're not on social media, you don't exist,” says Ashandra Batiste, a dentist and star of Bravo's *Married to Medicine Houston*. “People expect to see you on Facebook, Instagram or Twitter, so you have to be willing to put yourself out there.”

**Artist.** Diversify—don't let ego or pride box you in, says Mark McDowell, a working artist at Cattle Track Arts & Preservation in Scottsdale, Arizona. “You've got to adapt to the market,” he says. “No one here is

locked into a single skill set. We're problem-solvers and collaborators, even carpenters. In lean times, we build beautiful crates, make Christmas cards and print T-shirts, etchings and books. When my eyes and hands fail me, I'll become a blues singer.”

**Bartender.** “You may need to dial back the upsell,” says Costco member Morgan Weber, a former bartender who now co-owns several Texas restaurants. “Put out enough information to pique their interest, then hang back. If they follow up, go deeper. If they don't, chill out.”

**Realtor.** “Make a good first impression,” says Colleen Badagliacco, a Costco member

and broker associate at Legacy Real Estate & Associates in San Jose, California. “After shoppers enter, you and your staff are your biggest value-added. So know your stock and your competitors'. Your workers also should listen for any unmet needs and report them to you.”

**Doctor.** “Hire people who multitask,” says Dr. Rolando Maldonado, who practices at Midtown Family Medicine in Houston. “My nurses also bill and verify insurance, which allows me to hire fewer people and offer them better pay. Sacrifice some of your own salary. That builds loyalty among your staff.”

**Hairdresser.** “Greet everyone and make sure they're happy with the service,” says Nelson Chan, a Costco member, celebrity hairstylist and owner of Nelson J Natural Salon in Beverly Hills, California. “That personal relationship may be the reason customers return. And if they don't like something, you can fix it.”

**Uber driver.** Look closely. “Observe customers' facial expressions and body language to judge when to talk, listen or say nothing at all,” says John Morrow, a Houston-based Uber driver and former waiter. “If customers look stressed, I keep the conversation minimal.” **C**

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