

# **How to Manage a Business**

## **The 70 Best Business Ideas for Small Business Managers**

By BizMove Management Training Institute

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### **Table of Contents**

- [1. How to Make a Good First Impression](#)
- [2. Warning Signs That Your Business is in Trouble](#)
- [3. How to Produce More Results](#)
- [4. How to Improve Your Business](#)
- [5. How to Get the Skills of a Natural Leader](#)
- [6. How to Deal with Changes in The Market](#)
- [7. How to Motivate Employees in the Workplace](#)
- [8. How to Be a Good Manager](#)
- [9. How to Manage Your Time Effectively at the workplace](#)
- [10 How to Differentiate a Product or a service](#)
- [11. How to Manage People Effectively](#)
- [12. How to Get Customers to Buy](#)

- [13. How to Prevent a Business Disaster](#)
- [14. Is This the Time to Make a Radical Change in Your Business?](#)
- [15. How to Spot a Financial Accounting Fraud](#)
- [16. How to Reach a Goal Faster](#)
- [17. How to Win Potential Customer Trust](#)
- [18. How to Manage Change Effectively](#)
- [19. How to Increase Your Business Learning Effectiveness](#)
- [20. How to Jump Start the New Year](#)
- [21. Are You Making Any of These Common Communication Errors](#)
- [22. How to Develop Your Creativity Skills](#)
- [23. How to Choose and Keep Customers](#)
- [24. How to Deal With Difficult Employees](#)
- [25. How to Use the Telephone More Effectively](#)
- [26. Proper Business E-mail Etiquette Tips](#)
- [27. How to Keep Your Key Employees](#)
- [28. How to Enjoy Your Business](#)
- [29. How to Overcome Fear of Rejection](#)
- [30. How to Get Free Publicity Ideas for Your Business](#)
- [31. How to Generate Business Sales Leads Through Referrals](#)
- [32. How to Achieve Financial Success](#)
- [33. Top Sales Professional Techniques](#)
- [34. How to Get the Job Done](#)
- [35. Creating Great Print Ads for Your Business](#)
- [36. How to Work at Home Effectively](#)
- [37. Business Telephone Etiquette Manners Tips for Service Providers](#)
- [38. How to Be Empowered](#)
- [39. How to Be Successful in Business](#)

- [40. How to Delegate Tasks Effectively](#)
- [41. How to Form a Business Partnership That Lasts](#)
- [42. How to Make a Sales Pitch](#)
- [43. What to Do When You Feel Stuck](#)
- [44. How to Increase Sales and Profits in Your Business](#)
- [45. International Marketing Plan Tips](#)
- [46. How to Make Money on the Internet](#)
- [47. How to Make Smart investment decisions](#)
- [48. How to Improve Listening Skills](#)
- [49. Managerial Decision Making Techniques in Business](#)
- [50. Ways to Motivate Employees Effectively](#)
- [51. How to Motivate Your Salespeople](#)
- [52. Myths About Sales Techniques](#)
- [53. How to Get the Skills of a Natural Leader](#)
- [54. Effective Business Negotiation Techniques](#)
- [55. How to Succeed with an Online PR Marketing Campaign](#)
- [56. How to Work Effectively in a Home Office](#)
- [57. How to Organize Paperwork for Business](#)
- [58. How to Overcome Fear and Anxiety](#)
- [59. Personal Growth Plan Development Tips](#)
- [60. How to Chair a Meeting Effectively](#)
- [61. Do You Suffer from These Entrepreneur Weaknesses](#)
- [62. How to Solve a Problem Step by Step](#)
- [63. How to Protect Intellectual Property Rights](#)
- [64. Creative Public Relations Technique](#)
- [65. How to Increase Your Sales](#)
- [66. How to Improve Your Business Sales Proposal](#)

[67. Do You Make These Common Mistakes in Selling?](#)

[68. What to Do When a Prospective Customer Says No](#)

[69. How to Succeed in Small Business](#)

[70. How to Achieve Goals Effectively](#)

### **Bonus Ideas**

[71. How to Build and Manage a Brand](#)

[72. How to Negotiate Effectively](#)

[73. How to Be a Good Team Leader](#)

[74. How to Take Action and Get Started](#)

[75. How to Build a Team at Work](#)

[76. Are You Making Any of These Common Marketing Mistakes?](#)

[77. How to Write a Compelling Mission Statement](#)

## **1. How to Make a Good First Impression**

We sometimes get only one chance to make an impression on someone either in our personal or business life. Therefore it is important to remember some basic things to do that will assure us of making the best impression possible. The following are ten of the most common things people can do to make the best first impression possible.

### **1. Appear Neat And Dress Appropriately.**

Being neat in our appearance is something we can do regardless of whether we are trying to make a good impression on someone or not. In a \*first meeting\* situation for business, to show up in jeans, tennis shoes and with uncombed hair would be a big mistake. If the situation is social, dressing casual is fine depending on where you are meeting, but being well groomed is always going to make a good impression.

### **2. Maintain Good Eye Contact.**

From the first time you meet the person until you part, maintain good direct eye contact with them. This usually indicates to people that you are listening to them, interested in them, and friendly. You need not stare or glare at them. Simply focus on them and their immediate direction the majority of the time. When talking, look at them also, since your new acquaintance wants to be sure you are talking to him/her and not the floor. It also will give you an idea of how the person is receiving what you are saying to them if you are looking at them.

### **3. Shake Their Hand At The Beginning And When Parting.**

Whether it is a business meeting or a social occasion, most people appreciate or expect a friendly handshake. The best kind are firm (no need to prove your strength) and 3-5

seconds long. Pumping up and down or jerking their arm about is not needed nor usually welcomed. A \*limp rag\* handshake is not recommended unless you have good reason to believe shaking the person's hand any harder would injure them. Look at them in the eye when shaking their hand.

#### **4. SMILE! :-)**

A smile goes a long way in making a first impression. When you shake hands with the person, smile as you introduce yourself or say hello. Even if the other person does not smile, you can, and it will be remembered by the other person. As you talk or listen to the person speak, smile off and on to show your interest, amusement, or just to show you are being friendly.

#### **5. Listen More Than You Talk.**

Unless you are asked for your life story (in which case give a very abbreviated version) let the other person do most of the talking as you listen. Listening to your new acquaintance will give you information to refer to later, and it will give your new friend the impression you are genuinely interested in them, their business, etc. If you are asked questions, feel free to talk. If you are really bored, avoid 3-5 word sentence replies to your companion's questions. Pretend at least to be interested. You won't/don't necessarily ever have to talk with this person again.

#### **6. Relax And Be Yourself.**

Who else would you be? Well, sometimes people try to act differently than they normally would to impress or show off to a new acquaintance. Putting on facades and \*airs\* is not recommended, as a discerning person will sense it and it will have a negative affect on how they view you. Just be yourself and relax and \*go with the flow\* of conversation.

#### **7. Ask Them About \*Their\* Business And Personal Life.**

Show that you have an active interest in the other person's professional and personal life. When an appropriate time comes, ask them to tell you about their family and their business if they have not already done so. People love to talk about themselves. They usually feel flattered and respected when others, especially people who have never met them, show real interest in their business and their personal life. It also shows that you are not self-centered when you do not spend alot of time talking about yourself and \*your\* life.

#### **8. Don't \*Name Drop\* Or Brag.**

Very few people you will meet for the first time will be favorably impressed if you start telling them you know Donald Trump, Don Johnson, or the CEO of Widgeits, Inc. They want to get to know you and have you get to know them. Experienced and secure business people are not impressed by who you know as much as what you know. If someone asks you if you know \*so and so\*, then it's appropriate to tell them the truth. Unless they do, it sounds like you are very insecure and trying to really \*impress them\*. Bragging about your financial, business or social coups or feats is likewise in bad taste and not recommended. Just keep it simple and factual and be yourself.

#### **9. Don't Eat Or \*Drink\* Too Much.**

If your first meeting is at a function or place where food and alcohol are served, it is wise to eat and drink in moderation. This is especial true of drinking alcohol! You want to be able to listen well and remember what is said, and speak well for yourself. There is probably nothing that leaves a worse first impression on a business or social date than for their new \*acquaintance\* to get intoxicated and to say or do things that are embarrassing, rude, crude, or all three. Use good self control and eat as your new friend does, and drink only in social moderation or not at all. What is done one night under the influence of alcoholic merriment might be regretted for hundreds of nights in clear headed sobriety!

#### **10. Part With A Smile, A Handshake And A Sincere Comment Or Compliment.**

Regardless of how you felt the evening went it is simply common courtesy to shake hands when the evening is over, offer a smile and some sort of friendly comment or compliment. If it was a social evening and you had a great time, offer a sincere compliment and let them know you'd like to meet again. If it was a business meeting, offer a smile and a sincere comment around how it was nice to meet them, get to know them, learn about their business etc. You may never have to see the person again, but they may know people who they will tell about their meeting with you who you \*will\* work with or need to meet down the road. It always pays to be kind and polite even if you were not treated that way or did not enjoy the time you spent with someone.

[Go to Top](#)

## **2. Warning Signs That Your Business is in Trouble**

This is a checklist to identify warning signals that a business is in or is heading towards a crisis state.

### **Cash flow problems**

The business owner might not have a clear report on receivables nor have a process for maximizing revenues. There could be delays in paying bills and meeting salary and other expenses in a timely fashion.

### **Lack of profitability**

The business owner might not have set profitability goals and/or might not be tracking profits. Or, these mechanisms could be in place, but the business is just not profitable.

### **Issues Related to Products and Services**

A successful business requires a clear definition of products and services it offers. It is a warning if a business owner cannot clearly define the business, is not monitoring the shifting marketplace demands, and is not offering highly marketable products and services.

### **Business Owner has Weak Personal Foundation**

A business owner might have personal problems affecting his or her ability to effectively manage the business.

### **Staffing Issues**

The staff might exhibit low morale, the company might be losing its best people to competitors, or the overall work environment might not be encouraging high productivity from its employees.

### **Customer Issues**

It is a warning if the business owner cannot define the ideal customer. Other warnings are lack of effective communication channels with the customers, customer lawsuits, high volume of customer complaints, a lot of product returns, and low customer retention.

### **Business expansions or alliances that are creating problems**

A business might expand too quickly or into the wrong markets. It might form alliances with companies that are not a good match and will not enhance profitability.

### **Lack of succession planning**

A business might lack succession planning. This is a warning for family owned and non family owned businesses.

### **Lack of business vision and/or mission**

The lack of a business vision and/or mission might be evident in lack of teamwork or a weak company culture.

### **Lack of business growth**

The lack of a business plan with clear cut goals could be the source of slow business growth and a strong warning that a turnaround strategy is needed.

[Go to Top](#)

### **3. How to Produce More Results**

#### **1. Start with the end in mind.**

Develop a clear picture of what you want to accomplish. State the end results in one sentence that even a child can imagine, understand and remember. Consider the power of President Kennedy's goal "to send a man to the moon and bring him safely back home within this decade". Thousands of people did very detailed work and spent billions of dollars based on this simply stated goal.

#### **2. Develop a written plan.**

Get it on paper (or on the computer). Make the plan as specific as possible, in terms of what will be done and by when.

#### **3. Enlist support of others.**

Let them know what you are doing, and how they and others will benefit from the results you want to produce. Invite them to lend their support however they can.

#### **4. Set up milestones and reporting systems.**

Break the job down into segments, and set target dates for completing each segment. Develop a reporting system on paper or via a good software program. Send regular reports to people who are working on your team, or who have an interest in your project.

#### **5. Have a support system.**

Set up the supports you need in your work and in your personal life. Have one or more advisors that you meet with regularly to report progress, and get advice and encouragement. Your personal coach can be one of these key people.

#### **6. Monitor progress and make adjustments.**

Realize that even the best plans need to be adjusted in the heat of battle. Make adjustments quickly and respond to new opportunities or short cuts along the way that help you reach your destination faster. If you find it difficult to get around or through certain roadblocks, get help and advice promptly.

#### **7. Form mutually beneficial alliances with others.**

Find out what other people or groups are natural allies and team up with them so you can help each other reach your objectives more easily and effectively.

#### **8. Work your plan regularly and continuously.**

Maintain a high focused activity level yourself, and get help when you need it. Don't try to do everything yourself. Delegate as much as you can, and follow up with those to whom you delegate work.

#### **9. Keep your allies on your side and your enemies at bay.**

Inform your allies about progress you are making and problems you are having. Thank them for their help. Protect yourself from important enemies by setting up and maintaining boundaries between yourself and your enemies. Recognize that enemies can be within you as well as about you. When you find that you are doing things that

impede your own progress, replace that activity or habit with a better one. Ask your advisors what you personally can do better. Then put the corrections in place.

**10. Celebrate progress along the way and at the completion of your work.**

Share the glory. Recognize and thank the people who have helped you produce results.

[Go to Top](#)

## **4. How to Improve Your Business**

### **1. Know your personal values.**

What's most important to you personally? When you know your values, you'll better filter new information and opportunities and can rely better on your intuition because you know what you're hearing and how it fits in with you.

### **2. Get candid input from at least 5 other people who know you well.**

While it's nice to get input from experts, it's as valuable to get points of view from colleagues, family members, key employees who know you -- they know your tendencies, your moods, the way you think, your blind spots, your passions. Let them guide you.

### **3. Have a really big, big picture.**

When you know your long term goals, have a vision or have a helicopter view of the current situation or opportunity, you'll be "seeing more" and thus have more information on which to base your decision.

### **4. Always have a Plan B, Plan C and Plan D ready to go!**

You can improve your good judgment by having back up plans, whether you need them or not.

### **5. Don't put yourself in situations where you are forced to rely too much**

on your "good judgment." This one is important. After all, shouldn't you be enough ahead of the curve to have been making good decisions along the way so that having "good judgment" doesn't become critical? Don't confuse good judgment with crisis management.

### **6. Separate the facts from the interpretation of the facts.**

There are very few facts that aren't also coupled with someone's (even your) interpretation of the facts. Either sales are down 20% or they are not. An explanation is just that. There are great explanations, few of which are worth banking your business on. If sales are down, assume they'll stay down until you do something about it.

### **7. Always include a worst-case scenario -- and make it a really bad scenario.**

For a decade or two, Detroit kept factoring in worst-case scenarios, yet they continually came up short because they took incremental actions based on what they wanted to believe would happen, not what was so clearly a long-term trend of foreign-made cars slicing up their market share. Living in denial is always expensive -- yet we all do it. A good way to get out of denial is to assume that sales will drop 50% in the next year (think Volkswagen) and "be ready" for that possibility. Just by including that option and developing options at that level, one will make a better decision about what is more likely to happen.

### **8. Always look at the downside of every decision you make.**

If you're adding a new product, increasing the customer service budget, reducing overhead, permitting use of your name/trademark, entering into a co-venture agreement, make a list of the 10 potentially negative and even deadly consequences of

even a no-brainer/excellent change. Everything affects everything today -- and unexpectedly. If you respect this ecological truth you'll realize that every decision affects, in some way, you, your employees, your shareholders, your profitability and your viability.

