

HOW TO FIND “PEACE ON THE HOME FRONT” WHEN RUNNING THE FAMILY BUSINESS



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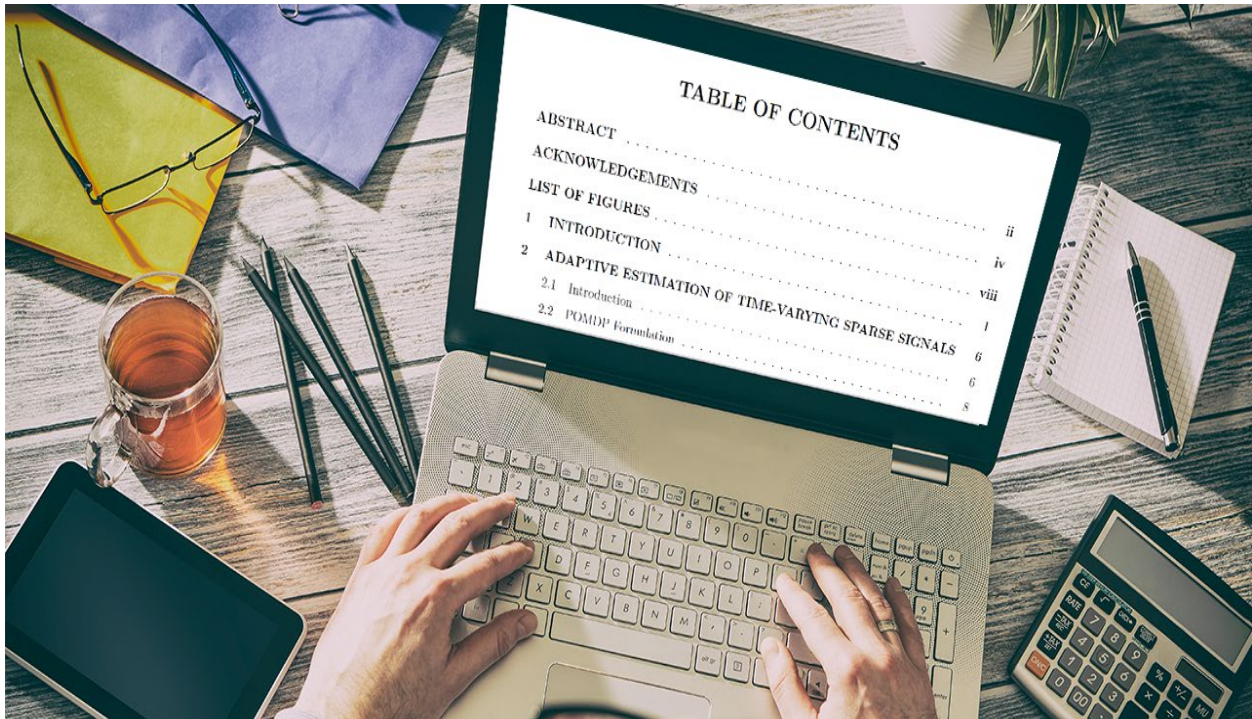


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INTRODUCTION

Running a business is tough, running a small business is even tougher and running a family business can be the toughest of all.

But it doesn't have to be.

If you get it right, then running a family business can be exceptionally rewarding.

My wife and I have been married for over 54 years, and for 42 of those years we've run a family business together.

In that time, we've had our kids and sundry other family members involved.

Has it all been fun and games?

Definitely not.

But once we learnt the rules of successfully running a family business, it has been very rewarding.

In this little book, I first want to take you through a few of the things we learnt the hard way that apply especially to small family-owned businesses.

Then, I want to give you 32 tips that apply to any business.

All of these tips I learnt in the “School of Hard Knocks” and the “University of Life”, so I know they work, they are not theoretical suggestions.



Both institutions are hard task masters, but you certainly learn the lessons they teach, very well.

In these few pages I want to share some of those lessons, so you can learn the easy way, not the hard way like we did.

You may already know a lot of what I’ve written, but don’t let that put you off reading the book, because the real question is, not do you already know it, but do you diligently apply it.

So, let’s get started.

SECTION 1

SPECIAL FAMILY TIPS

1. SET THE GROUND RULES FOR ALL FAMILY MEMBERS



Too often family businesses cause endless discussions, debates and arguments that can often spill over into that precious family or me time.

This can not only wreck the business, but also the family as well.

It can develop into a big “pile-on”, with the various family members

feeling they have to take sides.

Been there, done that and it’s not healthy for anyone, including the business.

So, the first and most basic and important rule is, no business discussions during family time.

Leave all business talk at work, nothing is to come home.

Chris and I use to go out every Friday for lunch and get all of the business stuff sorted before the weekend started.

After lunch she would go home and get ready for the weekend, I’d go back to work and just tidy up what I could and then make sure I was home by 5 pm.

There were no business matters discussed over the weekend.

Is this easy to do?

No.

Is it worth the effort?

Absolutely.

Why don't you try it?

2. SETTLE ON AGREED WORKING HOURS.

At one point in our business journey, even our dog forgot what I looked like.

Chris had her set hours, the staff had their set hours, but “muggins” was working all hours.

It took me way too long to realise that it was not only unhealthy but was also ineffectual – nobody was benefiting from my stupidity.

So, eventually I learnt the art of effective delegation.

I've covered this in a bit more detail in the next section, plus I've also covered it in a number of videos on my YouTube page.

The argument that usually is used to defend this strategy of working long hours, is “I can't afford to employ someone else to do it”.

My answer is always that you can't afford not to, your time is the most valuable.

The other defense is “no one else can do it as well as me”.

And, of course, that may well be true, in which case that should be one of your key jobs.

But there will be plenty of other jobs that someone else could do much better than you, and thereby give you more time to concentrate on the important stuff.



3. BE PREPARED TO PUT FAMILY FIRST.



This one sounds totally obvious, but ask yourself, “does that always happen?”

Or, like me, have you put the business first, far too often.

Oh, I know all the excuses (reasons) why you do that, because I’ve used them myself, but try this tip for a month or so and see how much better life is.

If we do not have a settled and happy home life, then the business will never be as enjoyable, or as prosperous as it could be.

