

HOW TO JUMP START YOUR NEW BUSINESS

THE SECRETS TO RAPID GROWTH



Bill Todd

HOW TO JUMP START YOUR NEW BUSINESS

Discover The Cutting Edge Secrets of Today's Most Remarkable Entrepreneurs

If you have ever taken the first steps toward starting your own business, you are rare indeed! The vast majority of us would be far more comfortable having a root canal without the aid of Novocain than start our own business! Why? Most will admit they are afraid to say good-bye to their reliable and predictable income. Without a doubt all the risk associated with starting a business is the primary culprit.

In short, the major obstacle is the simple fear of failure.

Entrepreneurs are risk takers and wealth generators. They are people with a strong desire to create their own success. According Entrepreneur.com, "The belief that I can do that, is the defining image of an entrepreneur." These business owners love a challenge. It took Thomas Edison 10,000 attempts to create a light bulb that only burned for several seconds. Imagine if Edison quit after 1,000 attempts. He could rightly rationalize that it couldn't be done. After all, who would expect him to try 1,000, 2,000 or even 5,000 times. Yet, it took 9,999 failures before he achieved this desired result.

Successful entrepreneurs spend little time worrying about their potential failures. Entrepreneurs are visionaries who see things that others cannot. They want to create change and growth and strongly believe in themselves. They want to control their destiny. Successful entrepreneurs seek out, acquire and practice the skills they need to succeed.

In short, successful entrepreneurs do what they have to do to get to where they want to be.

Amazon.com returns over 36,000 books, DVDs, CDs and white papers when you search "how to start a business". Google.com, will overwhelm you with 62,000,000+ results when you conduct the identical search. This continually growing mountain of data and products covers all the predictable topics such as: management, marketing, accounting, finance, customer service and human resources. Interestingly enough,

the one observation that is rarely mentioned is how the act of starting a business and starting a family have such amazing similarities.

There are no two other endeavors that will provide you with a such high level of excitement, joy, pride, passion and enthusiasm. Simultaneously, there are no two actions that will produce such high levels of frustration, stress, anxiety and sleepless nights. Yet when all is said and done, the positives of both will constantly outnumber the negatives.

For example, the moment you announce that you're starting a family both friends and relatives seem compelled to offer endless advice on how to both give birth and then raise your child. Like it or not, you will hear a never-ending stream of stories about other people's pregnancies, deliveries, childrearing and the sleepless nights that follow. Rarely are any of the gory details left out. By the time your first labor pain makes itself known, you will have had the benefit of hearing a multitude of well-meaning stories that will prepare you for what it's about to follow.

Ironically this is not true for giving birth to a new business. While it is quite common for us to have friends, family and neighbors who have started a family, the same cannot be said for starting a business.

Entrepreneurs are rare. Most people are not comfortable taking on the risk that starting a business involves. As a result, we know far fewer entrepreneurs and business owners who could share their insight. Most people seem to enjoy sharing their trials and tribulations of starting a family. While most entrepreneurs do not frequently share their early problems or the big mistakes. Too frequently, they hold that information close to their vest as if it might portray a weakness or vulnerability. As parents we humans seem to instinctively understand that no one succeeds by trial and success. As a result, we share our mistakes, problems and solutions readily. This same frank openness is hard to come by in the business world.

As an entrepreneur I have helped launch six aggressive start-ups. I have also been privileged to be part of launch teams that have started five fledgling franchises that grew into global brands. The most powerful lesson on success I can share with you is to expect early setbacks and failures as a normal, healthy part of new growth.

This may not be the upbeat motivational message you anticipated would come first. Trust me, it is the most important advice you'll receive. Too frequently the excited, passionate and energetic new business owner becomes transformed into a stressed out proprietor sporting a new crop of deep worry lines.

For the last two decades I've been a frequent traveler and averaged over six flights per month. From the first time I stepped on an airplane I've been a classic nervous flyer. For several years I hung on to my arm rests with a death grip every time we experienced turbulence. As luck would have it, a white-haired pilot was sitting next to me during one unusually rough flight. He could see the terror in my face as I squeezed every drop of blood out of his left forearm during one big bump.

He simply reminded me that we were heading to a warm sunny place and that temporary turbulence was a natural part of flying. He calmly explained that it is rare that anyone can get to where they want to be without experiencing some kind of turbulence. Although uncomfortable to the passengers, the plane was in no danger.

The crew would not have taken off if we could be in any real danger. He even pointed out that the clear air turbulence we were experiencing was the one that most frequently caught pilots off guard because it cannot be seen. It's okay to be surprised, because every good pilot anticipates it and realizes that it's just part of normal flight.

I can't overemphasize how that simple piece of advice reduced my self-induced stress levels from that day forward. If I had met this seasoned pilot on my first day I would've enjoyed my job a whole lot more those first few years.

Today, I ask all my clients who are starting a business for the first time to write one short paragraph of the worst case scenario that their new venture could experience. Amazingly every paragraph comes out almost the same. As a rule it begins with the business ending up in bankruptcy. The owner is unable to pay back the original investors or the owner loses their current savings. Employees must be laid off and the business is closed.

I next ask them to write a single paragraph predicting what will happen to everyone associated with their business in the six months after the bankruptcy. Once again the answers

are usually identical. The owner has reentered the workforce or started a new business. The former employees have done the same. The original investors have moved on to new ventures.

Finally I ask them read the two paragraphs out loud. I remind them that what they have just read in their own words was the very reason the majority of their friends, family and colleagues will never muster the courage to start a business. Entrepreneurs are rare, they choose to pursue great financial success. They are also willing to take on the stress and risks that accompany starting a business. Those two paragraphs predictably scare the hell out of the aforementioned friends and family.