**9. Seek to enhance your reputation first; bottom line second.**

I used to base most of my decisions on whether or not my company would make more money. But then I realized that the future of my business came from my current customers, their word-of-mouth and from the press we were beginning to receive from the national media. At that point, it occurred to me that if I'd just invest more money in our reputation and make my decisions based more on reputation than quarterly profitability, I'd be a lot more financially successful --- and more proud of my company, too.

**10. Hang out with others who have excellent judgment.**

There are so many subtleties about acquiring and developing good judgment that most of the process comes best from friends, colleagues, competitors and staff who already have great judgment. Learn from them, in every conversation.

[Go to Top](#)

## **5. How to Get the Skills of a Natural Leader**

Leadership exists on a continuum from managing self to managing others to managing the organization. Natural leadership does not mean that you either have it or you don't. It does mean that you are willing to assess your style and behavior, and that you are willing to learn and grow.

### **1. The only person you can change is yourself.**

Self-management comes before managing others or managing an organization. Understanding the impact of your behavior is crucial to leadership.

### **2. You must feel comfortable being in a leadership role.**

Leadership calls for authenticity. If you are not comfortable with the role, others will sense it and withhold the full measure of whatever it is they have to contribute.

### **3. Being a natural leader involves being able to adjust your style to the skill level and commitment of others in any given situation.**

Reading the people/task mix requires skill, flexibility and intuition.

### **4. Natural leaders develop other leaders**

Leaders of today must share skills, insight and power to bring along others who have the potential to lead. This includes giving others the opportunity to lead. Someone once said that leadership is like manure. Left in a pile it starts to smell really bad and does no good. Spread around evenly it promotes growth and doesn't smell bad at all.

### **5. As a leader, you must make sure information flows freely in all directions.**

The culture must be such that withholding information to strengthen one's own power or for any reason is absolutely not tolerated.

### **6. Leaders have to be accessible.**

You have to create a culture in which people feel they can tell you the bad news as well as the good news. You cannot isolate yourself or let others isolate you.

### **7. Leadership in modern organizations means sometimes fading into the background . . . when it is natural to do so.**

You do not have to plan every tactic or lead every charge. Hire good people who can articulate your vision as well as you can (maybe even better) and then let them do it.

### **8. Leaders need to provide support.**

Become a sponsor for someone else's idea or project. Make sure you provide the resources and structure others need to succeed.

### **9. Leaders must create a culture that encourages risk and tolerates mistakes.**

In these times, playing it safe in business is the riskiest strategy.

### **10. Leadership skills can be developed.**

Natural does not mean born with. Leadership skills can be learned and this learning circles back to self-management.

[Go to Top](#)

## **6. How to Deal with Changes in The Market**

The winds of change are building...reshaping business, government, educational institutions, not for profit groups, civic and professional groups, the military and all of our personal lives. Some people dig in their heels and try to resist change. Others ride the winds of change and seize the amazing opportunities it brings. Use these ten habits to recognize and maximize the gifts of change.

### **1. Accept the Certainty of Uncertainty.**

Change scares a lot of people. Facing the unknown rattles our nerves and undermines confidence. Yet, our rapidly world is filled with ambiguity, shifting priorities, different expectations, unanswered questions, and new responsibilities. People with a high need for closure and structure find it especially difficult. The ability to cope with uncertainty and ambiguity are critical skills for success in our New World.

### **2. Become A Quick Change Artist.**

Hundreds of thousands of years ago, this planet was inhabited by powerful dinosaurs. Then, something happened and in a very short time the great beasts perished. While scientists don't agree about what exactly happened, they do agree that whatever it was the dinosaurs simply could not adapt to the change. There are plenty of human dinosaurs out there today saying..."Don't rock the boat"...."why change what's working?....and "That's not the way we've always done it." Resistance to change is a dead-end street. Change requires that we abandon the status quo, overcome our additions to comfort zones, and adapt quickly to new situations and ways of doing things.

### **3. Stay In School.**

The most effective way to cope with change and find the opportunities it offers is to NEVER STOP LEARNING. We are the sum of what we read, hear and experience...the thousands of bits of information we pick up from many sources. Successful lifelong learners make it a point to learn something New everyday, to gain ideas from everyplace they go and everyone they meet. A great way to do this is to commit to the 30/10 RULE. Commit 30 minutes per day to actively seeking new information and then take an additional 10 minutes to decide how to apply this new information to your life. COACHU resources make the 30/10 Rule easy!

### **4. Open Your Mind and Unhook Your Personal Prejudices.**

A prejudice is a judgment or opinion reached before the facts are known or maintained long after the facts have changed. Prejudices severely limit our ability to respond to change. Prejudices stifle our creativity and innovation. Seek out diversity. Read books and magazines about subjects you have never been interested in before. Seek out new friends and acquaintances of different cultures, ages, and thinking styles and learn from them.

### **5. Become A Trend Watcher and New Idea Collector.**

Opportunities abound in trends and change. Look at magazines, newspapers, the Net, and other sources for themes that show up on a regular basis. Pay special attention to

feature sections in publications like USA Today and Entrepreneur Magazine. Start an Idea File.

#### **6. Be Sure To Open All Your Gifts and Look For More.**

It is so much fun to open gifts...especially ones we didn't know we were getting. We all have many gifts we have never fully used. Talents, abilities, and potential we have never exercised and developed. High achievers in a changing world use all their gifts and constantly seek new ones. For every gift you open, there are many more waiting to be discovered and used.

#### **7. Cultivate and Maintain a Strong Resource Network.**

Your Team 100, Circle of Ten or a Personal Advisory Board are all part of your resource network. Become a Master Networker. Your network is a gold mine of resources and support. Remember networking is a reciprocal process. It is about getting and giving.

#### **8. Develop a Reputation as FIXER...not a Finger Pointer.**

Every business, every organization, every community and even our own families need people who are willing to take care of problems, not merely point them out. People who are objective and willing to explore many options and solutions, rather than automatically opposing anything that even smells like change, become very valuable. Make it a rule never to complain without offering solutions along with your problem.

#### **9. Lighten Up! Optimism is Contagious.**

The benefits of optimism and a sense of humor cannot be overestimated in a climate of change and chaos. Negativity and its by-product, stress, cloud judgment and interfere with objectivity. On the other hand, a well-developed sense of humor increases optimism and helps us prevent blowing things out of proportion. We must consider how many other people take their cues from us. Do you lead others optimistically into change or do you somehow lead them into resistance? Optimism is contagious...spread it every chance you get.

#### **10. STOP WAITING!**

Many people can make an entire lifetime out of getting ready to do something...laying the groundwork...making plans...waiting until the time is "right." Change doesn't wait and in today's competitive world, waiting is a luxury we can no longer afford. We need to develop a sense of urgency ...coupled with action. The best insurance policy for tomorrow is the best use of today. CARPE DIEM!

[Go to Top](#)

## 7. How to Motivate Employees in the Workplace

Supervising people involves more than telling them what to do. Effective supervision involves motivation from within the individual, not by externals.

1. Treat them as individuals, not merely as necessary cogs in a wheel. Remember their personal problems, find appropriate times to ask how they or their families are, how the big event went, whether the plumbing problem got fixed.
2. Acknowledge their contributions. Let them be confident that when you pass their suggestions and contributions up the chain of command you will acknowledge the members of your team as the source.
3. Back them up. When things go wrong, the buck stops at your desk. Do not deal with problems by telling your superiors how awful your supervisees are. Tell how you will go about preventing a re-occurrence.
4. Take time for them. When a supervisee comes to you, stop what you are doing, make eye contact. If you can't be interrupted, immediately set up a later time when you will be able to pay full attention to them. Otherwise people may feel that they are bothersome to you, and you may someday find yourself wondering why no one tells you what is happening in your own department.
5. Let them know that you see their potential and encourage their growth. Encourage learning. Help them to take on extra responsibility, but be available to offer support when they are in unfamiliar territory.
6. Explain why. Provide the information that will give both purpose to their activities and understanding of your requirements. Providing information only on a need-to-know basis may work for the CIA, but it does not build teams.
7. Don't micro-manage. Let them know the plans and the goals, that you trust them to do their best, and then let them have the freedom to make at least some of the decisions as to how to do what is needed. Morale and creativity nosedive when the flow of work is interrupted by a supervisor checking on progress every two minutes.
8. Let them work to their strengths. We all like to feel good about our work. If we can do something that we do well, we will feel proud. If you believe supervisees need to strengthen areas of weakness, have them work on these, too, but not exclusively.
9. Praise in public, correct in private. NOTHING undermines morale as effectively as public humiliation.
10. Set reasonable boundaries, and empower your supervisees to set theirs. Once set, respect them. This is not a challenge to your power, it is their right as human beings.

[Go to Top](#)

## **8. How to Be a Good Manager**

How to become the boss everyone loves to praise, rather than the boss everyone loves to hate!

### **1. Acknowledge your staff.**

When a member of staff does a job well, make sure you notice it, and acknowledge her or him for it. Don't let the opportunity to praise a piece of good work go by.

### **2. Never, ever, humiliate anyone on your staff team.**

If you are annoyed with someone on your team, or they have done something wrong, make sure you keep your cool, especially in public. If you humiliate someone, he or she will hold a grudge against you, and their work will suffer too.

### **3. Create a culture where mistakes are OK.**

If you don't make mistakes, chances are you are not stretching yourself. If your staff are allowed to feel that mistakes are part of reaching for new highs, rather than something to feel bad about, or shamed for, then they will take more risks on your behalf.

### **4. Remember personal details.**

Take time to get to know your staff, who they are, who is important in their lives, etc. Be interested in them as people, not just as workers.

### **5. Don't hide behind your position.**

Be human and friendly with your staff - that way you will all be able to support and encourage each other when things are tough.

### **6. Be approachable.**

Allow your staff to feel that they can come and talk to you about sensitive issues, about inside- and outside-work difficulties, and that you will respect them, and not hold what they share against them.

### **7. Admit your mistakes.**

If you get it wrong, say so. Managers don't have to be infallible! Your staff will respect you more if you are able to admit your mistakes, and then set about sorting out a solution.

### **8. Listen in such a way that your employees will talk to you.**

Often people feel afraid of, or intimidated by, management. Make sure you show people that you are willing to listen to what they have to say, that they are important and worthy of your time.

### **9. Be clear in your requests.**

It is your responsibility to ensure that people understand your requests - so communicate clearly, and ask if people have understood what you are asking for.

### **10. Treat everyone respectfully and courteously at all times.**

Particularly when there is a problem! Everyone who works for you is a valuable human being who deserves respect. A manager is only as good as how she or he treats the people on her or his team.

[Go to Top](#)

## **9. How to Manage Your Time Effectively at the workplace**

### **1. Start with the end in mind.**

It has been said that "Time is Money" -- but I disagree. When you think about it, isn't Time really LIFE? At the end of your life, can you even imagine saying to yourself, "I wish I'd made more money?" It's more likely you'd be thinking "I wish I'd had more TIME -- time to spend with my loved ones, time to enjoy my life more, time to take that special vacation". Here are my favorite strategies for managing that most precious of all resources -- TIME.

#### **1. The first step is being aware of where your time is going, now.**

You can't find something you've lost when you don't know where you might have lost it in the first place. So the first strategy for managing your time is to know where it's going, now. That means actually tracking or logging your time daily, for at least 1 week (preferably 2). Track the exact time you begin and end an activity, make a note of the duration in exact minutes, and a few words to describe the activity. This step requires you to be really honest with yourself and track EVERYTHING you do in your work day so you can see where your time is really going -- so if you spent 23 minutes chatting with coworkers at the coffee machine (no cheating by logging all your time in nice, even 15, 30 or 60 minute intervals) -- write it down EXACTLY!

#### **2. Analyze and summarize your time logs.**

At the end of the week, review your time logs and start to summarize the tasks (and the amount of time spent on each) into categories. You will create these categories yourself, and you should have between 6 and 12 categories. They should be meaningful to you, self-defining, mutually exclusive and as concise as possible. Some examples might be: Administration, Business Development, Sales & Marketing, Computer, etc. You will then summarize, for each day, how much time you spent doing tasks or activities for each category, in the exact number of minutes. You might also do a little math, to figure the percentage of time each category takes out of each day. You make this step as detailed as you like, but the key here is: AWARENESS.

#### **3. Create a New Daily Routine.**

If you were honest and diligent during steps 1 and 2, chances are you had a rude awakening when you reviewed and analyzed your time logs. You no doubt can see where the time drains are occurring -- and now you're ready to make better choices and create a new daily routine. This routine will maximize the time you spend on productive work by conforming to the natural flow of your day and with your natural rhythms, by taking into consideration when you're at your best for certain tasks, grouping similar tasks together for greater efficiency, and by setting aside dedicated time for doing uninterrupted work. How do you create your routine? Look at where you've been spending your time and start making some decisions about where the different tasks can best be fit into your day. Then actually write this routine down and post it where you'll see it every day. Strategies 4 through 10 will give you some food for thought as you develop and implement your new daily routine.

#### **4. Prioritize and stay focused.**

Once you've done the up-front work of tracking and analyzing your time, and creating a new routine, how do you keep it on track? You will also need to do some work on prioritizing what you do. You can create your own easy tools to do this. On one sheet of paper, create 5 sections: High Priorities, Secondary Priorities, People to Contact, Telephone calls, and Schedule. You can fill this out each day, first thing in the morning (or better yet, at the end of your work day so you are well prepared to start fresh tomorrow!) Each day, ask yourself: "If nothing else gets done today, what are the one or two items that absolutely MUST be done?". Those are the items you will use to focus your day. You should also periodically go back to the time logging exercise, so you can determine if you are slipping back into those old bad habits and take immediate steps to get back on track.

### **5. Reduce interruptions by creating stronger boundaries.**

It is true that interruptions to your day can and will happen, and to some degree they are out of your complete control. However, you probably have more control than you think. Instead of blaming other people and getting frustrated with them for interrupting you, take responsibility for creating stronger boundaries with your co-workers where appropriate. Keep in mind, other people don't mean to be inconsiderate by interrupting, they are just caught up in their own "stuff" and probably don't realize. It is really up to you to set up some guidelines for when you can and cannot be interrupted, to communicate them to others, and then to stick by them. For example: you might institute a "quiet time" policy (mornings are usually best) where you let everyone know that this is a time where you cannot be interrupted -- and then set up another time later in the day where you have an open-door policy. This strategy creates a firm boundary but also provides time for you to be accessible to others. At first, those around you might try to cross your boundaries, and it's up to you to gently remind them that they can come back and talk during your "open door" time. After a while, they'll get used to it. Change takes time, so stick with it!

### **6. Structure your telephone time.**

Set aside certain periods of the day to accept, initiate and return calls. The best time to accept incoming calls is just prior to lunch or at the end of the work day (the other person will not want to dawdle on the phone at those times either!) -- so whenever possible, let others know this is your preference and set that time aside so you are available. When initiating or returning calls, the best time to contact those difficult-to-reach folks is early in the morning, just before or after lunch, or late in the day. Other tips for making the best use of your phone time -- plan in advance what you need to cover during the call; and at the beginning of a call, you might say "I have about 10 minutes to spend with you now. If we don't finish, we can always schedule another time."