When there is tension on the home front, then the business can frequently become the place we escape to.

However, eventually we have to go home and spending too much time at work will only make the tension and arguments at home so much worse.

I’ve seen way too many broken families because the owner(s) didn’t pay heed to this tip.

And a broken family only adds to the stress and so often becomes a source of ill health.

Ignoring this tip is just not worth the sacrifice and stress.

4. ENSURE ALL FAMILY MEMBERS HAVE WRITTEN JOB DESCRIPTIONS.



When taking on new clients, one of the first things I do is check that all staff members have a clear written job description.

I've mentioned this in the general business tips, as it is so important for all businesses, but it is doubly important for family businesses, especially where family members are being employed.

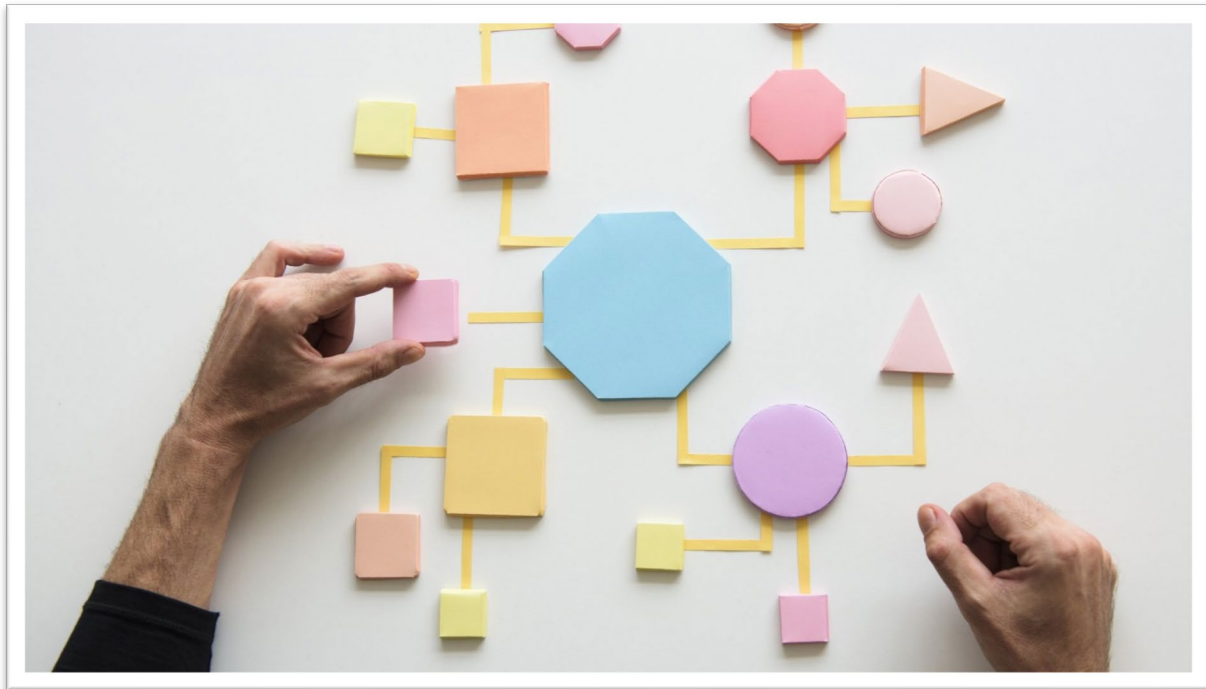
Without this basic level of clarity, family members can frequently interfere in areas where they should not be involved in.

This can be especially true when it's another family members patch and this then gives rise to more family stress and tension.

If it's another employee, and they are good at their job, you'll very quickly discover that employee giving you their notice.

This job description should set out all of their duties, their responsibilities, to whom they report and are accountable to.

5. HAVE CLEARLY DEFINED PROCESSES IN PLACE.



Again, this tip also appears in the general tips in the next section, plus if you go to my YouTube page, <https://tinyurl.com/yrn5hdex> you'll find a number of videos on the subject.

I'm mentioning it in this section as well as it appears often in family businesses, simply because family members think they have a right to decide how they will undertake their role.

If you are tasked with actually being the person who is responsible for the overall running of the business, then you cannot allow that to happen.

This can be a tricky subject to broach and enforce but believe me it becomes much more difficult if you don't. Try sacking a close family member and see how that helps the family dynamic.

I did it and let me tell you it does not help the quality of your life.

This tip not only helps you keep control of the business but is invaluable when someone is off sick or on holiday.

I think that just about covers, everything I wanted to mention in regard to the special tips for family-owned businesses.

However, I do strongly recommend you keep reading the general tips, as these tips apply to any business.

Just remember that when you look at any tip, just ask yourself, “is that what we are doing”?

Even if you are doing it go one step further and ask, “how can we do it better”?