It's important to note that most investors, such as venture capitalists, fully anticipate that the vast the majority of their investments will fail miserably. In fact, they fully anticipate that at least 80% of their investments will go up in smoke. They even factor it in to their risk assessment. These savvy investors also know they will make enough money off the 20% that are successful to fully cover those losses. One of the most common traits of today's most successful business professional is a long string of documented failures that seemed to pave the path of future success.

As New York City mayor and famous entrepreneur Michael Bloomberg aptly put it: "If people tell me they skied all day and never fell down, I tell them to try a different mountain."

As Tom Peters puts it, "Fail-Forward-Fast. It's not enough to tolerate failure, one must celebrate failure. To move fast, one must be trying new stuff. Trying new stuff means screwing up constantly then adjusting fast with a brand new try. Fail again and fail better. At the heart of the matter is the wholesale celebration of failure as a building block to long term success."

When I look back at the hundreds of entrepreneurs I have coached, one scenario emerges far too frequently. The owners gleaming faces are filled with excitement and passion on opening day. A few weeks later I return to see the weight of the world has now settled on the owner's shoulders and etched deep worry lines across their brows. All the fun and excitement of running a business and pursuing a dream has now been replaced by dealing with the predictable setbacks and pitfalls that often face a new business.

I quickly pull out their sheet with the one paragraph describing their potential worst case scenario. "Remember, this is as bad as it gets. Prior to opening we agreed that if this unlikely scenario were ever to materialize, you would not only survive but emerge stronger." I then politely grab them by the shoulders and start shaking them while saying, "When people are feeling overwhelmed, frustrated and fearful, they're rarely capable of brilliant decision-making. Yes, setbacks can be uncomfortable and unpleasant, but this is not life-threatening so get out and grow your business, it's your dream!"

Harland Sanders made the decision to start his business at the age of 66. The opening of a new highway in Kentucky put Harland Sanders into involuntary retirement. He was employed by a restaurant adjacent to a busy gas station called "*The Sanders Court and Café.*" He served as cook, cashier and manager. The new highway redirected all the traffic that had previously driven past his restaurant and gas station. At the age of 66, he was almost broke, living off a monthly Social Security check of \$105 and some savings.

Harlan Sanders was an entrepreneur at heart. For most of his adult life he had wanted to start a truly unique company. One that combined a brand new cooking technology with an old family recipe for seasoning chicken. So at an age when most people are enjoying a quiet retirement, Harland Sanders said, "If it's to be it's up to me," and set out to launch his new venture. His new company consisted of a broken down 1946 Ford and a used pressure cooker plus the Harlan's family recipe for fried chicken. The pressure cooker was his technological innovation. It allowed restaurants to fry chicken in one fourth the original time.

His business plan was to simply visit restaurant owners in person, trying to convince them to use his cooking method and family recipe. By his own admission he made over 80 sales presentations before making his first sale. He was so short of money he would frequently sleep in the back of his Ford because he could not afford a cheap motel room.

Most restaurant owners dismissed the elderly man before he had time to demonstrate his secret method of rapidly frying chicken that had been dusted in his secret recipe of spices. One morning he stumbled upon a restaurant whose cook had not shown up. Luckily it was also the busiest day of the week for the restaurant. The owner was frantically preparing launch entries

in the kitchen when Harlan Sanders poked his head in the door. Sanders not only spotted opportunity, he seized it!

He explained that he'd been cooking in restaurants for half his life. In exchange for a demonstration of his products after lunch, he offered to take over the cooking for that shift. The panicked owner who had no one to wait on tables jumped at the offer.

The Colonel quickly announced that fried chicken was the new special the day. Never before had the local regulars of this restaurant raved about a lunch special. Many commented they had never tasted better chicken. On that day in 1952 the Colonel made his 81th sales call, resulting in his first Kentucky Fried Chicken franchise agreed over a handshake. The deal called for the owner to pay him a nickel for every order of fried chicken sold from that day forward. By 1960 over 190 franchisees had opened 400 locations.

What if the Colonel had quit after his 40th unsuccessful sales call. What if he had turned his old Ford around and gone home after the 75th person said "No." With age comes wisdom; Harland Sanders knew that failure, especially in the early going, was the foundation for amazing success.

At an age when he should've been in a rocking chair enjoying his declining years, Colonel Sanders persevered as an entrepreneur. Never allowing failure or setback to dictate his plan to launch his business. If the Colonel had allowed the naysayers and doubters to dictate his commitment, we'd probably would be eating baloney sandwiches on our picnics today.

When you research the careers of today's most successful entrepreneurs you can document many similarities. There is one similarity that is always present. It is also the one similarity that is most frequently cited by entrepreneurs as the sole reason for their success. In a survey of Fortune 1000 CEOs conducted by the Cox Report on American Business, no less than 98% of the respondents credited a positive attitude as their sole reason for success.

In short, the skill or habit of maintaining a positive attitude every day, comes up almost every time!

Ironically, this research unnerved the small army of analyticals at Merrill Lynch who set out to test it. They surveyed the CEOs of the Fortune 500 with one question. "Was it aptitude or attitude that played the biggest role in your personal business success?" This time 94%

answered that aptitude or brains played little in their accomplishments. Attitude was the primary catalyst for their remarkable success.