### **7. Don't procrastinate.**

Procrastination is probably one of the biggest "time hogs" we have -- not only are we NOT doing the thing we're procrastinating about, but we also end up wasting even more time worrying about how much we're procrastinating. So, if you have an unpleasant task to do, simply make up your mind to take care of it immediately and just get it done!

## **8. Under-promise and over-deliver.**

You may have heard this one before, but a little reinforcement never hurts. Many of us have too many demands on our time because we take on more than we should... we don't like to say No, don't want to hurt someone else's feelings. When we over-commit ourselves, we are not only creating unnecessary stress in our lives, but we are also creating potential situations where we cannot deliver what we've promised. We also don't realize that when we can't deliver what we've promised, we can inadvertently cause more pain and hurt feelings than if we'd been willing to say No in the first place. Remember, you're not doing yourself or anyone else any favors by taking on more than you can reasonably deliver. Commit yourself to making this strategy a high priority in your life, and watch what happens!

## **9. Separate your work from your personal life.**

Whether you work in or out of your home, it is critical for your well-being that you find a way to separate your work from your personal life. If you work out of the home, don't take work home at all unless you are certain you can get to it -- it's better to stay a little longer at the office (but be sure and set time limits for yourself!) to get it done, then enjoy your leisure time without the stress of having to do that work at home. If you work at home, you will need to be even more diligent in setting aside separate times in your day for work and for your personal time and family. Post your schedule where your family can see it, and make it clear when you can and cannot be interrupted (when you work at home, you have to create better habits for the whole family to ensure your success!)

## **10. Remember, you're only human.**

We all have only 24 hours in the day -- and sometimes that just doesn't feel like enough, does it? There will always be days where things happen that are unplanned and which can throw even the most organized day into a tail-spin. When that happens, take a deep breath or two, and accept that you are doing the very best you can, right now. Tomorrow is a new day and a chance to start fresh. Let go of the need to be a perfectionist and remember, you're only human!

[Go to Top](#)

## 10 How to Differentiate a Product or service

When potential customers are shopping around, how can your products or services stand out? Try these top 10 tips to increase your sales.

### 1. **Begin by differentiating your services or products by who you and your company are.**

What differentiates you? More training, more experience, better methods, a better team? Come up with your key points.

### 2. **If people can buy a similar product or service for less, be ready to overcome that obstacle.**

Agree with the potential customer that they can buy for less but show them that they may be comparing apples to oranges.

### 3. **Sell based on value.**

Describe what they will get from your product or service. Use the "feel, felt and found" method. Here's an example: "My coaching service provides new approaches for you so that you'll make new discoveries, and see new answers, so that you will feel in charge of your business and your life".

### 4. **Stress the quality of your product or service.**

Point out what you are providing for the same investment as the competitor.

### 5. **Talk about dependability.**

How long have you been in business? What's your experience or background? How about testimonials and benefits?

### 6. **Have some advantages that differentiate you.**

What can you provide that others don't? Come up with something special or exclusive. Ask your customers what they might suggest.

### 7. **Give outstanding follow-up services.**

Frequently, customers complain that after the sale, there is no follow-up. Differentiate yourself by providing a unique follow-up service. That alone will be a refreshing change for customers!

### 8. **Offer a money back guarantee.**

Great point for differentiation.

### 9. **Take credit cards if most of your competitors don't.**

### 10. **Target a niche that your competitor doesn't sell to.**

Want to be different - just sell to people that no one else has marketed to... it takes a bit of research but can really pay off!

[Go to Top](#)

## **11. How to Manage People Effectively**

The ten below (and there are surely more) are a good yardstick to determine your profit potential through people management.

### **1. Create Expectations**

Tell people up front what is expected of them.

### **2. Set a Stretch Challenge**

Make people grow and coach them along the way.

### **3. Never move too slowly on critical personnel decisions**

Dragging your feet here will really hurt your business.

### **4. Involve people in both DEVELOPING and IMPLEMENTING strategy**

Too much top down brings the top down.

### **5. Call a Spade a Spade**

Address poor performance or it'll cost you -- BIG.

### **6. Reward your stars!**

Pay good performers what they're worth, and it will be returned to you tenfold.

### **7. Get the Right Person for the job**

Define the job and find the person who can do it rather than redefining the job to fit the capabilities of the incumbent.

### **8. Require that People do Their Homework**

When people are not prepared for meetings, the company is not prepared to make decisions. Stop the presses!

### **9. Constantly Upgrade Skills**

Provide continuous training to keep people at their best.

### **10. Recognize That Pride Drives Performance More Than Money**

Complement people for a job well done.

[Go to Top](#)

## **12. How to Get Customers to Buy**

The Most Effective Sales Skill: Irresistible Attraction.

1. Be a walking example/demonstration of how effective your product or service is.
2. Seek to serve instead of just seeking to sell.
3. Add value by network all of the time: Be a matchmaker every single day.
4. Add value to your potential customers by expanding their professional vision/goals.
5. Add value to your current customers by making sure they're maximizing the use of the product/service.
6. Turn your customers into your company's R&D Department, not just a focus group.
7. Improve your communication skills/relating style so that people WANT to be around you - a LOT!
8. Turn your customers into your sales deputies; have them feed you business instead of "prospecting."
9. Teach others how to sell in an Irresistibly Attractive way -- this guarantees you a strong future.
10. Strengthen your Personal Foundation/Reserve Levels so that you don't need the money anymore.

[Go to Top](#)

### **13. How to Prevent a Business Disaster**

It's not a matter of \*IF\* ... it's only a matter of \*WHEN\* you and your business will be affected by a natural or manmade disaster. Chances are greater today than ever before your normal business operations will be interrupted by an equipment failure, operator error, power outage or other calamity or disaster. Planning and preparation BEFORE disaster strikes is the best way to ensure your business will survive! Here are ten steps you can take to protect your business:

#### **1. Create a virtual disaster team within your company.**

A virtual disaster team is the best way to gather information and perspective which is essential in preparing an effective disaster prevention and recovery plan. Proper disaster planning requires information from all perspectives of your company as well as outside sources. Sole proprietors, coaches, and consultants should seek help from friends and associates in viewing their business operations from all perspectives.

#### **2. Conduct a complete asset inventory.**

Be sure to include all equipment, furnishings, supplies and inventory. Then augment your written inventory with still photos and/or videotape of all areas.

#### **3. Protect your equipment.**

Move mission-critical equipment away from doors and windows where they can be damaged by debris, wind or water during a storm. Protect major industrial or production equipment, office machines, computers, peripherals and accessories from dust, dirt, debris, moisture and power fluctuations. Install surge suppressors and uninterruptible power sources. Use equipment covers to protect from water leaks from overhead pipes and facilities. And move equipment, documents, supplies and inventory out of basements and other areas of your facility subject to flooding.

#### **4. Protect your vital records.**

Identify records that are vital to your business operation. Store copies of these records off-site. Implement a records management program and standard office procedures for handling electronic files and paper documents. Establish and enforce a computer data backup system.

#### **5. Establish off-site storage and alternate location policies.**

Develop a policy for storing original documents, vital records and critical electronic files off-site. Establish an alternate or emergency location from which you can perform the critical functions of your business should you be unable to access your business facility. If you have others on your staff, make sure they understand these policies and their individual responsibilities during and after a disaster situation.

#### **6. Develop, test and revise your disaster plan.**

Once you have developed what appears to be a good plan for limiting the effects of a disaster or business interruption, you must test the plan to ensure it meets your needs and expectations. Keep accurate and detailed notes through all phases of plan testing. Revise your plan based on your test results and notes; then test your revised plan.

### **7. Seek legal counsel on contracts and agreements.**

Entering into any type of agreement, contract, lease, proposal or signing any document you have not read or you do not fully understand is an open invitation to business disaster. Don't try to "Go it alone!"

### **8. Review insurance needs and documents.**

Meet with your insurance agent, consultant or advisor and determine your insurance needs. Go over your policy statements and make sure you understand types of coverage, coverage limits, exclusions and deductible amounts.

### **9. Prepare yourself and your staff for business interruptions and disasters.**

Large or small... natural or manmade... whether it strikes you directly or a business you depend on... you should be prepared BEFORE a disaster or business interruption occurs. Your business disaster plan will not be effective unless you know and understand your needs and responsibilities when a disaster or business interruption affects your business. Arrange first aid and CPR classes through local emergency officials. Develop and maintain off-site. storage policies, office operating procedures and computer backup schedules and procedures. When you read about a disaster affecting other businesses, review your disaster plan and make sure it covers such an event.

### **10. Prepare your workplace for disaster.**

Collect and remove trash, rubbish and debris inside and outside your facility. Clean your roof, gutters, downspouts and drainage ditches. Perform a physical inspection of your business and look for potential security, fire and electrical wiring hazards. Develop an orderly evacuation procedure which takes into account any persons with disabilities. Also establish a primary and a secondary evacuation route from your facility.

[Go to Top](#)

## **14. Is This the Time to Make a Radical Change in Your Business?**

Certain business realities signal us that we should make a change if we are to survive. Herewith, a list of some of those signals.

### **1. You find more and more competitors in your market.**

An indication that it's a good market, but being fractioned. Unless what you offer is both different and better, look for another niche.

### **2. Your market disappears.**

OK, you make the world's best buggy whips! Wake up.

### **3. Your interests and values are out of sync with your business.**

A formula for business disaster and personal misery. Revisit your vision and mission-- and align them with your values. Now start again.

### **4. Your customers are leaving for your competition.**

Either figure out why and fix it or find another business.

### **5. You dread going to work in the morning.**

Figure out why. If it can't be changed, do something else.

### **6. You notice your competitors changing.**

Have you noticed that, like it or not, it's a race? Do what it takes to win or join another race.

### **7. Working on the business is taking more time than working in the business.**

If your revenue can't support more help, find a way to simplify and streamline your business (your competitors probably are).

### **8. You're losing key employees to your competitors.**

A sure sign of "trouble in River City!" Conduct "exit interviews" with departing employees--figure out what the competition's got that you don't.

### **9. Your business no longer supports your lifestyle.**

Well, change either one or the other until they're in sync.

### **10. You're neither learning nor having fun anymore.**

Certain death if you stick it out. Time for a fresh start.

[Go to Top](#)

## **15. How to Spot a Financial Accounting Fraud**

Here are some signs of a possible dishonest employee:

### **1. Never wants to take a vacation.**

There's a reason, and it's not workaholicism. Bookkeepers behaving badly like to be in a position to intercept phone calls and correspondence. And as for the boss rifling through their desk to find something when they're out of the office -- that would be unbearable, of course!

### **2. Always has more work to do than can possibly get finished during normal working hours**

So much, in fact, that they have to stay after everyone else goes home. Or, if you'll let them, they like to take the work home. This might not be the loyalty you expect: unsupervised work lets the bookkeeper tamper with records with less chance of discovery.

### **3. A tattletale. Likes to point out incompetence of other employees.**

Pointing fingers at others puts an alibi in place, should you discover something amiss. Dan doesn't collect all his accounts. The deposit seemed too small? (It's Dan). Sharon hangs around the office when she doesn't belong there. There is postage missing? (Could be Sharon) Linda is disorganized. Why is this letter misfiled? (Linda is sloppy) Maybe the bookkeeper deposited some of Dan's deposit in her own account, and also purloined the postage. Linda's letter might be misfiled because the bookkeeper didn't want an auditor to see it.

### **4. Volunteers to take care of details that should be handled by the principals -- helping by picking up signature cards when you open a new bank account, for example.**

The more details the bookkeeper handles, the more opportunity for sticky fingers, and the easier it is to cover things up.

### **5. Likes to pick up the mail, even if it makes more sense for a lower-level employee to take on that task.**

The mail is both tempting and frightening to employees who steal. Checks come in the mail. So do unexpected notices that might tip you off to their theft.

### **6. Acts like bookkeeping tasks are as difficult as brain surgery, and twice as complex.**

I dump any bookkeeper who can't explain things to me in terms I can understand. That goes double for accountants who respond to my nosy questions by taking offense. -- She acts like she doesn't TRUST me!-- Yes. When they guilt trip you, watch your back.

### **7. Tells little fibs, perhaps unrelated to accounting**

Little lies tell big stories about people's character.

### **8. Seems to feel that the company owes something; as if he has done more than could be expected of any reasonable person**

In fact, most employees who take things really DO believe the company owes it to them. They may start by ...well, borrowing... then justify turning it into a theft by deciding you don't pay them enough.

**9. Prints in precise, tidy letters, but can't seem to find things when you ask; shuffles some things into messy little piles.**

Aha! This is a really good tip-off. People's habits aren't usually so schizo -- they are either consistently messy or compulsively tidy. Accountants, more often than not, fall into the tidy category. If you've got one that's tidy and messy at the same time, start spot-checking everything that looks messy.

**10. Volunteers to take the following things off your busy shoulders:**

1) Interfacing with auditors 2) personally making the police report if an item turns up missing 3) IRS correspondence.

[Go to Top](#)

## 16. How to Reach a Goal Faster

1. Install a consequence that really, really hurts!
2. Hire a short term coach who will help you make it happen.
3. Break the goal down into important pieces and enjoy the momentum as you accomplish each one.
4. Link the goal to one of your values so that it becomes an expression of yourself vs just this 'thing' that you're working on.
5. Know the next goal you want to accomplish, even before you have fully started on the immediate goal; this creates perspective and context, making the current goal look much easier!
6. Find a way to be rewarded as you go; a runner sips water continually; she doesn't gulp it down at the end.
7. Start feeling and acting as if the goal has already been reached and then just do what it takes to 'finish' it.
8. Eliminate the consequences of non performance and just work on taking daily actions instead -- get your juice from taking the actions vs comparing to the goal.
9. Set an earlier end point and orient everything around reaching the goal by then.
10. Change the goal so that it CAN be reached easily -- who says you should pick only the tough goals.

[Go to Top](#)

## 17. How to Win Potential Customer Trust

### **Reduce fear by eliminating doubt**

Buyers buy when you've reduced the threat of buying.

### **Be gracious and caring vs. hungry and uncouth.**

Never let yourself be in a situation in which you need business in order to survive-- buyers smell this and run.

### **Focus on what the buyer finds interesting about your product.**

There may be 22 key features of your service, but be sensitive enough to notice which 1 or 2 that the buyer indicates -- even subtly - interest in.

### **Ask questions which get you enough information to understand the buyer, what they need and how you can help them.**

Don't be bashful, but don't be a machine gun, either-- take an interest in the buyer and bring them out.

### **Be a walking example of the benefits of your product or service.**

Credibility can be instantly established when what you have and how you relate exudes the quality and power of your product or service.

### **Help the buyer to identify and feel something they hadn't felt before or for a while.**

Most people buy on emotion, then validate/justify this via information/facts.

### **Point out what your product will do and won't do.**

Always stress, highlight and be excited about, the positive but do mention what your product doesn't do or won't do for them.

### **Find a way to let the person know that you know who they are and what they're looking for.**

Have a well-phrased label to describe their situation so that they get that you get them and it.