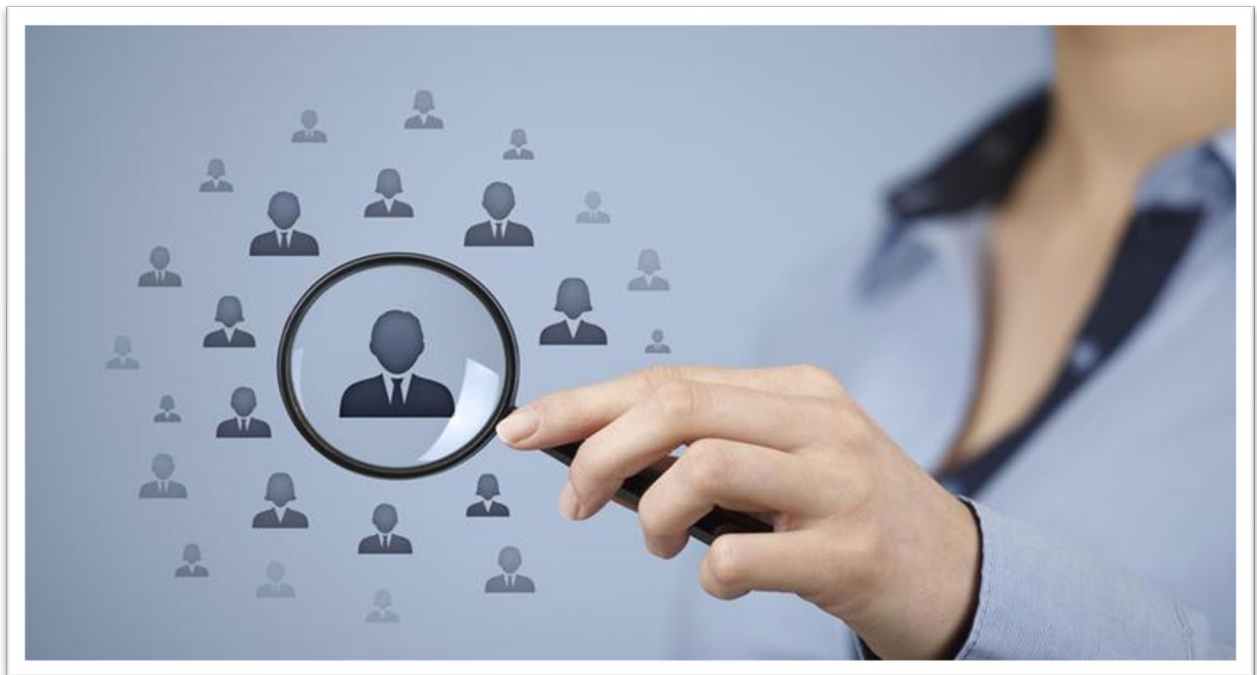
You’ll never perfect anything, but you should continually seek to improve whatever it is you are doing.

SECTION 2

GENERAL SMALL BUSINESS TIPS

STAFF TIPS

1. EMPLOY THE RIGHT PEOPLE.



Far too often when I have been called in to help a business get back on track, I find that the wrong people have been hired.

The owners then compound the problem, by instead of accepting that a poor decision has been made and amicably parting company with the employee, they persist in trying to fit a round peg into square hole.

Before employing any new person, first sit down and write a job description, one that clearly defines the role that the new appointment will fill.

Next workout what skills will be required to fulfil that role.

You can now write your job ad and start sifting through the applications looking for those people that have those skills.

However, let me make this point as strongly as I can: while skills are important, attitude is everything.

You can always train a person with the right attitude, but who lacks certain skills, but you can never train a person with the skills but a poor attitude.

I’ve seen many cases where people have successfully learnt new skills, but I can only recall one time where an employee had a complete attitude change.

2. HAVE CONTROLS IN PLACE SO THAT YOU CAN SEE WHAT IS HAPPENING IN THE BUSINESS.



One of the most common problems experienced by small business owners is that they micromanage their employees. The reason for this is that they have not learned how to manage the business in a hands-off manner.

These days, there are tools available for small business owners that allow you to exercise that same level of control, but without looking over your employees’ shoulder.

One useful tool that you could look at is Asana, an online task management system: www.asana.com.

This app will allow you to break up your employees into teams and manage their activities at both the team and individual level. An advantage is that it is also free.

Another useful piece of software in the quest to remotely manage your business is the MAUS KPI Dashboard.

For further information about suitable software, email us at admin@yourbusinessfreedom.com.au.

3. GIVE ALL STAFF A CLEAR, WRITTEN JOB DESCRIPTION.



How can you expect any member of your team to effectively discharge their role, if that role has not been clearly written out for them?

I’ve often heard an employer grumbling about the lack of performance of an employee, only to discover on further questioning, that the employee did not have a job description they could refer to.

On challenging the employer about this the answer is something like, “well common sense should have told them they should do that”.

Sorry, the world doesn’t work that way.

What is common sense to one person, is not necessarily so to another.

Put each of their duties in writing, along with who they are accountable to and what the expectations are.

Let them know what a good job looks like.

If you don’t want to be chained to the business every day, without being free to take a decent break, on a regular basis, then make sure you implement this tip, fully.

4. DOCUMENT ALL YOUR PROCEDURES, PROCESSES, AND POLICIES.



One thing that sets apart a well-run business from the rest of the pack is the consistency of the client experience.

To achieve this, you need to ensure that every one of your procedures, processes, and systems are clearly documented and up to date.

Before we all had smart phones, this could be quite an onerous task and even harder to make sure everyone had the latest edition.

However, with the proliferation of smart phones it's become much easier.

If you want to delve further into this topic, then head to my YouTube page, <https://tinyurl.com/yrn5hdex> as I've done several videos on this important topic.

My short version on how to easily accomplish this task, is to use your smart phone to video someone carrying out the process, in the way you wish it to be done, every time.

Once you've videoed the task, then upload it onto your YouTube page in the private section.

You can then give everyone the link so they can see how the job should be done.

Not only does this create a consistent experience for the customer, but it also means that someone else can fill a role when the usual team member is away due to sickness or holidays.

5. LEARN HOW TO EFFECTIVELY DELEGATE.



You can delegate to an existing team member, a new on-site employee or even someone remote.

The art of delegation is a very broad topic and can be disastrous if you do not learn how to do it well.

I have done a number of videos on the subject of delegation, which can be found at: <https://tinyurl.com/yrn5hdex>