In 2008, I co-authored a book with Stephen Covey entitled "*Speaking of Success*." In my research I spoke to hundreds of very successful entrepreneurs and small business owners. My goal was to identify the unique skills or best practices that made them out-sell, out-market and out-perform their competitors. Without fail, possessing a positive attitude was credited almost every time as the foundation for their success.

We are not born with a positive attitude. It is in fact a habit! Remarkable success predictably happens the moment you decide to maintain a consistent positive attitude. Success will happen, regardless of your current situation or past performance. Author Jeffrey Gitomer, in his best-selling book "*Little Red Book of Sales*", states "Attitude is not a feeling, it is a state of mind. In fact, it is one of life's few self-imposed blessings!" Earl Nightingale, a member of the Association of National Broadcasters Hall of Fame says "our attitude towards life determines life's attitude toward us."

It became clear to me that people began to become successful the minute they decide to achieve and maintain a positive attitude. Yale University Professor Gregory Walton states "Your attitude right now is only as positive as you decide it will be."

Many new business owners still hang on to the perception that somehow outside circumstances has control over our attitude. The truth is, whether you have a positive attitude or not has nothing to do with what's going on in your life. Unless you decide it will!

As a result of the popularity of the book "*Speaking of Success*," I've been privileged to present these findings to hundreds of business groups around the world. Almost inevitably I will be approached after my presentation by one of the attendees and told that this whole "attitude thing" is just too simple to explain long-term success. It sounds great but it's not complex enough to play a significant role in determining whether an entrepreneur succeeds or fails. One CEO even interrupted me to make the point that if attitude was so important to business success why was it not taught at America's leading business schools.

As a sales trainer I passionately promote the power of attitude in determining your eventual business and personal success. Ironically, as an entrepreneur, I'm not so eager to see my competition being updated on this research. Why? I can tell you for a fact that a positive attitude provides you with a distinct competitive advantage.

The most inspiring example of the power of a positive attitude took place in the spring of 1954 just outside of Oxford, England. A young medical student named Roger Bannister had read many times that the conventional wisdom was that the human athlete was incapable of pushing itself to the point of running a mile in less than four minutes. Although now a full-time medical student, Bannister had been an accomplished track and field star as an undergraduate at Oxford. His combined knowledge of science and running led him to believe that breaking the four-minute mile barrier was a distinct possibility. It's important to point out that in 2000 plus years of recorded history no runner had broken that historical barrier. The physicians who taught Bannister dismissed his assertion citing that the heart and lungs were incapable of sustaining the stress that would be involved in running a sub-four minute mile.

Be it so, Bannister was determined to break the four-minute mile. In fact, he went so far as to name the date, time and location he would achieve this remarkable accomplishment. Needless to say the obstacles in his way we're quickly deemed insurmountable by his fellow runners.

First, his heavy academic schedule would only permit him to practice 45 minutes a day, six days a week. In fact, running at all on Sundays was out of the question due his lab work and study obligations. Next, he could not afford a coach or trainer which was deemed imperative by every serious competitive runner. As improbable as the outcome seemed Bannister stayed focused on achieving success. He dismissed the unrelenting negative talk from friends, family, fellow students and peers.

By naming in advance the exact day, place and time he would become the first human to break the four-minute mile caused quite a stir. The administrators at Oxford, fearing the negative publicity, encouraged him to relocate his ill-fated attempt to another location.

On the morning of May 6, 1954 Roger Bannister awoke in London and participated in his regular morning rounds at Saint Mary's Hospital. He then boarded a train for Oxford where he joined a group of friends for lunch at a restaurant. After lunch he walked over to the track at Oxford and observe two disturbing factors. There was a light mist falling. This would've already dampened the track that was composed primarily of burnt embers from a nearby power plant. These damp embers would now stick to his metal cleats as he ran.

Next, there was a steady crosswind that would negatively impact any attempt to set a world record in running. Either one of these factors should dictate that any attempt to break the record be rescheduled. Yet Roger Bannister had already made up his mind he would break the record. The negative concerns of his peers or the intervention of mother nature would not have any impact on his desired outcome. He put on his running suit, stepped on to the track and for the first time in recorded history broke the four-minute mile.

Within a month, a second runner broke the four-minute mile. A few weeks later, Bannister took on that runner and they both broke the four-minute mile as Bannister reclaimed the record. Within just a few months at least a dozen other runners had broken the four-minute mile.

Absolutely nothing had changed with regard to equipment, training or technique. The only thing that it changed was people's attitude about the possibility of running a sub four-minute mile. By merely changing his attitude, Roger Bannister had accomplished a feat that had previously had been deemed impossible.

In every business scenario attitude is the catalyst to remarkable success. A North American shoe manufacturer decided to capitalize on the rapidly growing economy in Polynesia by opening a remote sales office. They dispatched their senior sales manager to open the office and retain the new sales staff. He was met at the airport by a driver who took him directly to his hotel. He walked right past the front desk and into the business center and fired off a terse e-mail back to his boss. It read, "I'll be on the first plane home tomorrow. I've seen at least 100 people between the airport and my hotel and not one of them are wearing shoes. Whose bright idea was this?"

The next week the company sent a young rookie to take the sales executive's place. The same driver picked her up at the airport and delivered her to the hotel. Like her predecessor she walked immediately past the front desk and into the business center to fire off an e-mail to the home office. It read "I have just seen at least 100 people between the airport and my hotel. Not one of them are wearing shoes. Immediately send more sample kits. What an amazing market, the potential is unlimited!"