### **Be an expert both in your product, and...**

...also in who your customers/user are, what they need, how they use the product, what problems are solved by the product and how a new buyer can flatten the learning curve to leverage value from the product/service.

### **Don't make cold calls -- always get referred to prospective clients.**

If you're not being referred by your current clients, then you're probably not doing as great a job as you need to be doing with them, but that's fixable!

[Go to Top](#)

## **18. How to Manage Change Effectively**

### **1. Start with the end in mind.**

We know that navigating successfully in a world that is changing as fast as ours can be tricky at times. In fact, if we allow it to overwhelm us, change can feel extremely stressful and downright frustrating. If we're smart, however, we've learned that although we can't alter the fact of constant change, we can learn to manage our response to it. Here's a sample of how I coach my clients on managing change in their lives:

#### **1. Accept change as a fact of life.**

As human beings we are constantly in process. We never get there, our in-box is never empty, and we can't catch up with technology. Our world is changing at a pace never experienced before—indeed, change is our only constant—accept it!

#### **2. Commit yourself to lifelong learning.**

If change is constant, then learning must also be continual. As long as we are learning we're on the road to an exciting, fulfilling, meaningful life. Learning helps us feel as though we're moving with the ever-changing world. This helps to relieve our anxiety of feeling left behind. We feel better because when we're learning we are moving with the world.

#### **3. Get healthy then stay healthy**

Change, even positive change, is stressful. To keep stress from getting us, we must stay physically healthy with proper nutrition, enough rest and regular exercise.

#### **4. Look at change as an opportunity.**

Changing our attitude about change is one of our best management tools. Look for opportunities in every change in your life. Rather than digging in your heels and resisting change, allow yourself to flow with it and see where it takes you.

#### **5. Develop and maintain a strong network and support team.**

Many changes in our lives require us to lean on others for emotional support and/or advice. Have your team in place—ready to see you through the inevitable significant changes in your life.

#### **6. Develop your spirituality.**

God is the only aspect of our lives that is constant. She is the same today, tomorrow, and into infinity. This is a comforting and stabilizing thought in today's world. To have a friend, a confidante, a love who will never outgrow us, leave us, or change her behavior toward us is surely one of the greatest gifts of life.

#### **7. Engage in rituals.**

Performing a task or celebration in the same way week after week or year after year gives us a sense of stability, a feeling of being grounded, a sense of security. Even the ritual of pouring a cup of coffee before settling down to work, eating dinner as a family, having lunch at a special restaurant on Fridays, or writing daily in a journal can be significant in dealing with change. Performing rituals and celebrating holidays in a certain way, gives us the satisfaction that not everything is changing.

### **8. Eliminate the tolerations in your life.**

Get rid of the little irritations (and sometimes big ones) that drain your energy. Energy you need to manage change. A toleration can be something as simple as a missing button or as significant as a toxic person.

### **9. Keep a daily journal.**

When change is viewed over a period of time there is more sense to it. Seeing this historical perspective of past change in our life can give us more objectivity to meet the current changes that are facing us.

### **10. Engage in meditation.**

Being centered within yourself grounds you for the changes you're required to face every day. Take a moment to quiet your mind, your body, your soul. You'll reap the rewards of this gift you give yourself.

[Go to Top](#)

## **19. How to Increase Your Business Learning Effectiveness**

So much to learn...so much information...so little time! Information has never been more accessible. Learning has never been so easy. BUT...there is so MUCH information out there. We are besieged by learning opportunities...awash in a sea of data, facts, and details assaulting our senses and leading to learning frustration rather than learning fulfillment. Try these tips, tools, and techniques to make the most of learning.

### **1. Examine Your Information Diet As You Would Examine Your Nutritional Habits.**

Establish categories of information needs/interests based on the various roles in your life...professional information needs, personal informational needs, and just-for-the-fun-of-it information needs.

### **2. Inventory Your Current Information Sources.**

Make a list of the television shows you watch on a regular basis, the books you read, the newspapers and magazines you subscribe to or purchase, the radio stations or tapes you listen to during drive time, the seminars you attend, the people who supply information to you in your daily life. Match these sources to the categories of information needs you established. Which of the information sources best meets your professional, personal and recreational information needs? Increase and improve these sources.

### **3. Determine Your Preferred Method Of Learning.**

Are you visual, auditory, or sensory in your information processing? Visuals usually learn best by reading a book, magazine or periodical. Auditory people learn best by listening to tapes and attending teleclasses. Sensory people need person to person interaction to learn. Maybe you are a combination of two of these information styles.... or lucky you...maybe you enjoy and benefit from almost any learning experience. It is important: however, to recognize your best information processing style so that when you need to learn something quickly you can seek out the information in your preferred learning style.

### **4. Keep An Ongoing List Of Terms You Don't Understand And Subjects You Would Like/Need To Learn More About.**

Make it a point to learn the meaning of new terms weekly and use them as often as possible. Seek out those who are experts in subject interest areas and ask them a lot of questions...questions that cannot be answered with yes or no!

### **5. Let Go Of The Perception That Classes Must Take Place In Brick And Mortar Institutions During the Day With Homework At Night.**

Explore diverse, leading edge learning avenues. Check out the classes offered by websites such as teleclass.com and teleu.com. Teleclasses are offered over a telephone "bridge" accomodating 30-150 people. You sit at your own kitchen table in your jammies, if you wish, with a cup of tea or a glass of vino, and learn from leading experts in a wide variety of fields while interacting with other lifelong learners from all over the world! Look into on-line learning and increase your on-line learning effectiveness by bookmarking websites that meet your learning needs and offer the most return for your time.

## **6. Take Advantage Of "Wait-Time Learning."**

We all spend a great deal of time waiting...in the grocery line, at the doctor's or dentist's office, in ticket lines, and in traffic jams. Grab a magazine off the rack while you are waiting in the grocery line and scan it for items of interest. Maintain a ready supply of audio tapes in the car to take advantage of drive time. Always have reading material in your handbag or briefcase. Wait-time learning can meet your recreational, professional, or personal information needs and turn this otherwise down time into productive learning time.

## **7. Improve Learning Skills By Improving Listening Skills.**

Don't assume because you pop an audio tape in the car during drive time or attend a lecture on a topic of interest that you are learning. There are a lot of distractions out there and the mind has a tendency to wander easily. Encourage a positive learning environment by consciously eliminating as many distractions as possible. Take notes. Ask questions. Later a good test of your understanding is to try to explain what you just learned or read to your mother or to a ten year old.

## **8. Avoid The Tendency to "pretend to know."**

Never nod your head in understanding when you don't really understand at all. Practice saying, "Please clarify that for me" and "I'm not really sure I understand what you are saying."

## **9. Pick A Successful Person And Learn Everything You Can About Them Personally and Professionally.**

Think about how much you could learn if you could spend 30 minutes a day with Barbara Walters, Sam Walton, Bill Gates, Ted Turner, one of our former Presidents or State Leaders. You can. Through their biographies or autobiographies, you can learn what made them successful and you can profit by their trial and error rather your own. Commit yourself to the 30/10 Rule for 30 days. Spend 30 minutes each and every day learning something new from a Master Of Success and then spend another 10 minutes deciding how to apply what you learned to your own life.

## **10. Use It Or Lose It!**

Research shows that we forget 25% of what we hear in 24 hours, 50% in 48 hours, and by the end of 30 days we are down to less than 5% information retention unless we USE what we learn. Relate new ideas and information to something you already know and use. When you find a connection to link and USE new information on a regular basis, productivity and retention increase.

[Go to Top](#)

## **20. How to Jump Start the New Year**

The following tips are intended to help you clear out the old and to bring in the new! Get ready for your best year ever; make all your dreams come true!

1. Spend the last days of the year, even the entire month of December, cleaning up your incompletions and tolerations.
2. Develop the practice of saying NO to things you don't want to do.
3. Identify your top energy drainers and eliminate them.
4. Remove blocks which keep you from achieving your goals and making changes.
5. Get your needs met once and for all, then you can focus on what you want.
6. Get that there is a flow to life. Trust and surrender to it. Eliminate struggle.
7. Set goals for the New Year based on your true values.
8. Identify what beliefs hold you back. Refashion those beliefs to support success.
9. Incorporate three new daily self-care habits into your life.
10. Get a picture in your mind of having what you want. Think thoughts to create it.

[Go to Top](#)

## **21. Are You Making Any of These Common Communication Errors**

### **1. 'Needing' to communicate.**

When you "have" to communicate, you probably won't be communicating very well. In other words, if you wait until you "have" to say something, you've missed the real opportunity for great communication. Tip: Communicate before you need to.

### **2. Trying to prove that you're right.**

When you find yourself repeating yourself, pushing to get someone to see it your way, creating evidence to strengthen your side, you're caught up in the ego of the situation. When you're simply accurate, you usually don't need to push it. When you're right, you likely will. So, right

### **3. Being a Black Hole.**

A Black Hole is a space phenomenon that sucks up all energy around it with nary a burp. People who are speaking need to hear an echo -- if you don't say anything or say things that don't help the person speaking that you got them, they'll get frustrated, keep talking, raise their intensity, etc. Tip: Learn the ways to say things that have the person speaking feel that you've heard them. Remember, it doesn't do much good if you DO hear them if THEY don't get that you heard them. Communication is always two ways.

### **4. Holding Stuff Back.**

Full communication means that you say everything that's occurring to you, albeit appropriately. If you edit the important stuff out, you maintain an inventory, which, like milk, spoils quickly. Tip: Talk to family and community and create agreements for all parties to communicate fully, along with an agreed-upon way to clean up/make up if one is perceived as going too far.

### **5. Being Stressed, Caffeine, Adrenaline (drugged).**

Communication becomes stressed when you're under the influence of externals and substances. Better to reduce/eliminate these rather than trying to strengthen your communication skills to overcome these influences. Tip: Simplify and clean up your life if you want to be a great communicator.

### **6. Insincerity.**

We've been trained to say the right thing, even if it ain't the truth. With all the hype and positioning occurring today, folks are less tolerant of bull and highly reward and value truth, sincerity, directness. There IS a truth in every communication and it's worth finding. Tip: Decide to tell the truth, even if there are consequences.

### **7. Not being responsible for how you are heard.**

It's one thing to speak your mind, which is usually healthy. Yet, assuming this, you can go the extra step and stand in the recipient's shoes and listen to how they are listening, being sensitive to their needs and style. Doing this will quickly improve most of your communications. And, it's not a weakness or patronizing or co-dependency. Instead, it's a gift to both parties. Tip: Ask people around you how they hear you. Learn from this.

### **8. Broadcasting.**

Communication is always two ways; broadcasting is only one way. Not much new stuff can be created when you're broadcasting (telling stories, complaining, ranting, stating opinions ad nauseum, being full of oneself). And one of the joys of communication is what can be created between/among the parties. That's where the magic is. Tip: If you talk a lot, find out why. You're likely to attract an audience, but wouldn't you rather have creative partners, instead?

### **9. Speaking Too Quickly.**

Why speak so quickly that the recipient needs to focus hard to listen and absorb? This is an unnecessary stress, especially when you really want your message to get across, land, find fertile soil, burrow in and create a home for itself. Tip: If you're a fast talker, find out why and fix it.

### **10. Criticizing, Even Subtle.**

Nothing stops a communication flow faster than criticism, in any form. Tip: Stop.

[Go to Top](#)

## **22. How to Develop Your Creativity Skills**

Creativity is a complex, multi-faceted process. Many myths have grown up around the process, one of which is that creative people have no say in the matter; that somehow creativity strikes certain people and misses others. Nothing could be further from the truth. Creativity can be developed, sharpened, amplified, because it is a factor of nurture as well as nature.

### **1. Believe You Are Creative**

Everyone is. Or has the potential to be. It is part of being human.

### **2. Broaden Your Interests**

Consciously seek out what you have not sought out before. Be open to new experiences, new sources of information.

### **3. Prepare to Create**

Gather information, hunches, impressions, colors, textures, sounds. Keep Notes!

### **4. Look for (or, better still, make) Connections.**

The more varied your interests, the greater the chance of cross-fertilization; of combining two or more things that have not been combined before. Look for relationships between things that are not related.

### **5. Break Habits.**

Our own habits are what often keep us from being more creative. The more you follow the script, the less you can improvise. Breaking even little habits can shake up the system enough to allow new connections to happen, new points of view to form.

### **6. Provide the Right Environment (for you).**

Some people like to listen to music, others prefer silence once they are in the creative flow. Experiment until you find what works for you.

### **7. Provide Time To Create**

(1) Time to sleep on it. Time without your conscious manipulation. Time for seemingly random thoughts and bits of input to percolate and bump into each other. (2) Time away from the immediate demands of work and/or home, dedicated to the creative task at hand. In certain environments, time is so precious that this seems like an unrealistic element of developing your creativity. But even five minutes could make a difference.

### **8. Persevere**

Don't give up on yourself or your project. Creativity is not necessarily easy. Make lots of mistakes. Learn from them. It is to be expected. It is a part of the process. Keep going. There is a paradox here because sometimes an important part of being creative is knowing when to abandon an unproductive idea.

### **9. Maximize All Of Your Senses**

The more you utilize all of your senses to gather and process information, the greater the chance of those bits of ideas bumping into each other . . . and sticking together to create a new something.

#### **10. Forget How Much You Know.**

Adopt the beginner's mind. Conventional wisdom may say this or that cannot be done and then unconventional wisdom goes right ahead and does it. Learn to look at things with a fresh eye. Don't be afraid to ask the "dumb" questions.

[Go to Top](#)

## **23. How to Choose and Keep Customers**

### **1. Do you know who your customers are?**

It may sound automatic, but many businesses simply don't keep track of who actually buys their products. And, those that do, rarely analyze buying behavior. A customer database is essential. If you don't have one, create one. Start by capturing the basics: customer contact information, product preference and purchase frequency.

### **2. Have you ranked your customers?**

Not all customers are created equal, yet most businesses treat them exactly the same. That's why you need a customer ranking system. Look at those variables that are most relevant to your business -- purchase frequency, revenue, selling costs, referral potential, and so on and score your customers accordingly. Marketing research firm CRI, for example, ranked their 157 customers using a simple quadrant that bucketed customers according to the kind of business they generated each year, i.e. High Volume/Low Margin and Low Volume/High Margin.

### **3. Do you know which customers are your most valuable?**

The ranking exercise may help explain puzzling disparities in company performance. The 'Why aren't we growing/more profitable/gaining market share when we have more customers than we ever have?' dilemma can be crystal clear when you really look at how each customer is contributing or subtracting from the bottom line. CRI found that only 10 of its customers fell into the preferred category-High/High.

### **4. Do you have too many customers?**

In CRI's case, they concluded they were 'spending much too much time and valuable employee resources on too many unprofitable customers' -- in fact, 101 of them essentially contributed nothing to the bottom line. Smart CEOs understand precisely who their target customers are. And, they know how to go after only the right customers. Is there room in your business to be more customer-selective?

### **5. Which of your customers may be worth firing?**

Less can definitely be more when it comes to unprofitable customers. Like CRI, who cut its customer base in half, getting rid of some customers may be your company's secret growth strategy. Also think about the costs you would NOT incur if certain customers went away. Are some draining the business? The process of raising your customer standards and paring automatically opens space to attract the flow of new, more profitable business.