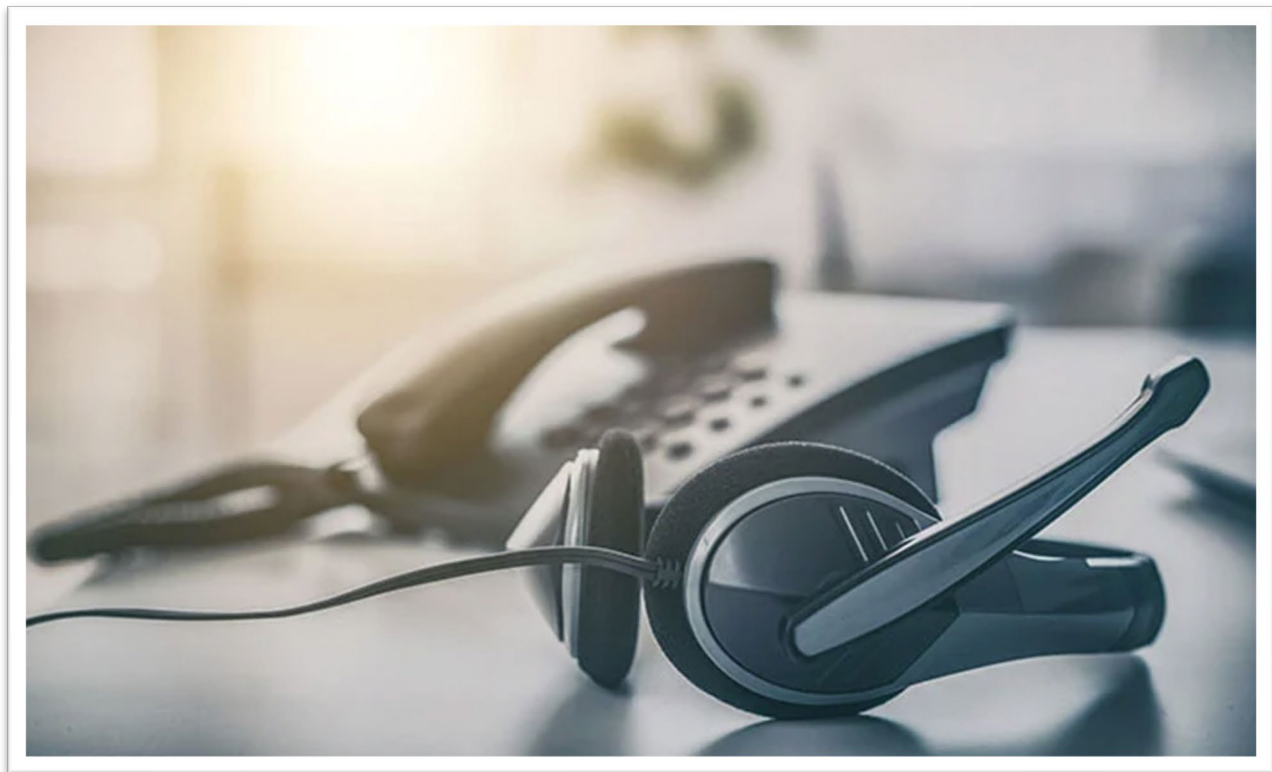
While this is a tough art to learn, if you don't you will never ever be able to effectively grow your business. Even worse, you will drive yourself into the ground.

In short, the key is to identify someone with the appropriate skill set and prepare a clear set of procedures (this can either be written, or preferably videoed), before they commence the duties.

To begin with, make sure you build into your process a system of checking, until such time you’re satisfied that they are competent enough to do the job without close supervision.

As mentioned in a previous tip, you can use Asana or the MAUS KPI Dashboard and others to manage this process.

6. HAPPIER STAFF GIVE BETTER CUSTOMER SERVICE.



I believe the Chinese have a quote that says, “man with a sour face should not open shop”.

If you are not a happy person at work, then your staff will not be happy at work. If you and your staff are not happy at work, you will drive customers away.

The costliest part of doing business is to actually get people into your place of business, on the phone or online. If you then put them off because of a miserable attitude, then you are burning through a lot of money.

This is one of those things where you could get somebody at random to contact your business, either in person, on the phone or online, and then report back on their experience.

7. HIRE THE BEST PERSON FOR THE JOB.



I want to come to this one from a slightly different angle. I'm not talking here about the more mundane work that might need to be done in your business, but the role where intelligence is a definite advantage.

Frequently I find that small business owners shy away from employing people who are smarter than they are.

They tend to feel that, as the business owner, they should

have all the answers, and employing somebody more intelligent than them may compromise their authority.

The thing to remember is that it is your business, and, at the end of the day, you will be the one who will look good or bad, depending upon the decisions made within your business.

So, if you are employing people smarter than you, there is every chance that better decisions will be made, and your business will become more successful.

For a senior role, I always look for people smarter than me, because they end up making me look good.

Recent graduates will often look for the opportunity to demonstrate their ability.

They may not have the practical skills that you’re looking for, but they are generally extremely keen to work hard and learn.

Sure, unless you can continue to grow them, they will move on to bigger companies who can offer them a career path. But in the meantime, you will have benefited from their knowledge and abilities.

8. TREAT YOUR STAFF WELL.



It almost seems like a waste of time mentioning this point, as it is so obvious.

However, it’s been my experience that this is not always the case in every business.

In some businesses, the owners take the attitude that the employee should be grateful for the job.

They seem to feel that they have kept their side of the bargain by paying them.

Now there may not be anything malicious in the owner’s intent, but it is most certainly a dangerous practice.

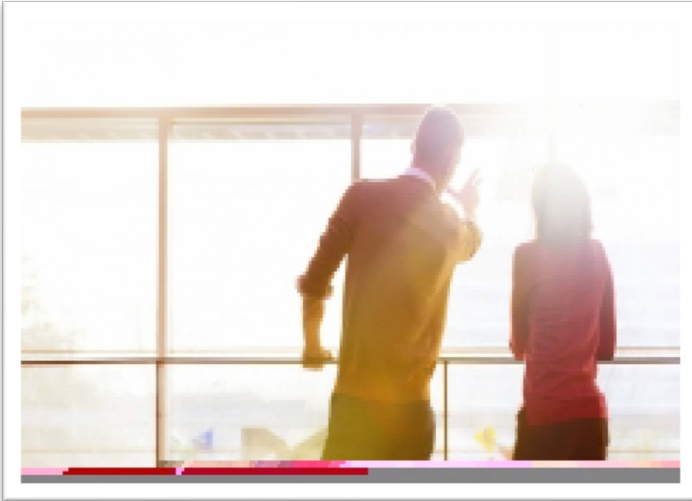
We must never lose sight of the fact that the future of your business lies in the hands of your employees.

Your employees usually are the link between your business and your customers.

If your staff are not representing your business as you would wish, then it will cost you money and possibly even your business in the long run.

So, treat your staff as you too would like to be treated.

9. SHARE YOUR GOALS AND PRIORITIES WITH YOUR STAFF.



Some business owners treat their staff like mushrooms. They keep them in the dark and feed them on manure.