W. Clement Stone was the founder of *Success Magazine* and president of Combined Insurance Co. His home was adjacent to a large university. One of the university professors had heard him speak at the local chamber of commerce and was amazed to learn how much money insurance salespeople were taking home. These earnings held true for both full and part timers. As a result, he quickly pursued an offer to sell insurance for a large local firm. Immediately, he made it a point to reintroduce himself to Mr. Stone, who was also neighbor. Specifically, he asked Mr. Stone if upon completion of his sales training could he visit him in person.

His objective was to get his famous neighbor to provide him with some initial "hot" leads to jumpstart his new sales career. Mr. Stone was happy to help out and prepared 10 lead cards with a prospect's name, address and phone number. The professor then asked if he could use Mr. Stone's name when calling on the prospects. Mr. Stone assured him that was perfectly fine.

At the end of his first week the professor eagerly called Mr. Stone to report that he had done remarkably well and had sold six policies. In fact, he was the top producer in his training class for his first probationary week.

At the beginning of the second week the professor stopped by Mr. Stone's house to see if he could receive another set of leads. Unfortunately, he was informed that Mr. Stone was traveling on business and would not return until the following week. The second week was nowhere near as successful for the professor. Although he had called on over 30 people he did not make one sale.

At the beginning of Week Three he stopped by Mr. Stone's house in search of more leads. Mr. Stone was on a conference call so he motioned that the professor take a seat and handed him the phone book. He said, "Here are all the prospect names, numbers and addresses you need". The professor look startled and implored Mr. Stone for 10 more special leads. He did not mean to be greedy, but he was in danger of losing his status as the top sales person in his training class. Mr. Stone pointed to the phonebook and said "Professor, where do you think I got your first 10 names and addresses from."

Maintaining a positive attitude day in and day out is challenging even for salty old business veterans. Imagine taking on that task as a new entrepreneur navigating in a brand new field. Author Brian Tracy states that, "80% of your success comes from attitude while only 20% can be credited to aptitude." Life Coach Jim Allen says, "To change your attitude, simply start thinking and acting like the person you want to become." Insurance executive A.L. Williams writes, "The number one problem that keeps people from winning big in business is a lack of belief in themselves."

Jim Cathcart, a world renowned speaker and author, was hired to speak to a regional franchisee marketing workshop for Tidy Car, a North American vehicle detailing service. One of the franchisees was a young man named Tim Seward. He was a 19-year-old business rookie who had no real experience in the world of business or entrepreneurship and was only armed with great enthusiasm and solid work ethic. That year the company ran an incentive to reward its top selling franchisee. The prize was a candy apple red Corvette with a white convertible top. Needless to say that incentive immediately resonated with the young entrepreneur.

During lunch, he asked Jim if he would share a motivational quote or phrase that he could use on a daily basis to help motivate him. Mulling this over for a moment, Jim replied, "Tim, I'll do better than that, I'm going to give you a question you can ask yourself. How will the person you want to become do what you're about to do!"

Tim went back home and took Jim's advice to heart. Although just a small franchisee he decided to ask himself that question with everything he did. He decided that the Tim Seward

he wanted to become wouldn't wear jeans and a T-shirt to work. He designed a special white uniform.

Tim even went to a local Chevrolet dealership, got a photograph taken of him in a red Corvette and put it around his home and his office. Tim joined and actively participated in the local Chamber of Commerce plus a business referral group managed by BNI.

At the end of the year Jim Cathcart was invited back to speak at the Tidy Car Annual Franchisee Convention. After his speech, he handed the mike over to the Tidy Car's CEO, who announced the results of the sales competition. The outcome was unusual to say the least. The second place franchisee beat the Number 3 by only one point. The score separating the Number 3 from the Number 4 franchisee was only a few points. Amazingly, the difference between the first place finisher and the second was a staggering 300 points! The winner was Tim Seward!

Jim asked him what he had done to achieve such massive growth to which Tim replied, "Everyday, I asked myself what would the international sales leader of Tidy Car do what I was about to do." As Zig Ziglar says, "If you can conceive it and believe it you can achieve it!"

The second most powerful tactic utilized by today's remarkably successful entrepreneurs is very closely related to the first. In fact, like all the shared success tactics this one is amazingly simple and produces exceptional results.

That is, hire for attitude first and then skills second. This tactic is based on sound reasoning. Research consistently proves that customers buy your people first and your product second. In short, people buy from people they like. The Peters Group reports that 74% of an average company's clients, who take their business to a direct competitor, do so because of the indifference of one employee. A recent story by *Female Executive Magazine* compared the sales results of a large group of insurance agents who consistently demonstrated a positive attitude with an even larger group that was perceived as possessing an average attitude. The agents, who were perceived by their customers, employers and peers as having a positive attitude, sold over 40% more policies than did the larger group. They sold the same policies in

the same territories, to the same people and at the same rates as did their peers. The only difference between the two groups was in their attitudes.

Hal Becker is the best-selling author of *Can I Have 5 Minutes of Your Time.* At the age of 22 he was hired right out of college as an entry level account executive for Xerox. At the time, Xerox boasted the largest sales force in the world with over 11,000 frontline sales people. Hal was a rookie with no experience in selling but he possessed a great attitude.

Xerox had established a long time ago that you hire for attitude first, skills second. One day a massive snowstorm paralyzed Hal's city. No one went to work for almost three days, except Hal Becker. As a rookie, Hal had not yet learned that you don't go to work when it snows. Utilizing the subway and a good set of snow boots he trudged his way to work. He noticed that only a few lights were on in the buildings above and decided that those must be the bosses—the ones who had to come to work regardless of the weather. He also quickly realized that the few lights that were on belonged to many of the clients he been unsuccessfully calling for the last few weeks.