### **6. When is the last time you checked customer satisfaction?**

If you're not regularly taking the pulse of your customers, they may be sacrificing, rather than being satisfied. 'Customer sacrifice = What the customer wants EXACTLY minus what the customer settles for' say B. Joseph Pine II and James H. Gilmore, authors of The Experience Economy. Check to see if you can shore up the areas of your product or service that may be cracking or settling.

### **7. Are you spending too much on finding new customers?**

Determine all of the costs (people, time and dollars) you incur to grab new customers. Are more company resources focused on customer acquisition vs. customer retention? Consider putting more attention on holding on to the ones you already have. It can have a profound impact on the bottom line -- current customers are 5-10 times LESS expensive to sell to than new customers. And, you can avoid nasty customer defections due to neglect.

#### **8. Are you actively converting first-time buyers to long-term customers?**

In some businesses, such as car or life insurance and credit cards, companies actually lose money on first-year customers. Check to make sure you don't have a 'leaky bucket' --- losing mature customers and replacing them with new ones. It takes many new customers to compensate for the loss of just one veteran, according to Frederick Reichheld, author of The Loyalty Effect. And, the bigger the leak, the harder you have to work to keep it full.

#### **9. Are you fortifying relationships with your best customers?**

There are 4 strategies to keep great customers, say Don Peppers and Martha Rogers, authors of The One-to-One Future: #1) Recognize your Most Valuable Customers (MVCs) with special treatment (perks, MVC Club, unique services), #2) Reward loyal buyers, i.e. frequent buyer programs, #3) Deliver Consistent Product Quality and Satisfaction, and #4) Customize Product/Service For Individual Customers -- the ultimate way to keep customers loyal longer is to spend more time catering more to their individual tastes. What can you do to better personalize each customer's experience with you?

#### **10. Are you earning customer loyalty?**

Strategic CEOs treat customers like assets and do everything they can to invest and safe keep them. Customer loyalty standouts, such as Lexus, State Farm and MBNA, engineer their entire company (not just the customer service dept.) around customer loyalty -- manufacturing, pricing, sales incentives, and all operations inside and out are built for lifetime customers.

[Go to Top](#)

## **24. How to Deal With Difficult Employees**

If you've been a manager for long, you know that things can go wrong even in the best of organizations. Problem behavior on the part of employees can erupt for a variety of reasons. Here are ten tips for dealing with it.

### **1. Recognize that problem behavior usually has a history.**

It usually develops over time and seldom from a single incident. As a manager, it is your responsibility to be alert to the early warning signs and deal with the underlying causes before the situation reaches a crisis.

### **2. Ask yourself: "Am I partly or wholly responsible?"**

You would be surprised how frequently it is the manager who has created, or at least contributed to problems of employee behavior. Having an abrasive style, being unwilling to listen, and being inattentive to the nuances of employee behavior are all factors that contribute to the manager's need to thoroughly examine what is going on.

### **3. Don't focus only on the overt behavior.**

When confronted by an angry employee, it's easy to attack the person and target the behavior rather than examine the factors that underlie the behavior. Often, this takes patience, careful probing, and a willingness to forgo judgment until you really understand the situation.

### **4. Be attentive to the "awkward silence" and to what may be missing.**

When an employee is obviously reluctant to communicate, it's almost a sure sign that more lurks beneath the surface. Often, employees will withhold because they feel unsafe. They may test the waters by airing a less severe or kindred issue in order to see what kind of a response they get. In order to get the full story and encourage forthrightness, it's imperative that the manager read between the lines and offer the concern and support necessary to get the employee to open up.

### **5. Clarify before your confront.**

Chances are, when an issue first surfaces, you will be given only a fragmentary and partial picture of the problem. You may have to dig deep to surface important facts, and talk to others who may be involved. One safe assumption is that each person will tend to present the case from his or her viewpoint, which may or may not be the way it really is. Discretion and careful fact-finding are often required to get a true picture.

### **6. Be willing to explore the possibility that you have contributed to the problem.**

This isn't easy, even if you have reason to believe it's so, because you may not be fully aware of what you have done to fuel the fire. Three helpful questions to ask yourself: "Is this problem unique, or does it have a familiar ring as having happened before?", "Are others in my organization exhibiting similar behaviors?", and finally, "Am I partially the cause of the behavior I am criticizing in others?"

### **7. Plan your strategy.**

Start by defining, for yourself, what changes you would like to see take place, Then, follow this sequence: (1) Tell the person that there is a problem. State the problem as

you understand it and explain why it is important that it be resolved; (2) Gain agreement that you've defined the problem correctly, and that the employee understands that it must be solved; (3) Ask for solutions, using open-ended questions such as: "What are you willing to do to correct this problem?" In some cases, you may have to make it clear what you expect; (4) Get a commitment that the employee will take the required actions; (5) Set deadlines for completing the actions. In the case of a repeated problem, you may want to advise the employee of the consequences of failing to take corrective action; (6) Follow up on the deadlines you've set.

#### **8. Treat the employee as an adult and expect adult behavior.**

To some extent, expectation defines the result. If you indicate, by your actions or by the content or tone of your voice, that you expect less than full adult behavior, that's what you're likely to get.

#### **9. Treat interpersonal conflicts differently.**

If the problem behavior stems from a personality conflict between two employees, have each one answer these questions: (1) How would you describe the other person?; (2) How does he or she make you feel?; (3) Why do you feel that the other person behaves the way he/she does?; (4) What might you be able to do to alleviate the situation?; (5) What would you like the other person to do in return?.

#### **10. Seek agreement regarding steps to be taken and results expected.**

Nothing is really "fixed" unless it stays fixed. All parties to a dispute must agree that the steps taken (or proposed) will substantially alleviate the problem. Further, they must agree on what they will do IF the results attained are not as anticipated. This can be achieved by doing a simple role play, i.e., having each side (including your own) articulate the steps to be taken and the outcomes anticipated. That way, even if subsequent events are significantly different than expected, the lines of communication for adjusting the situation are opened.

[Go to Top](#)

## **25. How to Use the Telephone More Effectively**

The telephone is effective when used efficiently, sparingly, and within the framework of a plan. This list includes some tested guidelines for making the phone a tool that works best for you!

### **1. Know the purpose of your call.**

Most of us talk on the phone too long. Have the purpose of your call clearly in mind before dialing. If helpful, write down a "statement of purpose", together with 3 main points you want to make on a scratch pad prior to dialing. Then "go for it"!

### **2. Know the audience you are calling.**

Unless you're conducting "cold calling" for marketing or polling research, you probably know something about your "audience" on the other end. Think of the needs of the person/people you are calling. Then revise your "statement of purpose" accordingly prior to making the call.

### **3. Start off right!**

State your purpose at the outset, and always ask if it is a good time for the other person to talk. If not, set a specific time to call back.

### **4. Use names whenever possible.**

Identify yourself at the outset of each call. Spell it out, or sound it out, if necessary (e.g. I always tell people "My last name is Vuocolo; Vuh-co-lo; think "Coca-Cola!"). Establish the other person's name early in the conversation, and use it often throughout the call!

### **5. Pay attention and be aware of your tone.**

Ask open-ended questions that invite response. Give the conversation your undivided attention - don't be tempted to do two or three things at once and expect it to be a productive call. Smile! This helps to make your voice sound friendly. If you're angry or anxious - put off the call until a later time, unless it's an absolute necessity to conduct it now.

### **6. Listen carefully.**

Pay attention to the first words spoken by the person called. You can learn a lot in the first few seconds by listening carefully. Did you catch the person eating, arguing, gardening or partying? Decide whether to proceed with the call or to call back, depending upon what you hear in the background of the call. It's better to arrange to call back another time than to interrupt - and you'll probably get a better audience!

### **7. Avoid initiating major business, if possible.**

Always save the most important business to be conducted in person, if possible. If not, make a careful transition from introduction to purpose of the call. Remember that a ringing phone virtually always interrupts the party being called - so give them time to adjust before hitting them with something major.

### **8. Avoid confrontation.**

If you have bad news, or a difficult issue to discuss with someone, don't do it by phone unless it's the only way.

**9. Be assertive - not aggressive!**

Always present your point of view in an assertive, positive, way. If you have difficulty being assertive, try making your point while standing during the call. This helps you be more animated and direct, even if the other person can't "see you" ... Although, with fiber-optics, they probably soon will! (If you're an extrovert - please remain seated!)

**10. Conduct a verbal review.**

Before concluding the call, go over all agreed upon points. Repeat necessary dates, times places and how and when you may be reached.

[Go to Top](#)

## 26. Proper Business E-mail Etiquette Tips

“This wild, wonderful web! All of the opportunities at our fingertips! Customers galore!”  
“They'll be beating down the server and I'll have so many orders I won't know what to do with myself!” As a business owner, have you ever had those thoughts? Think again. :) While it may be easy street for a select few, for most, it's not. So how can you make sure your business is successful? Try a little E-Mail Courtesy. Seriously! Many of the businesses who have established themselves on the Internet haven't the faintest idea of how to address one of the most important issues online: Customer Service. “Why should customer service matter? My product's right there, along with my order form.” It does matter. Shoppers on the net are still wary. They may e-mail you first to see if they receive a response and what the response is like. They may ask questions to see if you express enough knowledge about your own products/services and to gather your enthusiasm about what you're selling. Businesses come and go on the web, and only those who show true interest and enthusiasm about what they're selling will survive. If the shopper is another business, they might request to exchange links -- and see how they are treated in their request. Or they may request a free sample. And all of this will most likely be done through e-mail. So how can you and your online business show courtesy through e-mail? Here are 10 tips to get you started:

1. Answer your e-mail and answer it promptly. The Internet is FAST. It gives people information in a much shorter amount of time than having to go through a more traditional route of finding what they want. Customers expect FAST replies. An appropriate response time in my opinion should be 48 hours. No longer. If you wait a month to answer a request from a customer - forget it. They are GONE.
2. In addition to regular inquiries, answer your customer \*complaints\* immediately. Within 24 hours. Nothing irritates a consumer more than to order from you, receive a product with a problem, then have to wait over a week for your reply as to how they should handle the situation. If you wait longer than one day to respond to a customer with a complaint, you might as well kiss future sales to that person goodbye. Even if you don't know what the customer and/or you can do to rectify the problem, at least make contact with the customer. Assure them you are working on it, and then DO IT. There aren't too many \*easy\* sales on the net - you have to work for them, and this is one way you can accomplish your objective.
3. Address letters to your customer or potential customer in a business-like manner. Dear “Mr./Mrs. So & So” will suffice. When addressing other businesses on the net and you don't know the name of a contact person, try something like “ATTN: Director of Marketing”.
4. If you offer something FREE for the client, whether it be information or a sample product, be sure to send it. If it is to be sent via e-mail, send it the SAME DAY. If you are not able to send information daily as it is requested, use an autoresponder. Don't wait two weeks until the potential customer forgets they've ever heard of you. If you are sending a free sample, send it the SAME WEEK. Customers would expect a snail-mail package or product to arrive slower than e-mail, but no longer than a week.
5. When sending an unsolicited marketing pitch to a potential customer via e-mail, keep it short. I learned this the hard way. :) Now, my pitch goes something like this -- “If

you'd like to consider a unique, personal, and colorful advertisement for your company - and at a reasonable price compared to traditional online advertisers -- please e-mail me or visit my web site for more information.” That way if the prospect is interested, the pitch isn't forced on them before they're ready. They can look at their leisure. Which is what you want them to do, so they'll have the proper time to consider your offer. And of course, it doesn't hurt to comment positively on their web site and give your impressions. :) It also will help if you buy one of the company's products while you are visiting.

6. If someone mails you a pitch and you're not interested in the product or service, don't blast them with a slew of obscenities. If you're not interested, don't answer. Or maybe consider replying in this fashion: “Dear Mr. So & So, Thank you for making me aware of your fine service. I am not currently in a position to employ such services, but will definitely keep you in mind if and when I decide to do so. And since you visited my site, I'd like to offer you a free copy of \_\_\_\_\_ (or free sample of our most popular herb) (or 10% discount on our gold watches, good for this week only).” What does this do? It turns the selling party into a potential buying party. For one, they will appreciate the fact you took time for a personal reply. And they might just buy your discounted product!

7. If someone gives you an award, recognition, or other form of positive communication, THANK THEM. And do so promptly. That person giving that award or special mention of your company name didn't \*have\* to take the time to do it. You can assure great future relations if you immediately zip them off an e-mail expressing your thanks. After all, how long does it take? Three seconds to type “thank you” and hit “send”.

8. Follow through. If you are corresponding with a customer via e-mail on a situation, be sure to keep the contact going until the situation is resolved. The customer will appreciate your attentiveness to both them and whatever the situation might be.

9. Never, ever, ever address the customer by the \*wrong name\*. Always look at their letter, observe the spelling of their name, and get it right. A person's name is an individual trait, specific to them. When addressed by the wrong name, or misspelled name, people tend to feel they don't mean much to you, or you are showing lack of attention to detail -- not a good trait for an online vendor to display.

10. Always remember...the way in which you deal with people online - either within e-mail, on mailing lists or newsgroups -- will reflect back to you. If you make negative comments about another online vendor, the customer could lose respect for you as a business person. After all, who's to say the next negative remark won't be made about \*that customer\*?

You've heard “The customer is always right” and “The customer always comes first”. Both of those statements should be adhered to online, just as they would be if you were face to face with them in your off-line place of business. Because for every business online, new ones are popping up daily to provide competition. And who will be the winners? Those who are courteous and respectful of everyone online.

[Go to Top](#)

## **27. How to Keep Your Key Employees**

1. Give them an economic stake, notably equity or options -- everyone's an entrepreneur/investor these days, especially key employees!
2. Offer each key employee a way to get around ANYTHING or ANYONE that gets in the way of their creativity, effectiveness or production.
3. Develop a company vision/cause/purpose that is even more compelling than any one individual is -- this bonds key employees.
4. Create an entrepreneurial environment which stimulates without becoming adversarial/territorial.
5. Give each key employee the BEST of every tool, software or equipment -- they need/respond well to these more than the average employee.
6. Challenge each key employee to produce FAR more than they currently are producing -- key employees NEED to be challenged to keep them focused and out of mischief or job searching.
7. Eliminate the power structure and replace it with a strength-based power structure; this in order to reduce politics and simplify structure/management levels.
8. Put the key employees in continuous training, both in their skill set but also in communication/relating/management skills training programs as well.
9. Build up the reputations of each key employee vs being afraid to grant them this visibility/credibility/power.
10. Put the key employees in their own 'club' so they KNOW they are one of the anointed one -- they'll keep paying the 'dues' which is motivating.