Now, again, there may be nothing malicious about this at all; it's just a failure to understand why this is so important.

In a team sport, if only the captain or the coach knew what

the team was trying to achieve, winning would be very difficult.

This is equally true in business.

The more your team understand what the goals are, and the order of priorities, the greater the contribution they can make towards the outcome you're seeking.

For many years, I have made it a practice to have a regular team meeting, where I set out what we are trying to do.

We work from a 90-day action plan, through to daily task management.

When your team has this sort of information, it is easy for them to prioritise their own work so that they fit in with the overall aims of the business.

10. INSPIRE STAFF TO NOT PUT A CEILING ON THEMSELVES.



Many employers have this false assumption that it is not a good idea to inspire their staff to be the very best that they can be.

Many refuse to spend money on training their staff and encouraging them get better qualified.

They have this misguided notion that if they train them up, they will either want more money or leave and go to one of their competitors.

That entertaining speaker, Tom O’Toole, from Beechworth Bakery, used to say, “what if you don’t train them and they stay”.

From my own experience, spending money on employees and helping them grow is one of the best retention tools you can use.

If you want your business to grow, both you and your team members must grow first; the business will then grow as a result of your team’s growth.

11. HOLD REGULAR MEETINGS WITH YOUR STAFF.



In the smallest of businesses, even if there are only two of you, get into the habit of holding regular team meetings.

The reason for this is that communications play a vital role in any business, and yet they are frequently handled so badly.

Regular team meetings give you the opportunity to make sure everybody is up to date with what is happening within the business.

It also gives your team members the opportunity of bringing up matters that have the potential to cause problems further down the track.

You should always make sure that you have somebody taking notes and will circulate those notes to all the team members, within 24 hours.

These notes should also include any actions that need to be taken, by whom and by what date.

How frequently you hold these meetings will depend upon the sort of business you are in. In my previous business we used to meet every 2 weeks.

CUSTOMER TIPS

12. ALWAYS ASK “HOW DID YOU HEAR ABOUT US” EVERY TIME A CUSTOMER OR ENQUIRY CALLS YOU.



This is a common mistake made by many small businesses.

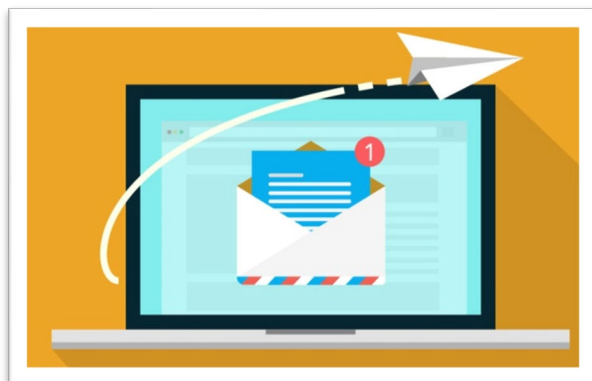
They have no idea where their business is coming from.

If you're spending any money at all on marketing, then you must be aware of what is working for you and what isn't.

If you know where your customers are coming from, then you can ramp up your marketing in that area and probably cut back your expenditure on the marketing that is not working.

If you don't know what's working for you, then you're wasting money and opportunity.

13. KEEP CUSTOMERS INFORMED OF WHAT YOU'RE DOING.



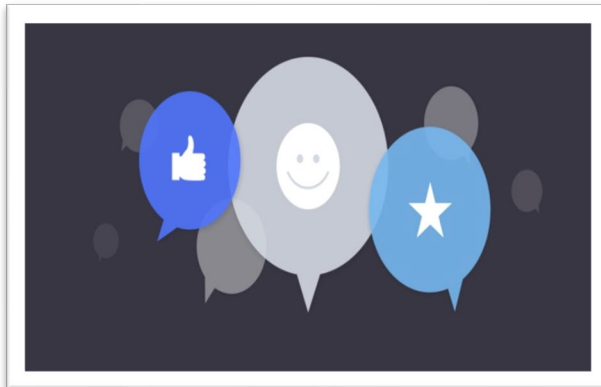
You can't expect your customers to guess what new things you are doing.

The least costly customer is the one who has already done business with you.

So, make sure there is somewhere in

your process where you capture their details. Then keep them up to date with any new developments in your business and any other product or service that might help them.

14. GET WRITTEN TESTIMONIALS



One of the things you need to recognise is that most happy customers will intend to give you a written testimonial, but they will forget due to the busyness of their days.

The trick here is to write down the comments that the client made as soon as you finish talking to them,

type it up, send them a copy, and ask for their permission to use it.

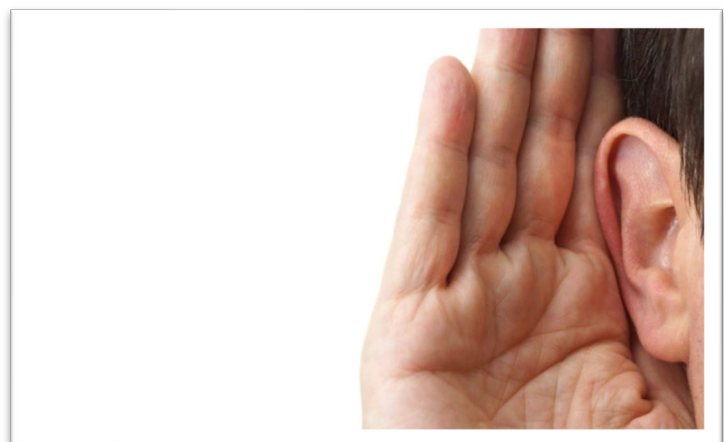
Most people will be more than happy to give you the approval; in fact, they will be pleased to help you.

Written testimonials are a powerful endorsement of your service and can be used, not only on your website, but also on your ads, where appropriate.

15. LISTEN TO CUSTOMERS; THEY ARE YOUR LIFEblood.

We should, on a regular basis, survey our customers to see how well we are performing.

Often, we think that we are providing the service or product that they are looking for, when in fact, they are really looking for something different.