Hal packed a week's supply brochures under his coat and set out to visit the few lights that were burning brightly above. Each time he entered an office the reception was almost the same. The people inside were indeed the bosses and decision makers. They were also universally shocked to see a salesperson standing in their doorstep. Time and time again, the executives would parade Hal around to the other workers bragging that they had just discovered the most dedicated salesperson in their town. Frequently they would ask each other "where are our salespeople and why aren't they this committed." For almost three days the paralyzed city was void of workers. And for almost three days Hal knocked on dozens upon dozens of doors. When the streets were finally cleared Hal Becker had broken the record for the most sales in a single week by Xerox salesperson. He had little experience but lots of attitude. Maybe that's why Hal finished out the year as the number one salesperson nationwide among Xerox's 11,000.

As head of global sales with an American hotel company, I was trying to personally win back an extremely lucrative client that booked over 150 meetings and conferences a year. The

senior corporate meeting planner had decided to give us one chance and if we did a great job the result would be millions of dollars in sales for our hotels nationwide. The client insisted on personally inspecting the first hotel before she made a decision that would allow us to host the test meeting. I arrived the day before the inspection and went immediately to see the general manager of the hotel. At the time he was speaking to one of his new housekeepers who had just been hired without any previous hotel cleaning experience. I explained the importance of the client and that she was a reputed fanatic for cleanliness.

I then shared some insight I'd gotten from a competitor. It seems this fastidious client was famous for entering each sleeping room during her inspection and dropping to her knees to look under the beds. If the housekeeping staff had vacuumed under the beds she knew there'd be a predictable commitment to cleanliness throughout the entire hotel.

The next morning the client arrived and true to form walked into the first empty hotel room, drop to her knees and looked under the bed. She then let out a huge belly laugh. "It seems that our inexperienced housekeeper had been listening to my conversation with the hotel's general manager the day before." On her first shift she had stayed late into the night. Before she went home she placed a sign under every single bed that read, "Welcome Mrs. Jones. We do vacuum under all our beds every single day." That housekeeper had no experience but she had a great attitude. She single-handedly landed the biggest meetings account we closed that year.

Best-selling author Seth Godin had written several best-selling e-books on the topic of marketing. Hundreds of thousands of people had purchased and downloaded Seth's e-books.

The executives of a large publishing firm in New York City had received word that he was about to finish his much-anticipated book, *"Purple Cow."* They invited him to talk about the possibility of publishing this book. This was a well-respected publisher and Seth was excited to have their interest. He explained over the phone that he would gladly meet with them and was excited to share a fantastic promotional idea that his team had developed to jumpstart the sale of this book. The silence on the other end of the phone was almost deafening before the publisher grunted that he would meet with Godin the following week.

The meeting took place at the publisher's New York office. After the obligatory pleasantries Godin began to describe the promotional campaign developed by his team. A look of impatience and annoyance settled across the faces of the publishing executives sitting around the table. The senior member of the publishing team thanked Mr. Godin for his enthusiasm but reminded him that everyone one at the table had at least 10 years experience in the publishing industry. He had acknowledged that Seth was a well-regarded author with a loyal following but was not a publisher. His experience as a marketing consultant was not in publishing or selling books.

Nevertheless, Seth Godin eagerly shared his promotional concept. The plan was simple, create the paperback version first, but only print 10,000 copies. Since the book was entitled "*Purple Cow*" they proposed creating a direct mail piece utilizing 10,000 purple milk cartons. He would utilize a precisely focused mailing list of sales and marketing professionals that had previously bought multiple copies of non-fiction business books for their co-workers. Utilizing this creative direct mail piece, plus limiting number of paperbacks, would certainly create a marketing buzz that would stimulate significant interest in the book.

The experienced book publishers began shooting looks back and forth to one another. Most involuntarily shook their heads. The senior publisher then thanked Seth for sharing his ideas and politely insisted everyone assemble to return to the original agenda. He reminded Seth that they had a long-standing formula for non-fiction business books that they never strayed from—which was to print the hardback, make it available to Amazon and all the traditional bookstores and then wait about six months. Next, produce the paperback and repeat the entire process over again.

Seth politely reminded the experienced publishers that this was the identical formula used by all other major publishing houses. This formula also lost money on conservatively 80% of the business books published. "That may be the case," responded the senior publisher but they liked their proven formula and did not stray from it.

Needless to say the big publishing house and the author politely parted company and went their separate ways. Seth chose to self-publish and utilize his creative direct mail concept.

It was an amazing success! The paperback edition sold 5,000 copies during the first week available. That was an unprecedented feat in the realm of business books. By the end of the second week he had sold all 10,000 copies. Now the experienced executives from the big publishing house might have been stubborn, but they weren't crazy. They gladly paid Seth an extremely lucrative advancement for the rights to publish his hardback edition. That hardback edition of *Purple Cow* sold well over quarter of a million copies.

Too frequently entrepreneurs limit themselves to only interviewing potential employees with documented experience in their own industry. They forget that all things being equal, customers will buy from people they like. All things not being equal, they still prefer to buy from people they like.

According to The Robert Brack Lead Research Group, the following steps either used individually or in combination will dramatically increase your "like factor."

Zig Ziglar reminds new business owners that "the reason they have two ears and only one mouth is to remind them that when it comes to customers they should listen twice as much as they talk. Your business likeability increases exponentially with your commitment to listening more than you talk."