[Go to Top](#)

## **28. How to Enjoy Your Business**

1. Surround yourself with objects that make you smile when you look at them.
2. Turn your day around. Do first things last and last things first.
3. Lighten up! Don't take yourself or your business so seriously. Life's too short.
4. Take regular breaks. Have puzzles, games and coloring books nearby to play with.
5. Write down two things you are grateful for in your business for the next seven days.
6. Play music in the background that inspires you.
7. Take a day off in the middle of the week just to play.
8. Be your favorite business guru for a day. Take actions and make decisions the way you think they would.
9. Send uplifting notes to your clients and customers to let them know you are thinking of them.
10. Structure in some dream and think time. If you're too busy doing, then you're too busy earning a living to make any money.

[Go to Top](#)

## **29. How to Overcome Fear of Rejection**

Often in our lives we must ask someone for something. Whether the object of our desire is money, a date, a favor, an appointment, a raise, help, etc., we sometimes become tense, overwrought and paralyzed by the possibility that our request will be denied. Here are some proven ways to get into action for the results you desire.

### **1. Imagine the best that could happen.**

Imagination has power; use it to imagine the best, not the worst outcome. Imagine that your prospect says "Yes"!

### **2. Begin.**

Schedule an appointment with yourself to initiate the first contact. Go ahead, put the date and time in your day planner. Keep that appointment. No appointment to call prospects means no appointments with prospects.

### **3. Let a stranger run your life. (NOT!)**

Every minute you spend in fear is a minute controlled by someone you don't know or something that hasn't happened. You are the one to determine whether or not you will enjoy success.

### **4. Have a vision bigger than you are.**

Fear of rejection will be reduced to cold ashes when it is ignited by your burning desire. What fabulous picture do you see for yourself when your vision becomes reality?

### **5. Get a buddy.**

It is easier (and more fun) to whistle in the dark when someone is in it with you. Trade off making calls and give feedback. Get better at what you do that works. When two or more people confront the boogeyman, he doesn't stand a chance!

### **6. Remember, it's about numbers.**

Keep track of your numbers. Know how many contacts it takes for you now to generate the number of appointments you need this week, to make the number of presentations you need this month, to get the number of YESSSES you want this year.

### **7. Stay open to the outcome.**

All you can do is your best. How people respond to that is beyond your control. However, when you focus on being your best, you will get more positive responses.

### **8. Be more interested in them than in yourself.**

You have something of value to offer them whether they want it today or next year. By not contacting them, you deprive them of the opportunity to choose you to provide that value. Be generous; make that contact.

### **9. Use proven scripts and presentations.**

Know what you are going to say. The more you know your presentation, the more relaxed, confident, and flexible you will be in making it. You will be free to really listen,

and listening is the cornerstone of exceptional relationships. Exceptional relationships yield exceptional results.

**10. Let your sphere of influence help make you successful.**

The folks who know and trust you will be glad to talk with you, and they will give you referrals if they know the kind of referrals you want. Take the time to educate them about what you want for referrals, about how you will treat that referral, and about how you will thank them for making the referral. Make it easy and comfortable for them to help you be successful.

[Go to Top](#)

### 30. How to Get Free Publicity Ideas for Your Business

Getting your business mentioned in the press is an extremely good way to achieve a positive image and attract new customers to your business. Few things can give you as much credibility than as being recommended by a major newspaper or magazine. But just how do you write a press release that gets attention, and brings in results? Although I can't guarantee that you'll get media attention, I can tell you how you can increase the odds of seeing your business in the real-world media.

#### What is a Press Release?

A press release is a document that is written out in a specific format that is used to pitch a reporter or editor or to make an announcement that you believe is newsworthy.

The basic outline for a press release is as follows:

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#### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

For Further Information Contact:

Full Name of Contact

Email Address

Direct Phone Number

URL

Headline

Some City, Some State -- Date (i.e. January 27th, 2001) -- Introductory paragraph that answers Who, When, Where, What and So What?

A second paragraph offering more information.

Third paragraph includes a quote that's attributed to somebody important, for example: "It's a revolutionary product," says Joe Smith, CEO of Big Company Inc.

Fourth paragraph includes some more information, perhaps another quote.

Fourth paragraph often includes history and background information about the company.

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The entire press release should be no more than 400 words, or one printed page.

#### Five Things That You Must Do In Your Press Release

**1. Make your press release newsworthy.** Make sure that you have something to say that'll be of interest to the readers of the publication that you're sending the press release to. Keep in mind that the media love news stories with a human side to them. Make your angle on the story entertaining, interesting or newsworthy or don't bother sending out a press release at all.

**2. Target your releases.** There's no point in sending a press release about the launch of your jewelry store to "Fishing World" magazine.

**3. Use the proper press release format.** Have a professional check the press release for grammar and spelling.

**4. Keep the press release concise.** Get to the point in the first paragraph. Use clear, concise, vivid language. There's no better way to get your story ignored than sending a lengthy release which doesn't state it's purpose (Who, When, Where, What) right upfront. Don't fill the press release with buzz-words, hyperbole and exaggerated claims.

**5. Write an excellent headline.** The headline is 90% of your press release. Here are a few headlines that worked extremely well

- I Can Help Anyone Find the Love of Their Life in 90 Days Or Less!

- Abraham Lincoln's Office Is Being Given Away... For Free!

- Brooklyn Bridge Sold By New Jersey Man... For \$14.95!

Write headlines that attract attention, stir emotion and create pictures in the mind of the reader.

### **More On Targeting**

Be careful who you send your press release to. When compiling your own media list don't waste your time getting the email addresses or fax numbers of every newspaper and magazine in the country, just the ones who would be interested in your story. Likewise, when you purchase a media list, don't send your press release to every contact. Take some time to filter out all the ones who wouldn't care about your press release, no matter how good it is.

[Go to Top](#)

### **31. How to Generate Business Sales Leads Through Referrals**

To get more and better business leads network with those clients you already have a relationship with. (Note: some professions are prohibited from making gifts for referrals.)

#### **1. Create a referral form.**

A fill-in-the-blank referral form that is distributed quarterly to the names on your database is guaranteed to land leads. To help customers zero in on appropriate prospects, ask questions that relate to your niche: "Whom do you know who's retiring in five years? Who just bought a new home? Who's launched a business?" Send a thank you note to everyone who sends you a referral. If you win a large account, send them a basket of flowers, bottle of wine or a magazine subscription.

#### **2. Host a salon.**

A salon is a business mixer for the sole purpose of garnering new business. Invite your best clients and ask each of them to bring a friend along. Because it is not easy for customers to think up prospects names when they don't know your market, send a list of the type of client you are trying to target along with the invitation.

#### **3. Ask during delivery.**

No matter what you sell, your clients are most likely to be enthusiastic at the point of delivery. (Weylman) This is an excellent time to leverage yourself. In fact, ask for referrals at any point in the sale.

#### **4. Offer incentives.**

Rewards for referrals that turn into business can range from free estimates, samples, consultations, coaching sessions to a discount on future purchases, etc. Just be careful to not give more than the referral is worth.

#### **5. Sponsor a contest.**

Enter everyone who sends a referral that coughs up a lead in a drawing. Make the prize substantial. "Make giving referrals fun," says Robert Middleton. Examples might range from a meal at an elegant inn to a mini-vacation or such.

#### **6. Give leads in return.**

This is one of the best ways to get referrals. But be absolutely sure that the referrals you give are competent and reliable. Remember your reputation is on the line. You don't want good intentions to jeopardize your relationship with your existing clients.

#### **7. Pump prospects who've passed up your services.**

Most potential client/customers feel bad when they have to turn your business down, so why not make them feel better by requesting leads. They do not see this as a burden. Just be sure to acknowledge them when the referrals come in and especially when they become a customer.

#### **8. Swap leads with rivals.**

If geography or time restricts your ability to service all your potential clients, simply pass along jobs you can't handle to other businesses and ask them to do the same. Giving

these referrals scores you points with potential clients who may come back to you some day.

**9. Cultivate reciprocal referrals from non-competitors.**

Find out who is compiling a database of related business and ask to be included. The opportunities occur in businesses which are somewhat collateral to your own.

**10. Tap suppliers.**

Constantly remind vendors of your need for referrals. Send out a letter or brochure which says, "When my business grows, your business grows." Likely, reason you don't get more referrals is because you don't ask. So, ASK!

[Go to Top](#)

## **32. How to Achieve Financial Success**

Most people use a combination of several of these approaches to become financially successful.

### **1. Start (or buy) a business, build it up, and then sell it.**

You can usually sell a business for 4 times annual profits.

### **2. Buy real estate and trust inflation/local surging of demand.**

Location, location, location and timing, timing, timing. There are always several hot real estate areas around the US.

### **3. Save 10-30% a year, consistently.**

Consistently!

### **4. Invest well in the markets.**

Stocks, bonds, commodities.

### **5. Inherit it.**

Hey, why not? Money is money.

### **6. Invent a product or process.**

Yes, you CAN!

### **7. Earn \$300-\$700 per hour as a professional.**

Combine this with #3 and you're on your way to financial independence. Just don't get caught up with the Lexus Lifestyle, however.

### **8. Marry well.**

Hmm..

### **9. Win the lottery.**

Hey, it happens!

### **10. Trade and Deal: buy low, sell high.**

Deal in goods, put together deals for others, network well, develop your reputation.

[Go to Top](#)

### **33. Top Sales Professional Techniques**

The top 5% of all sales professionals seems to have most of the following qualities, traits, styles and attitudes. I've included the traditional/old selling skill in parenthesis. Obviously, these Top 10 Secrets go the next step beyond the traditional way of describing them. How to improve sales performance:

**1. An obvious and compelling Passion for People, not just the for product or service. (OLD: Really believe in the product/service.)**

Super Sales Professionals care SO much for people and helping them to solve their problems/get their buying needs met that the buyer FEELS this. It's not an act; it's a calling.

**2. An ability to help the prospective customer to FEEL. (OLD: Find/create pain.)**

The Super Sales Professional doesn't just look for the hot buttons as a way of getting the person to buy. Instead, they help to create a possibility that EXCITES the buyer.

**3. A willingness to sell to the buyer's buying strategy instead of using a collection of selling techniques and hoping for a connection. (OLD: Using a technique that works for you.)**

This requires a certain humility because the Super Sales Professional makes the buyer more important than the Super Sales Professionals collection of selling skills. Every buyer has their preferred way to purchase; get to know these in general and quickly discover the preferred way that your potential customer buys/makes a decision, etc.

**4. An ability to peg/discern who is going to be a buyer and who is not. (OLD: Ability to qualify prospects quickly.)**

Super Sales Professionals have a sixth sense that helps them to distinguish between tire kickers and real buyers. This sixth sense is develop-able. And, it saves LOTS of time and frustration when mastered.

**5. Ability to easily match the EXACT features/benefits of the product with the client's spoken or unspoken needs or wants. (OLD: Sell the sizzle, not just the steak.)**

No buyer cares about ALL of the features and benefits; they usually only care about 1 or 2 of them. Your mission: Sense, feel or discover (by asking questions, guessing) the key benefits that turn this discussion into a sale, quickly.

**6. Not needing to have to make the sale. (OLD: Don't appear too hungry.)**

Hungry salespeople scare away the meal.

**7. Discerning the appropriate next step for the buyer and helping them to see how your product/service is the obvious choice. (OLD: Sell to the need.)**

This requires some thinking and feeling. When you can size up your buyer and look "ahead" for/with them, you'll see a picture of what's next and be better able to language how your product/service can assist them in their progress.

**8. Having enough evidence of how REALLY effective valuable your product/service is and then sharing that with confidence. (OLD: Know your product/service well.)**

When you've seen enough customers do extremely well with your product or service (not just well, but EXTREMELY well), you'll not be hesitant to share how well your product/service works. Facts inspire confidence. Get to know the real facts about how effective your product or service performs and delights customers, and you'll be a FEARLESS sales professional.

**9. Naturally adding value to everyone you touch, buyer or not. (OLD: Be a resource to potential customers.)**

Either you seek to add value to everyone or you don't.

**10. Be human, be light and be real with everyone. Don't perform or act. (OLD: Create rapport.)**

Drop the pretense, the false sincerity, the I'm-your-new-best friend, the I'm-here-to-SERVE-you-at-least-as-long-as-I-think-there's-a-chance-that-you'll-buy-something-from-me.

[Go to Top](#)

### **34. How to Get the Job Done**

Get the job done means that whatever task you're doing is being done so perfectly and thoroughly that nothing about it is unclear, confusing or not fully thought out by you or when communicating with another.

#### **1. If experiencing a problem:**

What system needs to be installed to prevent this problem, its brother, sister and cousin, from ever coming your way again?

#### **2. If sending an email:**

Assume this person is extremely overwhelmed and barely remembers his name, much less what I emailed him about earlier, what can I include in my email to him so that he clearly understands what I am saying, what I am asking for and what's really important that he get -- whether he asked for it or not.

#### **3. If asking for something;**

a. Tell the person exactly what you need (Size, shape, name, format, version). b. Why you need it (the context, background, problem). c. How you want it (FedEx, email, immediately, later, by when).

#### **4. If instructing someone:**

Assume the person is an idiot and will misunderstand what you're writing unless you spell out each step distinctly.

#### **5. If closing the sale: Double close and triple close by:**

a. Asking what concerns they have. b. Sensing and responding to what they aren't saying, questions they have. c. Being in touch with what YOU'RE feeling.

#### **6. If asking for a change:**

a. Condition the change. b. Tell the person why you're making a change. c. Tell the person what you want them to do and by when. d. Offer support/access/Q&A time.

#### **7. If surprised by something:**

a. Ask yourself why you were surprised; why didn't you know beforehand? b. Ask yourself what it means; is it good or bad; serious or not. c. What is the risk that has been added or that is potential?

#### **8. When presented with an opportunity:**

a. Ask yourself how this might bring down your business. b. Notice how you are responding -- adrenaline, greed? c. Ask yourself how this opportunity might cost you in other areas. d. Ask yourself if it's really worth it.

#### **9. If informing someone of something:**

a. Give the who, why, where, how, when, and what of it in the first paragraph. b. Ask yourself how what you are saying might be misheard and cause fear. c. Ask yourself the questions that any reasonable person would ask themselves when reading what you just wrote and then weave in these answers to your communication.

#### **10. If reacting emotionally to a situation:**

a. Ask yourself why you're reacting; what does this bring up for you? b. Ask yourself: Is the other person a jerk? And if, so, why are they in my life? c. Respond with a request that the other person act differently. d. Take responsibility for your PART in the matter. Emotional reactions don't just happen on their own. It may be a dynamic/racket that you created, even without meaning to. e. AND FINALLY, notice where you didn't do complete work somewhere along the process, that got you to this upsetting place right now. Fix that and you'll fix the upset.

[Go to Top](#)

### 35. Creating Great Print Ads for Your Business

Print ads generally have four written parts -- headline, support copy, call to action, and company name -- plus a visual. Visuals are usually more important than copy because they're more effective in attracting readers' attention and can instantly present your product or service in a dramatic and motivating way. Unless you're commissioning your own original artwork or photography, the visuals you'll use will probably be either drawings and photographs from your suppliers, or non-copyrighted artwork (clip art) found in clip-art books and scrap-art computer programs. So choose the strongest visual among them -- the one that best draws the eye and explains what you're selling -- and move on to copy.