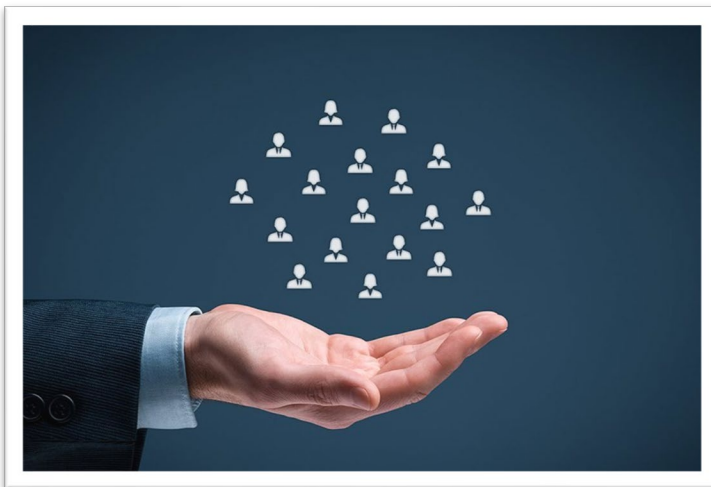


It is very easy these days to set up a simple confidential survey to gain valuable insight into our performance.

One simple tool that is on the market is Wufoo. This is a tool that we use quite frequently when we are seeking honest feedback, as the people respond anonymously.

For further information go to www.wufoo.com. I am pretty sure that they have a free version.

16. BUILD A CUSTOMER DATABASE.



We must know who our customers are, and how to contact them.

Once we know who they are and how to contact them, we must ensure that we are in contact with them on a regular basis.

Although sending out newsletters with your latest offerings is better than nothing, there are better options.

In this day and age, where so often we are reduced to merely a number, anyone who takes the trouble to treat us as a person will always be a step ahead of the competition.

When you start to build a client/customer database, see if you can segment it, so that any communications you have with that client will be meaningful.

The large players these days have developed this to a very fine art. They seem to know more about us than we do ourselves.

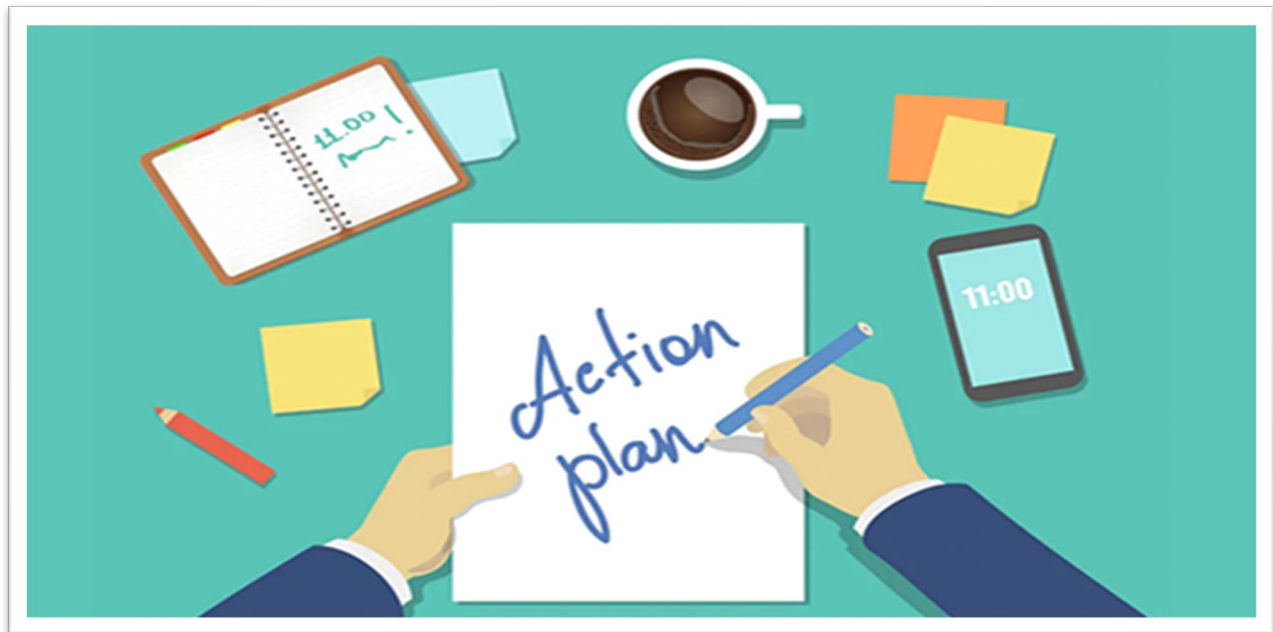
So, if we wish to remain competitive, we must learn the same lessons that they have. There is plenty of material about this issue on Google, so spending a bit of time in this area will ultimately pay dividends.

If you don't already have database software, then I suggest you start with MailChimp, as it has a free option.

For further information on MailChimp go to www.mailchimp.com.

STRATEGY TIPS

17. DEVELOP AN ACTION PLAN, AND THEN IMPLEMENT IT!



Good intentions will not get the job done. You need to lay out a plan, in writing, record the action, who's responsible for the action, when the task will be started, when it should be finished and, finally, when it was actually done.

You need to review this action plan on a regular basis, at least weekly, and hold everybody accountable for their actions, especially you.

If you would like a copy of the action plan template, then email us at admin@yourbusinessfreedom.com.au and put in the subject line 'action template'.

18. LOOK TO INCREASE YOUR AVERAGE SALE VALUE.



One of the hardest things to do in business is to actually get in front of a customer, whether this is in person, on the phone or online.

However, once we are with the customer, we must make sure we make the most of the opportunity.