- 1) Know your product and service inside and out. You can't help people make buying decisions if you can't show them a benefit or problem solved.
- 2) Seek to understand your customer's business inside and out. Ask about the key issues they face and suggest solutions. Business owners who act as problem solvers rarely compete on price. They add value to the businesses that they serve. Their ability to listen to the needs of clients and understanding of how their products could meet those needs is a skill.
- 3) If you deal with mutable individuals employed by a single account, treat each with the utmost helpfulness. If you don't, you can bet they will be in the ear of the decision-maker with negative feedback. This can never be underestimated. Also look for opportunities to ask about their hobbies, interests and families. It is a fact that people like to brag about what they do out of work such as families, kids, hobbies, sporting events, etc.
- 4) The positive and enthusiastic business owner that delivers on what he/she promises and that possesses the ability to relate products sold to overcoming business problems and challenges is trusted and probably also making more money than everyone else.

5) Tell stories about how your products have helped your clients. This humanizes the product pitch relating it to real life people and situations where a product really made a difference in someone else's business and life. That is powerful! Stories act like glue in the memory and are more easily recalled than facts alone.

In short, enthusiasm, positive thought, the ability to listen, follow through, expertise on products and services, story-telling, friendly spirit and a demonstrated interest in the customer's needs will dramatically boost your likeability head and shoulders above the competition.

It's official, "persistence, persistence, persistence" has replaced "location, location, location" as the three most important words in business. The most powerful strategy you can employ in pursuit of success is to just out-sell, out-network and out-hustle the competition. No rocket science is required—just good, old fashioned determination.

According to Orvel Ray Wilson, co-author of *"Guerrilla Selling"*, "Bad selling done on a consistent basis will always out-perform brilliant selling done sporadically."

Research tells us that the classic entrepreneur works an average of 53 hours a week. That also means that half are putting far more than 53 hours each week. Ironically, these same people only spend, on average, eight hours a week speaking directly with clients or prospects. By doubling the time you spend communicating directly to customers, you can double your sales performance.

It is also important to become professionally persistent when pursuing first time accounts. Research also tells us that you must approach a prospective customer at least 11 times before he or she decides to buy from you. According to a Harvard University study, the average entrepreneur gives up after 1.8 sales calls upon a new account. In fact, 48% of entrepreneurs quit after they have made the first call. Another 20% call it quits after the second call, and seven percent give up after the third call. Five percent quit after they have made the fourth sales call, and another four percent quit after they have made the fifth sales call.

I want to specifically point out that this specific piece of information is always cited as the most valuable I share with my clients. This is very straightforward yet amazingly powerful

data. Most of your competitors do not like to hear “No.” That is why the ever constant presence of rejection is the primary reason cited by the majority of people who leave the lucrative sales profession.

When a prospect says “No” for the fourth, fifth or sixth time you now know that the eventual sale is just around the corner. All you have to do is be professionally persistent and you will always out-sell the competition.

Tom Peters says, “Any idiot can come to work with a 25-item to-do list. The brilliance is never doing 20 of them.” Simply put, we often get side-tracked with unimportant tasks that keep us from doing our primary job—generating revenue.

To combat this tendency, I recommend you place simple white labels on your phone, computer screen and the sun visor of your car. On this label, boldly print your revenue target for the current month. Every time you look at any of those labels, ask yourself, “Is what I’m doing now directly contributing to the achievement of this goal?” If the answer is “No,” stop what you’re doing and start doing something that will drive sales. It’s that simple! It’s also exactly what will set you miles apart from your competition.

At every one of my training seminars I ask the attendees to return to their offices and sit at their desks. I then instruct them to look carefully under, behind and around their desk. I ask them to count every customer they find lurking in, under or around their desk. The answer is a predictable “None.” I then ask, if this lack of clients is normally what they would find. The answer is always “Yes.” I then ask, “if that is always the case, why do you spend so much time there?”

The Peters Group reports that “consistently high sales producers have an unrelenting focus on doing things that produce revenue.” They don’t wait for the phone to ring or the website, direct mail and advertising to start producing. In short, they have declared war on sales complacency. Peters goes on to report that “high-achieving entrepreneurs seem to share a mantra that is ‘ready-aim-fire!’”

Nolan K. Bushnell, founder of both Atari and Chuck E. Cheese says, “The critical ingredient is getting off your butt and doing something that will drive revenue. It’s as simple as that. A

lot of people have ideas, but there are few who decide to do something about them now. Not tomorrow, not next week, but today.” Maybe that is why just 20% of entrepreneurs take home 80% of the profits generated by all new businesses.

The senior statesman of business speakers and trainers is Zig Ziglar. He states that only three percent of people in the USA set goals, and they are among the wealthiest people in the nation! Author Brian Tracy reports that,

“The ability to set goals and make plans for their accomplishment is the “master skill” of success. It is the single most important skill that you can learn and perfect. Goal-setting will do more to help you achieve the things you want from your new business than will anything else you’ve been exposed to. Setting well-defined goals enables you to channel your efforts and focus your energy toward something that’s important to you. Goal-setting gives you a target to aim at and enables you to develop the self-discipline to continue working toward your target rather than becoming distracted and going off in other directions.”

When it comes to setting goals far too frequently entrepreneurs inadvertently only pay lip service to it. When it comes to setting goals, they plan on doing it, they just never get around to dedicating the time required to accomplish this essential task.

Successful entrepreneurs also realize that of all the goals they will set, the revenue goal takes priority. Why? It’s the one goal that if you don’t achieve it, you just might not be around to talk about all the others you did hit. Your sales goal should have monthly, quarterly and annual targets. Every person who works for you should clearly understand each goal. More importantly, it is incumbent upon you to make sure they understand the exact role they play in achieving that goal. Each revenue goal must be challenging yet realistic. Entrepreneurs can sometimes set unreasonably high revenue goals in an attempt to impress the investors. These unrealistic goals are counterproductive and will rapidly discourage the frontline employees.