The most prominent piece of copy -- your headline -- must not only work with your visual, amplifying its meaning, but also attract attention with a word, phrase or sentence announcing a benefit that appeals to your target market. One expert wrote that a headline is that final, mind-changing, sales-clinching comment you'd make when leaving the office of a prospect who, until then, had responded with nothing but negatives. Others point to the enduring effectiveness of the standard headlines "Sale," "Free" and "Buy now and save."

Collect ideas that are right for you from your salespeople, from the ads in your file, and from advertising books. And remember it is not so much the words, but the ideas they express, that sell; determine your message, then find words to convey it.

Below the headline, support copy explains the headline premise and adds secondary benefits or any assurance readers might need to dispel suspicions raised by the headline, such as the assurance of "same great quality" when you're offering a "new low price." Following this copy, as a sign-off, is a call to action urging the reader to respond ("Call for an appointment today," or "Remember, sale ends March 21").

Your company name, traditionally at the bottom of the ad, should include your address and phone number. Make your phone number larger to help stimulate response by phone. Add a cross street to your address (e.g., "5730 Sheridan, at La Monte") if you're a new business or if, for other reasons, people might have difficulty finding you.

The next step is to combine all these visual and copy elements into an eye-catching, easy-to-read ad formatted to the dimensions stipulated by the publication. It's best to study the ads in that publication in advance, and consider what your ad might look like in order to stand out on the page. Experiment with different layout ideas rendered in thumbnail sketches, and then fine-tune your ad to fit the layout you prefer. Obviously, it's highly advisable if not imperative, when you're doing ads in-house, that the person composing your ad has design experience. Not only is skill required to make an ad look right, but the quality of your ad must compete favorably with others appearing in the publication.

It's also a good idea to prepare your ad well ahead of the deadline. This way, you can put it aside for a few days and then review the ad with a fresh perspective while there's still time to make revisions.

As a final check, lay your ad on a page of the publication where it will appear and make sure it stands out from the articles and other ads on the page.

[Go to Top](#)

### **36. How to Work at Home Effectively**

Most of the suggestions below use external means to keep you working, instead of going down the willpower track, which is fraught with effort!

**1. Have deadlines with a consequence.**

Ouch. When one HAS to get something done, they usually do.

**2. Have a buddy, colleague, coach or staff members who keep you focused.**

Rely on others to help you stay focused and productive.

**3. If you don't love what you do, change it so that you do.**

Then, you don't need to TRY to stay focused, because you'll naturally be.

**4. Develop a schedule/routine, or not.**

Some folks work better with a schedule, others don't. Get to know YOUR style and preference, which by the way, may change with the seasons.

**5. Train your family members what work time means.**

Lock the home office door if that doesn't work.

**6. Make your home office absolutely perfect.**

A great home office will naturally keep you focused.

**7. Keep your beverages/snacks close at hand.**

If you leave your home office to go to the frig, you may get distracted by what's going on in the rest of your house.

**8. Set daily goals.**

And time line your day, if that works for you.

**9. Get off to a great start for the day.**

Whether it's a walk, or time with the paper, or a cup of coffee or tea, have your rising/getting started routine something that you genuinely like!

**10. Have something interesting/exciting to work on for the next day.**

The afternoon/night before, have something you're looking forward to working for the next day. This will get you into the home office. If you don't have something exciting to work on the next day, invent something that is exciting.

[Go to Top](#)

### **37. Business Telephone Etiquette Manners Tips for Service Providers**

A warm, helpful, professional and friendly voice on the phone can build customer loyalty, or if missing, drive them to your competitor. Extend the common courtesies to your callers and create a reputation of legendary service to keep your customers coming back!

#### **1. GREET -**

A warm, friendly, professional greeting including company name, dept name (if appropriate) and the person's name who answered the call. It is suggested that the greeting end with a helpful statement that assures the caller you are willing to help. Ex: ABC Shutter Company, this is John, how may I assist you?

#### **2. LISTEN -**

One of the most important techniques in telephone etiquette is to actively listen to the customer. Listen for both the content as well as the intent. Usually the customer tells you both in her opening statement. By listening actively to the customer's opening comments, you can then RESPOND with a statement that assures the customer you HEARD. Example: Customer: This is Mary Smith and I'd like to speak with someone to arrange for an estimate on hurricane shutters. I just moved into my home here in Florida. Service Provider: Yes, we can arrange for an estimate for you. I will be connecting you with Bob Jones in our Sales Dept. Will you please stay on the line, while I connect your call?

#### **3. EMPATHIZE -**

In other words, walk a mile in your customer's shoes. If the customer states: I don't want to wait for Bob Jones, I'm on my lunch hour and very busy, besides, this is my 2nd call and no one answered in the sales dept. Don't you want my business? Pause for a moment to be empathetic and respond: Yes, we do want to service you, Ms Smith and I apologize for the inconvenience. Since you are on a lunch hour, I will find someone to speak with you immediately, or I will be happy to have your call returned this evening to your home. Which works best for you?

#### **4. PROBE-**

Although probing isn't a technique that may come naturally to everyone, it is a required skill for anyone servicing customers over the phone. Keep it simple and remember the basic open questions ....Who - What - When - Where - How. I have found the phrase, Tell me more about..... works miracles when trying to discover information.

#### **5. COMMON COURTESIES**

Ask permission to place a caller on hold and get the caller's attention when you return. Most of us can remember all too clearly a time when we were placed on eternal hold and wondered if we had been forgotten. A simple rule to remember: call the customer by name when you return to the line and wait for her to respond, then continue. EX. May I put your call on hold while I pull a copy of the invoice? To gain the customer's attention when you return to the line, call the customer by name and wait for her response. EX. Mrs,Smith? (pause for her to respond) ..thank you for waiting, I do have the invoice information for you. TIP: If you know the wait time will be a few minutes, tell the

customer before you leave the line. You will save on customer irritation and possible repeat calls. To the bottom line of a business, you could lose revenue and productivity.

#### **6. AVOID COMPANY JARGON & RULES -**

All companies have their own set of rules and terminology. These can sometimes be defined as hot buttons for some customers as most of us do not want to hear quotes about what you can and can not do from the company manual. Nor do customers want to hear you refer to a simple order as FORM 1979-M. Keep It Simple!

#### **7. OFFER SOLUTIONS/ALTERNATIVES -**

If you know you can't do what the customer is asking, just tell her what you CAN do. There are usually alternatives that a customer will be willing to accept, IF you just take time to offer! Ex. If the customer is unwilling to wait any longer, then offer to have the sales rep return the call at a time that is most convenient for the CUSTOMER. Make the commitment and follow up with the Sales Rep to insure the commitment was met. If not, your company just lost Credibility and possible additional referrals!

#### **8. TONE -**

Since you are not face-to-face, the most important measurements of good communication in this case are voice quality and tone. Keep it positive and enthusiastic. Remember, the image the customer has of the person who is answering your company's phone is the image the customer has of YOUR COMPANY. Is it flat, monotone or upbeat and perky? Is it abrupt, indifferent or polite and empathetic? You want to hire NICE people to answer your phone who will be NICE to your customers.

#### **9. APPRECIATION-**

Before the caller hangs up, make sure your customer service associate has expressed sincere gratitude for the customer's patronage. EX:, Thank you for choosing ABC, we appreciate your business, Ms. Smith.

#### **10. GO THE DISTANCE -**

Run an extra mile for every customer - every time! Take time to extend yourself in some way to make a positive, lasting impression on the customer. Maybe when you pull the invoice, you notice that she has been a loyal customer for 6 years....or perhaps she just moved to a new location. Offer to send address change cards, or send a thank you card in the mail for her loyalty. Be your company's ambassador and watch your company flourish! Providing exceptional telephone service is nothing more than following "the Golden Rule" that we all learned as a child.

[Go to Top](#)

## **38. How to Be Empowered**

Contrary to common belief, the most effective control over one's life can be gained in an almost effortless manner. The truly empowered person "has it together", exudes a glowing poise that is apparent to others. Here are ten steps whereby you can begin experience empowerment in your own life.

### **1. Start from where you are and take one step at a time.**

When you think about it, that's the only place you CAN start, i.e., where you are at this moment. Begin with your present perceptions, understandings, and strengths and move forward, one step at a time. In this world of objectives, goals and big plans, we often focus too much on the future with the result that our ability to concentrate fully on the present is severely compromised. Yet, it is only in the present that we can make a difference.

### **2. Examine your resistance points--the things that irritate you, limit you, or cause you to react.**

We often resist what we most need to learn. The next time you find yourself resisting new information, a particular situation, or something someone else is saying, ask yourself: What is it that is really bothering me about this? Is there something that I need to learn?

### **3. Recognize that whatever you are experiencing at this very moment is appropriate to your need to grow.**

Implicit in this "rule of appropriateness" is the concept that there is a larger plan of which you are an integral part. Until you're willing to acknowledge the possibility that such a plan exists, you will never be able to see it!

### **4. Stop worrying about whether others are getting theirs!**

It's easy to become preoccupied about what the other person is doing, getting, achieving, etc. This kind of worrying is useless and wastes time and energies that are better spent on yourself.

### **5. Realize that it doesn't matter what happened to you or who did it to you; the only thing that matters is what you do about it.**

What happened and who did it to you are in the past. You can't change the past, you can only change your perception of it. The ONLY thing that counts is what you do NOW in order to move forward.

### **6. Learn to withhold judgment.**

To withhold judgment is to accept what is. How often in conversation do you find yourself mentally correcting, criticizing, or re-phrasing? when you do, you risk missing the real message which may not be in the words themselves. Rather than saying to yourself, "that's inaccurate" or "he/she is wrong", try accepting the statement as simply a representation of the way that person thinks, feels or what he/she intends to convey. This simple technique can open up a whole realm of hidden meaning, AND it enables you to respond more objectively and dispassionately.

## **7. Learn to operate holistically by opening up to the other possibilities that are always there.**

There is always more than one way to solve a problem. You're most likely to get "stuck" when you foreclose your options by setting up conditions, demands, expectations, fears, positions and prejudices.

## **8. Complete your unfinished business.**

Most of us have "unfinished business"--failures, a relationship gone sour, or a good deed left undone. Getting beyond ("completing") is not always easy, but there's a three-step process that, if followed, can do wonders for your psyche. It's this: (1) Acknowledge the wrong, mistake, screw-up, etc. to yourself, (2) Admit it to one other person, preferably the person you've wronged and, in the latter case, apologize and ask simply: "What can I do to make this right with you?" (Sometimes there really isn't much you can do, but the simple act of asking is healing in itself), and (3) Move ON. You've admitted your mistake, taken whatever corrective action you could, and now it's time to go forward. This third step takes discipline, but it works.

## **9. When faced with an apparently hopeless situation, take action, any action.**

There's something called the "logjam" theory that applies here: when logs in a stream become all jammed up, moving ANY ONE log frees the others to move, because the act of moving a single piece creates space which in turn allows the other pieces to move. It's important to recognize that you're not trying to reach a final solution in a single move; you're simply taking "one step at a time" (Step#1)

## **10. Consider the wisdom of doing absolutely nothing!**

As with the rule of appropriateness (above), there's a hidden assumption here, namely, that we each possess an inner wisdom that is always available if we know how to tap into it. Call it intuition, spiritual sense, whatever, the fact is that this "still small voice" is audible only when we are very quiet. It's a bit like a point in which you can see the bottom only when the surface is calm and the water nu-muddied. Doing nothing means exactly that: nothing physically, nothing mentally, nothing at all! The Japanese call it, "kokoro-no-mizu", literally, a "mind as water"--smooth, flowing and undisturbed. Try it. It works, and it's fun!

[Go to Top](#)

## **39. How to Be Successful in Business**

### **1. Customer-base**

Ask yourself: If I just bought this company, how would I sell more/expand what I sell to this customer base?

### **2. Cash**

Ask yourself: If I could invest this cash in any one part of this business/niche/product line for the biggest cumulative return/profit over the next 5 years, where would I invest it all?

### **3. Market Leadership**

Ask yourself: To remain the market leader for the next 25 years, where should I invest my time and company's resources right now?

### **4. Reputation**

Ask yourself: What can I do to double the strength of our current reputation, within the next 6 months?

### **5. Momentum**

Ask yourself: What's working well right now and how can I keep it working well?

### **6. Key Staff**

Ask yourself: Who are the 5 key people in my organization and what game/plan can I create with them so they'll stick around for a long time?

### **7. Systems**

Ask yourself: What systems work so well that we take them for granted? How could we improve them?

### **8. Responsiveness**

Ask yourself; How quickly and completely do we respond to changes in our customers, market, technology, staff needs or economic conditions?

### **9. Intellectual Property**

Ask yourself: What do we have, IP-wise, that just isn't being as leveraged as it could be?

### **10. The X Factor**

What do we have that's very, very special and that we could really maximize, just for the pleasure of it?

[Go to Top](#)

## **40. How to Delegate Tasks Effectively**

### **1. Delegate to someone who is naturally responsible and accountable.**

Anything less and you've got a problem.

### **2. Link performance to salary.**

Make the task/accountability that you're delegating a requirement for the person to get paid.

### **3. Identify what the signs/measures of failure are.**

This way, you can inform the person, in advance, what isn't acceptable, and what you'll be "looking out for...." This works.

### **4. Identify the measurables of the job/task/item.**

Then, you'll both know if the job is getting done.

### **5. Develop an iron-clad reporting system.**

A daily checklist, a weekly report, a monthly financial statement, a weekly meeting. Whatever it takes.

### **6. Install an oversight process.**

Have someone else that you trust to check in/check up on the employees performance, results, accuracy, honesty.

### **7. Identify consequences for inadequate performance, in advance.**

This way, no surprises and whatever actions you take are not punitive or arbitrary.

### **8. Double-check the work yourself from time to time.**

This means to review the work, chat with customers, get outside verification.

### **9. Build in a system of continuous improvement of the delegated task/accountability.**

This keeps the employee focused on creating new and better ways of doing what you need.

### **10. Customize a reward/incentive package, if appropriate.**

Everyone has their own unique way to be motivated. Make sure that you understand theirs and create something around that, not around your own way. But don't be too generous -- that usually backfires. Remember, you're their employer, not their friend or business partner.

[Go to Top](#)

## **41. How to Form a Business Partnership That Lasts**

**After choosing one another as potential partners, establish mutual ideas, goals, and philosophies operating in the team you are developing.**

Look for enough compatibility to challenge and stimulate one another over time, as well as the presence of mutual trust.

**Choose a partner whose strengths complement the limits of the other partner, and vice versa.**

**Establish the project or core focus of the partnership that is being created.**

**Determine the kind of Partnership that will be created.**

Will it be Equal, or possibly an Associate relationship, or any other possible combinations in between? Factors such as determining level of financial risk, availability of time and energy for the project, and prior existence of any intellectual property tied to the project are

some key items to consider. Hiring a Coach that has expertise in this area is recommended during the formative stages of the partnership, and at any time such support is needed in the future, in order to protect the best interests for each partner involved.

**Develop a sound financial compensation plan for profits received that both partners agree to in a signed document or contract.**

Legal representation for the partnership may be appropriate at this juncture.