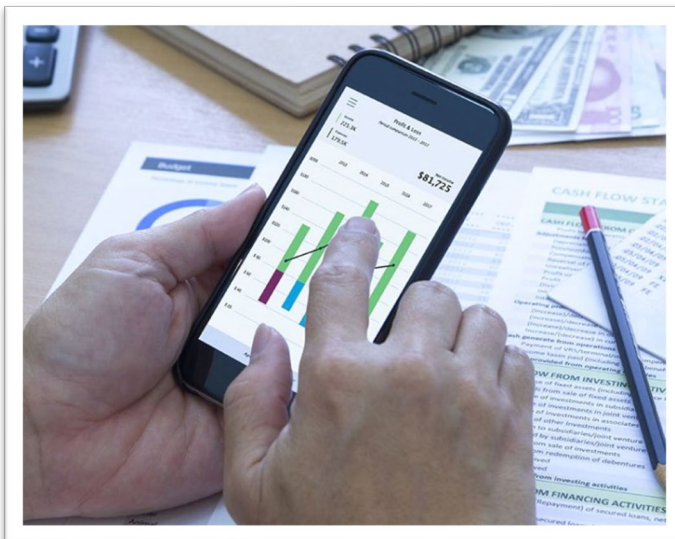
Everyone knows about McDonalds’ “would you like fries with that”, but I’m not sure that everybody is aware

of just how much this adds to McDonalds’ bottom-line.

If you have a look at all the big players, they all have some strategy to increase the value of the sale.

You need to do the same. Get together with your team and see what additional offering you can make, to increase the value of your average sale.

19. THINK PROFIT & CASH FLOW, NOT SALES.



More sales do not necessarily equal more profit, sometimes they can equal less profit.

If you do not have good systems in place, as well as well-trained staff, then more sales can often result in chaos.

In fact, in my 40 odd years in small business advice and management, I’ve seen increased sales bring about many businesses’ failure.

The cause of the failure may be a result of a lack of systems and well-trained staff, but it also may be a result of running out of money.

So, before you go and crank up your sales, make sure that your systems, your staff, and your cash reserves, will cope with the increase in business.

Before embarking upon any major increase in turnover, always run the numbers and make sure they stack up.

If you’re looking for a simple cash flow projector template, then email us at admin@yourbusinessfreedom.com.au and put in the subject line ‘cash flow template’.

20. DON'T STICK TO ONE SINGLE IDEA.



Play with different ideas and see which ones are successful and profitable.

You don’t want to have too many “irons in the fire”, as you can easily lose focus; but you also need to be careful that you are not a “one trick pony”.

When testing different ideas and products, make sure that you stay within your core business.

21. CREATE A MARKETING PLAN.



These days marketing is as important, if not more so, than product development.

There is no point in having the best product and the best service at the best price, if nobody knows about it.

Without a marketing plan, what will happen is you will tend to dabble, and this is a great way of wasting money.

What tends to happen, without a formalised marketing plan, is that we try this, and then we try that, all without any clear strategy behind what we're doing.

When we are trying to optimise our marketing, we should be clear on our approach and be continually checking our analytics, to see what is and what isn't working.

Having no clear marketing plan is a recipe for failure.

22. NETWORKING IS THE KEY TO SUCCESS.



Networking used to involve us attending functions and trying to meet as many people as we could. This was a very time-consuming process and some of us were better at it than others.

Today, we have plenty of other options available to us.

One of my favourites is LinkedIn. You can sit at your computer, or your smart phones, and connect with those people who you would seek out at a networking event.

The beauty of this is we are not restricted geographically or even chronologically. If you're a bit of a “night owl”, you can even do this late at night or at any time that suits you.

However, if you are going to use LinkedIn to network, please remember that what you are looking to do is to build relationships.

One of the cardinal sins that people make with LinkedIn is that no sooner have you agreed to connect with them that they try and sell you something.

This is the fastest way to destroy any hope you have of creating a relationship with your new connection.

Of course, LinkedIn is not your only option these days; there is also Twitter, Facebook and Instagram and others that you can use to build connections and relationships.

The old-fashioned way of networking by meeting people in person of course remains, but when it is convenient.

23. VISUALISE WHAT YOUR FUTURE IS TO LOOK LIKE.



I once heard a racing driver explain how they were able to avoid some of the accidents that an amateur would end up having.

His explanation was that racing drivers concentrate on where they want the car to go, whereas amateurs look at what they're going to hit.

To put it another way, the professional looks at where he

wants to go, but the amateur looks at what he doesn't want to happen.

Most top sports people these days spend a great deal of time visualising the outcome they are seeking. They spend no time visualising what they don't want to happen.

You must take a leaf out of their book and spend some time visualising what you want the future to look like.

What would it look like in one year's time, in 5 years' time, maybe even 10 years' time?

The more detail you can put into this, the more likely it is to happen.

The best thing to do is firstly write this out on a foolscap sheet of paper. The act of writing seems to have a greater reinforcing affect than typing.

Once you have it in writing, keep polishing it until you reach a point where you think it represents a clear picture of what you want the future to look like.

Remember, you are doing this for you, so you don't need to worry what others may think about it.

Once you have it written out to your satisfaction, start spending some time each day visualising it.

24. BALANCE WATCHING EXPENDITURE WITH INVESTING FOR YOUR FUTURE.



While it is very important to monitor your expenditure and make cuts wherever possible, you also need to be investing in your future.

To get this mix correct is a very fine balancing act.

My advice to keep the balance right, is to work off a percentage of sales, gross profit, or possibly net profit.

The reason why I have mentioned 3 different options is because it will depend on the nature of the investment.

Will this investment make you more efficient and thereby cut your costs?

Or, is it the sort of investment that will allow you to increase sales?

It may be an investment, in either yourself or a staff member. This should be to help you, in the future, to run your business better.

Knowledge is a powerful weapon which can be learnt the hard way, as a result of your own experience.

Or, by leveraging off someone else's experience, which is way cheaper and far less stressful.

All of these investments are very valid and well worth spending money on, but you must make sure that the business can either afford the expenditure at this point or will be able to provide a rapid return for you to cover the cost.

ATTITUDE TIPS

25. BE HONEST AND UPFRONT.



I remember reading many years ago that, if honesty did not exist, then business would need to invent it.

In the very crowded business world in which we operate, being honest and upfront can really set you apart from the crowd.

By being honest and upfront, I don't just mean not telling lies.

I also mean telling people when you do not believe that your product or service is in their best interest.

Even if you miss the sale, people will remember you and either come back to you when you do have an offering that would suit them and/or tell a friend or acquaintance of the experience.

Although it may be a sad reflection on society that we can use honesty to set us apart from our competitors, it nevertheless is true.