The second most important task in setting goals is consistently celebrating when any goal is achieved. In fact, in the early stages of a new business, the entrepreneurs should look for every opportunity to celebrate any success. The habit of celebrating success, no matter how small, is a key component to long-term business success. Social psychologists tell us that the

best way to ensure that our employees repeat the behavior that leads to success is to positively recognize and acknowledge it.

It is not surprising that 65% of Americans report not having received any positive feedback on their work during the last year. Catching people doing something right is a daily habit that is consistently practiced by extremely successful business owners.

According to Dr. Bob Nelson, author of *"Keeping Up in a Down Economy"*, "Entrepreneurs should constantly recognize employees for their progress towards the achievement of preset revenue goals. They should show appreciation for small accomplishments as well as big ones. The recognition must be ongoing to reinforce the employees natural need to feel they're doing a good job in the workplace. Praise is priceless and costs nothing! Personal praising from a manager is the number one single motivating incentive cited by workers today."

One monumental challenge faced by all new entrepreneurs is how to create a memorable marketing message that will cut through the clutter of the over 3,000 marketing messages being directed at consumers each day.

In short, how do you stand out in a crowd that is overpopulated with competitors? Especially competitors who have been in business for years or have very deep marketing pockets.

One way to out-smart the out-spenders is to concentrate on increasing your brag index. Simply put, your brag index is the percentage of people, who after doing business with you, will voluntarily tell no less than eight people about their positive experience. The good news is that the national average is currently only about 14%. That means that out of every 100 people that deals with your competitors only 14 of the are proactively saying positive things about them. The higher your brag index, the less money you will have to invest in sales, marketing and advertising. When a business maintains a high brag factor they've tapped into a powerful free resource called "word-of-mouth advertise." It allows them to reduce their marketing costs and increase their profit margins resulting in far higher net profits. By focusing on immediately increasing your brag factor entrepreneurs begin the lucrative practice of standing out in a sea of monotonous competitors.

Your objective is simple: to begin presenting your business in a way that is so fresh and so innovative and you add a spark to your customer's experience. In short, you begin to do little things in an extraordinary way. Author Seth Godin refers to these experiences as "purple cows."

His analogy is that no one gets terribly excited about driving down the road and seeing cows standing out in their fields munching away. After a while, you become oblivious to the cows. Let's face it, when you've seen one cow you've seen them all. Now, if one of those cows happens to be purple you're going to take notice. In fact, if you have children it's fairly predictable that you will slow down to take a closer look at this purple cow. Within a matter of moments your kids will probably have taken several photos of that purple cow via their cell phones. In moments they will be shared with friends and family via e-mail and YouTube. The next several weeks anytime someone even mentions cows, cattle or bulls you will most likely volunteer the fact that you've recently seen a purple cow.

Conventional wisdom tells us that it costs no more to keep and care for a purple cow than it does a black or brown one. Yet by simply being purple the cow has become remarkable. In short, everyone who sees it feels compelled to remark about. If your business is remarkable you will become the purple cow in a sea of monotonous competitors. The objective is to turn your customers into walking, talking billboards for your new business.

In most large American cities if you were to go to the dreaded Department of Motor Vehicles and experience fast, courteous service while not waiting in endless lines, you would most likely be inclined to tell a minimum of eight people about your remarkable experience.

Catching customers off guard in a positive way, he is easier today than it has ever been before. When you surprise your customers they will reward you by recommending you to friends, family and co-workers. It is so simple and yet so infrequently accomplished.

In the Northwest United States there is a remarkable chain of retail stores called "Les Schwab Tire Centers." When you drive into any of the 400+ Les Schwab Tire Centers, a smiling employee sprints out to your car. Their objective is to stand at your car door before you turn

the key off. In fact, people who have never shopped at Les Schwab often think they've done something wrong when they arrive.

Selling tires is not their number one priority. Amazing people with remarkable customer service is. Maybe that's why they sell more tires than all of their competitors in each of the 400+ neighborhood markets they service. Years ago, when the economy was emerging from a recession, one of Les Schwab's large commercial accounts was having serious cash flow problems. They were a large regional meat wholesaler with a fleet of delivery trucks. Winters in the Northwest can be brutal. Without commercial grade snow tires the meat distributor would be unable to stay in business for long.

Les Schwab agreed to exchange snow tires for a large supply of steaks, roasts and chops. During that winter every customer who bought a tire from Les Schwab was rewarded with their choice of filet mignon, leg of lamb, T-bone steak or a thick New York strip. Needless to say, the customers were amazed. Word began to spread throughout the communities about this remarkable sales promotion. To this day, every one of the 400+ Les Schwab locations gives away free meat during the month of February. Yes, every new Les Schwab location has a built-in meat freezer. Frequently tire customers in the Northwest will brag that they actually postpone their purchase until February because that's the month Les gives away his free meat.

In each of his 400+ locations Les Schwab competes with the best-known names in the tire industry. In addition, he goes head-to-head with big box retailers like Costco, K-Mart and Sam's Club who sells tires on razor thin margins to drive store traffic. Yet without exception, Les Schwab is always the market leader earning while consistently earning highest net profits. He accomplishes this by simply being remarkable. He has turned his customers into walking, talking billboards. In 2009 we emerged from the worst recession since the great depression of 1929. During that year, the company took on no new debt and opened ten new retail stores. They also expanded their corporate headquarters to over 120,000 square feet. They accomplished this via cash flow without borrowing one penny.

Too frequently entrepreneurs believe that they alone must come up with all the original ideas that will boost their brag factor. Yet it is the frontline troops who deal face-to-face with the customers each day that come up with the best ideas.

Best-selling author Barbra Glanz tells the story of a remarkable employee who provided his company with a remarkable boost to its brag factor. About 3 weeks after she had spoken to the supermarket employees, her phone rang late one afternoon. The person on the line told her that his name was Johnny and that he was a bagger in one of the stores. He also told her that he was a Down Syndrome person. He said, "Barbara, I liked what you said!" Then he went on to tell her how when he'd gone home that night and asked his dad to teach him how to use the computer.

Now, each night when he goes home, he finds a "thought for the day." He said, "If I can't find one I like, I think one up!" Then he and his dad type it into the computer, nine times on a page, and they print out at least 200 pages each night. Then he cuts them out, signs his name on the back of each one, and the next day "with flourish," he puts a thought for the day in each person's groceries he bags, adding his own personal signature in a heart-warming, fun and creative way.

One month later the manager of the store called Barbara. He said, "you won't believe what happened today...when I went out on the floor this morning, the line at Johnny's checkout was three times longer than any other line!" He said, "I went ballistic, yelling, 'Get more lanes open! Get more people out here,' but the customers said, 'No no! We want to be in Johnny's lane—we want the thought for the day!'"

He said one woman even came up and told him, "I only used to shop once a week, and now I come in every time I go by because I want the thought for the day!" (Imagine what that does to the bottom line!) He ended by saying, "Who do you think is the most important person in our whole store?" Johnny, of course!

Three months later he called Barbara Glanz again, "You and Johnny have transformed our store! Now, in the floral department, when they have a broken flower or an unused corsage, they go out on the floor and find an elderly woman or a little girl and pin it on them. One of our

meat packers loves Snoopy, so he bought 50,000 Snoopy stickers, and each time he packages a piece of meat, he puts a Snoopy sticker on it. We are having so much fun, and our customers are having so much fun!" THAT is spirit in the workplace!

Johnny took what many of us might consider to be a not very important job and he made it important by adding his own personal signature. If young Johnny can do it, there is no reason why each one of us can't do it too. Imagine the new spirit of self-esteem, commitment and fun which could permeate our places of work if we each, like Johnny, found a way to add our special, unique touch to our job! This story is excerpted from "*CARE Packages for the Workplace—Dozens of Little Things You Can Do to Regenerate Spirit at Work*" by Barbara A. Glanz, McGraw-Hill 1996.

One powerful strategy than you can begin to use to immediately to drive up your brag factor is to become more fun to do business with. Being fun to do business with provides you with a remarkable competitive advantage. Why? Tom Peters says, "That 70% of buyers would switch suppliers immediately if they could find someone who was more fun to do business with."

Advertising legend, David Ogilvy, said, "Fun-like enthusiasm is contagious and has a snowball effect on sales." Jack Welch writes, "You can learn a lot about a company by paying attention to its humor." *Business 2.0 Magazine* reports that "the simple act of incorporating fun into your client's buying experience has just been designated as one of the best business ideas ever."

Why is being fun to do business with such unique competitive advantage today? Maybe it's because opposites attract and coping with stress seems to have replaced baseball as America's favorite pastime. According to California State University, between 75% and 90% of all visits to primary care physicians can be credited to stress. In fact, on average one million workers are absent each day due to stress. Fun is the polar opposite of stress!

We seem to be drawn to companies that are fun to do business with! In the best-seller, *Contented Cows Give Better Milk*, the authors state that, "Companies with fun work

environments and positive upbeat cultures flat out make more money than their direct competitors.”

To prove this point during my training seminars I judicially ask each audience what airline is known for being fun to fly with? Like clockwork, I always get the exact same answer from every group—Southwest Airlines. While the rest of the airline industry consistently takes a bath in red ink, Southwest Airlines has reported a profit for almost every quarter for almost the last 20 years. Since their first day in business, their passengers have bragged about them. Southwest business success comes in large part because the personality of their employees and their corporate culture. That emphasizes fun! Each day they cash in on an avalanche of lucrative word-of-mouth advertising. Jay Conrad Levinson, author of *“Guerrilla Marketing”* said, “Southwest Airlines is not successful because it sells cheap flights but because people have realized the they are fun to fly with. It’s not surprising, that the authors of *Contented Cows Give Better Milk* report that employees who were perceived as being fun to do business with our 127% are more productive than their peers. One of the world’s most famous entrepreneurs, Sir Richard Branson, tells us, “don’t do it unless it’s fun.’ If it’s not fun, make it fun! Then make sure it’s fun for all others.”

As entrepreneurs we owe a great deal to Sir Richard Branson. By example, he has taught us the power of maintaining a great attitude and then hiring for attitude before skills. He has taught us to have an obsession with being fun to do business with and to always deliver legendary customer service. His remarkable success can be attributed to his professional persistence and his never-ending quest to catch his employees doing something right every day. He has taught entrepreneurs to consistently strive to out-smart the competition but never to out-spend them.

He’s enjoyed every day of his business life and never lost an hour’s sleep worrying about the inevitable pitfalls and setbacks that present themselves to all business endeavors.

Starting a business is an enterprise available to anyone who can see opportunity. Remarkable success in a new business is limited to those who not only see opportunity but seize it every chance they get.