26. NEVER GO BACK ON YOUR WORD, EVEN IF IT HURTS.



We’ve all had those circumstances in business, where we made a promise which we then found very difficult or expensive to deliver on.

It does not matter how much personal pain you may suffer, if it is within your power to deliver on your promise, then do so.

Over the years, I’ve been counselled many times on what many perceive is my lack of pragmatism. However, I’ve never changed and have no intention of changing, because once I have a customer, they stay with me for years.

The cost of keeping a promise, in the long-term, falls into insignificance, when compared to the business that I have received back, as a result of the loyalty of the client to me and my business.

27. ENTHUSIASM IS CONTAGIOUS.



If you're running a business, one of the greatest characteristics that you can display is enthusiasm.

In the same way that negativity can spread like wildfire throughout a company, so can enthusiasm and positivity.

Often people will justify negativity, by saying that that they're just trying to be realistic. However, in most instances, it just produces an air of negativity.

Enthusiastic people are always keen to try new ideas, whereas negative people always know why it won't work.

If you're the sort of person that is not naturally enthusiastic, then research some strategies to help yourself in this area.

I know that, as an engineer, I can get caught up in the “just being realistic” mindset, so I've developed a little strategy that I use each day, where:

- **every morning I write down 5 things for which I am grateful**

- every evening I write down 5 things I’ve achieved that day.

Between these 2 actions, I manage to stay in a positive mindset.

28. FOCUS. FOCUS. FOCUS.



One of the most frequent problems I encounter when working with small business owners is, that they are involved in so much, that they don’t focus.

I use the analogy of taking a sheet of paper outside, holding it in sunlight and asking what the effect would be. The answer of course is nothing much.

If we then take that same sheet of paper, along with a magnifying glass, and concentrate the sun’s rays, I ask them what the effect would be. Their answer is that the paper would catch fire.

I then ask them what the difference is; it’s exactly the same sun’s rays. The answer of course is that those rays have now been focused.

In the first example, the sun’s energy is diffused. In the second example, the energy is concentrated on one spot.

Exactly the same thing happens to us. If we defuse our energy, it has no impact. If we concentrate our energy, we catch fire.

29. PROCRASTINATION IS THE ENEMY OF GROWTH.



Procrastination is unquestionably a business killer.

We live in a very fast paced world today, and those businesses that delay taking the action that they know they should, will die.

There is no doubt that as small business owners we need to speed up not only our decision making, but also our actions taken.

We need to become people of action.

We no longer compete on a local or national stage. We have been forced to compete on the international stage as well.

So, it is no longer the person just down the road, who we have to compete against, but quite likely somebody in India or China, or in fact, anywhere in the world.

We must become light on our feet, and swift in action, out-thinking and out-implementing our competitors, wherever they may be.

30. ALWAYS BE PUNCTUAL.



We used to call this a common courtesy, but regrettably it is becoming less and less common.

It doesn't matter what the occasion is, whether it is a meeting with a customer, a team member, a supplier, or anyone else, make sure you are the one that is on time and ready.

Being late puts you at a significant disadvantage if the other party is already there, ready and waiting.

From this point on, you will be forever scrambling trying to catch up.

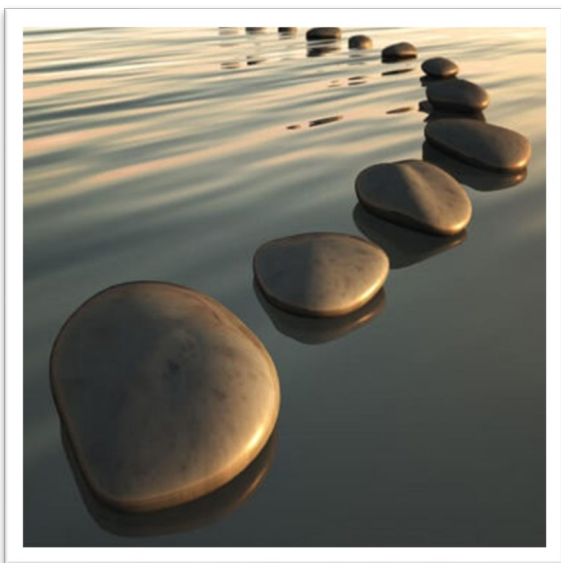
You're also giving the other party the impression that their time is not important, while yours is.

Now we all understand that there are moments when being late is unavoidable, but in these days of mobile phones, there really is no excuse for not alerting the other party of your late arrival.

I know some people are habitually late, and this is because it has become a habit and a bad one in that.

So, make a resolution to always be on time for any sort of meeting in the future.

31. LEARN FROM SETBACKS - THEY ARE THE STEPPINGSTONES OF LIFE.



Setbacks and problems are a fact of life. Everybody suffers from them.

The difference is, for successful people, they look for the lessons in the setback and then move on.

Winston Churchill once said, “success consists of going from failure to failure without loss of enthusiasm”.

We often think that famous people don't suffer the same trials and tribulations as we do.

This is far from the truth, what they have learned to do is to deal with life’s reversals much more effectively.

If we have any aspirations towards achieving anything significant in our lives, then we too must establish similar habits.

32. WALK THE WALK AS WELL AS TALKING THE TALK.



When I was growing up, I would often complain about some restriction that my father had placed on me.

My “beef” was that he didn’t follow his own rules.

His favourite reply was “do as I tell you, not as I do”.

I thought then, and still think now, that this is a real copout.

How are you going to respect someone and the decisions that they make, if they don’t follow the same rules?

I know, when I work with small business owners, that the hardest people to get to change are the owners themselves.

They will often continue to follow shortcuts, even after we’ve agreed on a set process for everyone, simply because they know that there is no one to haul them into line.

Simply put, they do not demonstrate accountability, so how can they expect to be able to hold their staff accountable?



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Having worked with small businesses for more than 40 years, one of John's greatest frustrations has been watching people giving their lives to their business, supporting their communities, and providing employment, only to find that when it comes time to sell, either they are unable to, or unable to sell for what they hoped, and so their dreams get shattered.

John firmly believes that there are answers out there and has made it his life's mission to help as many small businesses as possible to find these answers, taking back control of their businesses and finally achieve the freedom and the financial stability that they dreamt of.



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