**Determine what roles each partner will play during the course of the project, defined and clearly documented for future reference.**

Be accountable to your role, until both partners change the structure of roles established.

**Create and support the intent to continually place a working plan into action, review the results of the action taken, and making expedient and necessary shifts that will support the health of the partnership over the lifespan of the alliance.**

**If possible get the support of your immediate support system established before entering into partnership.**

You will need to educate them about expenditures of time, money, energy and other resources that will be needed to successfully launch the project(s) your partnership represents.

**Have planned, regularly schedule meetings on a weekly basis.**

These meetings will be set up for the purpose of discussing the wins and challenges, what's working and what's not, areas of discord and mutual planning for future growth and expansion.

**Set a minimum time period that both partners will agree to a "no exit" clause.**

New ventures take time to be planted, watered and nourished, weeded and ultimately harvested.

[Go to Top](#)

## **42. How to Make a Sales Pitch**

1. Name of the company or product.
2. Name of the buyer.
3. Primary benefit that the buyer receives IF they buy the product.
4. Instructions on how to get that benefit (say yes).
5. Ask for the order.
6. Be/sound positive and excited about your product; have confidence in them.
7. Inform buyer where this product will better position them in the world.
8. Identify and fill at least one hole or need of the buyer.
9. Authenticity (be honest, clean-spoken and REAL vs just salesy)
10. Treat the buyer as if they ARE going to buy vs waiting for them to say yes.

[Go to Top](#)

### **43. What to Do When You Feel Stuck**

Feeling stuck and unproductive is natural and it can be caused by overwork, lack of momentum, a bad mood, a success block, the weather and/or dozens of other factors. And, while it's helpful to understand why you're stuck and unproductive, sometimes it's just better to do one or more of the PRACTICAL things which follow!

#### **1. Play the Check-In game.**

Call a friend/colleague and say, "I'm stuck/unproductive. Can I check in with you every hour for a couple of hours until I get cranking again?" This really works! And, your friend may want to play along too! Just share what you want to get done, specifically, between now and the next time you call in. Your friend would listen and accept what you're saying -- or ask you to increase/decrease the goal for the hour. In either case, keep the check in call to be less than 5 minutes.

#### **2. Take a walk, go to the gym, go running, move your body.**

Increasing your body's metabolism also loosens up your mind and spirit, resulting in a greater energy flow. It's that simple.

#### **3. Take a nap.**

Sometimes, your mind needs a break to work through an idea or block. Take a 1-3 hour nap and see if that helps.

#### **4. Turn up the music.**

I use music as a prompter, especially when I'm feeling draggy or alone. Rap, disco, instrumentals work for me. And when I'm really stuck, Frank Sinatra does the trick.

#### **5. Eat/drink something that you will respond to emotionally or physically.**

If I'm REALLY stuck, I'll have a couple of cups of coffee -- caffeine is a great unblocker for me.

#### **6. Completely clean up your work space.**

It's said that "stuff" around you that's not in its place, can be a drain of energy. When I get stuck, one of the first things I do is take 10 minutes and put things in piles or file stuff away or clear my immediate work area so that there's less stuff dragging me down.

#### **7. Work on another task or project.**

I don't know about you, but I'm not willing to push myself through a project that I'm just not in the mood to work on. So, I find a project/idea that I DO want to work on and my productivity picks right up!

#### **8. Have a schedule/routine.**

A routine provides momentum and momentum will keep you from getting stuck. So, schedule in an hour or three of dedicated work between appointments/calls/meetings.

#### **9. Play the reward game.**

This may not be spiritually healthy, but I'll give myself rewards when I finish a tough project. Like a vacation, a trip, a shirt, a massage, etc. Hey, whatever works!

## 10. **Go on a trip.**

I find that I'm especially creative when on a plane, train or bus. So, sometimes, I'll book a 3-10 hour trip, bring my laptop and be incredibly productive. And, financially, it's WORTH IT.

[Go to Top](#)

#### **44. How to Increase Sales and Profits in Your Business**

**1. Cut overhead by automating almost everything.**

Accounting, reporting, voice mail, ordering, fulfillment, customer service, sales.

**2. Cut variable expenses by negotiating with suppliers.**

If you're seeking higher profits, you'll need your suppliers to reinvent themselves too! The smart suppliers will be empowered by your request.

**3. Cut variable expenses by redesigning (re-engineering) how work gets**

done/how the product is produced. This should be a continual process and second nature to you.

**4. Increase productivity by expecting 50%-100% more from everyone. (Yes,**

really. THAT much more.) And give them the best tools and training needed to produce more, without stress.

**5. Leverage your strengths by extending the product/service line.**

If you can easily add supplemental products or customized versions at the same profit margin, your overall profit should increase.

**6. Each quarter, challenge your assumptions about your industry and your**

company. Profit is ALWAYS temporary. What keeps profits increasing long term is staying in touch with an always-changing marketplace/industry.

**7. Experiment with new ideas, new types of products and new processes.**

Invest 1% of sales into making boo-boos, radical experiments, intuitively-based decisions, think tank getaways -- whatever is beyond the 9 dots.

**8. Have and hire only employees who continually impress you with their**

initiative and competence. Let everyone else go. Increasing profits come from great employees, not average ones.

**9. Turn your customer service department into the R&D Department of your company.**

[Go to Top](#)

## **45. International Marketing Plan Tips**

### **1. KNOW YOUR TARGET MARKET**

Select your market (country) based on the need you perceive for your product in that market. To find out IF there is a need for your product there are several sources you can tap: That country's embassy or consulate. Embassies are generally in Washington D.C., and depending on the size of the country, consulates are located in major or strategic cities around the USA. The local library. Find out if they are on-line. If so, they might have access to a National Trade Data Base (NTDB) which is updated monthly. You can also subscribe to their service and receive monthly CD Rom.

### **2. KNOW YOUR COMPETITION**

Find out who your competitors here in the USA are and where they export to. Who are their distributors or sales outlets in your target country. Find out who potential local competitors are in that country and where their products originate from. Find out pricing information if you can. Again, embassies and consulates as well as that country's trade mission (if any) and their chamber of commerce (here and local) may be helpful.

### **3. SHOULD YOU GO INTO THAT MARKET?**

Now that you have this basic information you need to decide if it will be worth your effort to proceed with this country. Usually the decision to market in a new country has far reaching effects on product development, pricing, financial and staffing. Do you need to conform to special laws and standards? (i.e. ISO 9000, metric etc.). Does your product come under export restrictions? (strategic high tech products). Does your product require specially trained technical support? Do you need to translate documentation? (Warning! Translations need to be done into the translator's native language; he/she must be familiar with your industry).

### **4. DISTRIBUTOR vs [OWN] SALES REPS**

Should you market your product yourself, or through a distribution network. Using your own sales reps means they are your employees and therefore you have "control" over their sales efforts. It also gives you "presence" in that country. The downside is, that it is expensive, you pay them whether you sell anything or not. Unless you are there physically you don't really have "control" over their activities and there is a ramp up time since most likely they don't hit the ground running. Distributors, in contrast, are established companies with their own presence, infra structure and [hopefully] success. They are already staffed and have a market established and they may have already a pipeline (prospects) for your product. The downside is, that they usually represent many other products as well.

### **5. HOW TO CHOOSE A DISTRIBUTOR**

The U.S. embassy in that country can help locate distributor candidates for you. There is a fee associated with that; check with the Department of Commerce (DOC). You can also check trade directories for the Region (where available) and local trade publications for ads from distributors. You may want to ask another company which has similar products to yours (not competitive) and find out who they are using in that country. That country's embassy/consulate often has such directories as well. After you

contact potential distributors find out who they are representing, how many products, how many sales reps they have, what their annual volume is, what they feel the market for your product might be, if they have technical support people (if that's what's needed for your product). When you have interviewed several potential distributors (on the phone, fax or e-mail), spend the money and visit the country and meet them personally. You will also get a first hand feel for the market. That is very important. You may want the same distributor represent you in several countries. (i.e. all that use the same language such as Austria, Germany and parts of Switzerland). Be cognizant of cultural and language differences! It, might however, be better to have one distributor for each country (not all eggs in one basket). In South East Asia it is different. Often one distributor has several countries because the markets may be small (Hong Kong, Singapore, Thailand, Malaysia etc.).

## **6. AGREEMENTS**

It is of utmost importance that you execute a distributorship agreement (or sales rep agreement) which has been reviewed by an attorney with international contract experience. It should contain, aside from the boiler plate clauses, length of term, information to what degree the distributor has the right to disclose information, pricing policies, discount policies, technical support policy, training, customer training, who pays for documentation, translations (if applicable), commissions and/or royalties, and sales quotas. If a distributor wants and gets exclusive geographic rights, then quota requirements are a must. If distributor does not make quota for a specified number of times, h can lose the distributorship or the exclusive status. Establish policy on multi-national accounts, "house" accounts, third party sell, etc. Will you provide sample product and/or demonstration products?

## **7. SUPPORT**

You have to consider what kind of support your distributor or sales rep will get. If it is an "easy" product may be very little technical support is required. High tech products like hardware and software require skilled technical support not only from you to the distributor but also from the distributor to the customer. You need to maintain a state-of-the-art level of support at the distributor level. For that he either needs to attend training at your location here in the USA or you need to provide that training at his location. Who pays for it? (needs to be in the agreement). US Manufacturers often provide frequent visits to their distributors. Some technical support visits, some marketing/sales political visits.

## **8. POTENTIAL FOR YOUR PRODUCT(S)**

Establish what the potential market for your product is. Although a variety of market research may be available from the country's embassy/consulate or DOC, trade publications etc. you may have to do some search yourself through local channels. What is the "life" for your product? Is it something consumers will purchase on a long term continual basis or is it a seasonal product or fad. Is it a capital purchase which requires regular maintenance long term. Is there residual income from maintenance, support, value added services?

## **9. COST OF MARKETING OVERSEAS**

When putting together the marketing plan, cost of marketing overseas is a major consideration. If you decide to market in one country, how much more expensive would it be to market to a number of countries in the same region. Cost factors are travel and related expenses, regional and local trade shows, local training, documentation, translations, added technical and other support, communication cost (tel/fax), licensing (export and local), adaptation to local standards and laws (i.e. 220V/50Hz), conversion of CCIR and not the U.S. format).

#### **10. LONG TERM COMMITMENT**

When a decision is made to sell a product in foreign markets, it is a long term commitment. The first 12-18 months are difficult at best and most likely will not show our company and product must build a customer confidence. Only a long term commitment will provide this. When making a marketing plan, it should contain sales and cost figures for at least 5 years, which are updated annually and reviewed quarterly. If approached properly, a comprehensive business plan is essential.

[Go to Top](#)

## **46. How to Make Money on the Internet**

There is no real secret to making money on the Internet. There are just well-known key factors that must be met in order for you to achieve Online success. If your business doesn't meet these key factors then it is bound to fail. Without further ado, here are the Top Ten Keys to Online Success...

### **1. PROVIDE VALUE**

Let's look at two of the most successful Online ventures: Google and Amazon. Why are they so successful? They provide tremendous value to the Web. That's what they've been doing all along. Your website must provide free resources, foster a sense of community and show real value to your visitors. Without useful information and real content, your website will just be background noise. Provide real value and the revenues will follow.

### **2. QUALITY PRESENTATION**

Providing content, community, and utility is not enough. It must be presented well. Quality means fast, clear web design that looks good and is easy to understand. It should be easy on the eyes, as well as the brain. Your users will make quick determinations about the quality of your site. High quality will result in repeat visitors and more traffic. The word about your awesome site will spread!

### **3. BE UNIQUE**

Your site must be unique. You should own something no one else has. In most Internet business opportunities you're nothing but pitching something you don't even know anything about with a web site that looks exactly like thousands of others. It's depressing to see people waste their money promoting some "get rich quick scheme" or advertising the same programs as everyone else. Not to mention those ripoff cybermalls. So, if you don't have your own unique website which fosters the Five C's (content, community, consistency, capability and commerce) then you're nothing but a cyber-static sales-pitch.

### **4. BUILD YOUR BRAND**

Why is Google valued at such a high worth? It's its brand name. Facebook is now virtually synonymous with the Internet. Amazon has also attained great name recognition. Both companies have formed a name that people can easily remember and with a comfortable ring to it. Today the key success factor is not about gaining market share, but rather gaining "mind share." This means brand recognition. Your name needs to be catchy and meaningful. Your name needs to express a feeling or image in the mind of the consumer. For example, the name Yahoo! is exciting and makes me feel like I've struck gold. The name Amazon.com paints a picture in my head of a vast and great jungle where anything is possible.

### **5. E-COMMERCE**

Let's face it. E-Commerce is here to stay. Your site must have a fully-functional E-commerce system built into it. It's expected if you want to actually make sales through the web. Visitors need to be able to purchase your product or service at any time with just a click of a button. Your site needs to make shopping a fast, fun and easy experience. Cater to the impulse buyer and provide a simple yet effective shopping cart system. How else do you expect to make any money on the Net?

## **6. FORM AFFILIATIONS**

One of Amazon's biggest success factors is their affiliate program. Wherever we go there's an Amazon book being sold on a website. It is so important to form solid partnerships and affiliations. Set up your own affiliate program and you might just see your profits soar. Develop joint venture partnerships with those web sites that fit with the "theme" of your business. Remember, you won't survive very long if you're trying to do it all by yourself.

## **7. TECHNOLOGICAL KNOWLEDGE**

No one accomplishes all of the above key factors without substantial technical know-how -- or at least ready access to it. It goes without saying Google and Amazon.com have many very technically savvy people on staff. Surely you wouldn't expect to build a substantial Online business without doing the same. Of course, you don't have to be a programmer, but you must have access to those people who can support you technically.

## **8. PROMOTE**

Advertise! Promote! Tell the world about your site! And I don't mean spam. I'm talking about a constant, strategic and aggressive promotion by using opt-in lists, ezine advertising, classified advertising, search engines, targeted email marketing and other Online promotional tools. Advertise on the radio, newspapers, and television. You have to let everyone know that you exist and that you mean business. A web site is, in reality, infinitesimal bits of data buried in a computer. It only means anything if people come see your site.

## **9. PATIENCE**

You have to be patient and think long-term. It takes a lot of hard work to be successful and it won't happen overnight. Plan ahead. Focus on your strategy and develop the right moves for the right time. Take your business step by step and you'll be greatly rewarded. I see too many people trying to make that fast, quick buck without putting much work into it. It's just not going to happen that way.

## **10. INVESTMENT**

In order to reach your goals and dreams, you have to invest time and money. If you're short on finances, then try to gather friends, family or investors to fund your project. If you think you have a really great idea then you should approach angel investors and venture capital firms. According to the Small Business Administration, angel investors pour as much as \$20 billion a year into some 30,000 small companies.

[Go to Top](#)

## 47. How to Make Smart Investment Decisions

Consider these ten things when you're using the NPV, IRR, or payback method to make a capital budgeting or investment decision.

1. Remember that the reason you're making a capital budgeting decision is to create more value in the future than exists today! Don't commit yourself to a future course of action that is not profitable in the future under all possible conditions you can think of today and expect tomorrow. The value of a decision is not only centered in its expected results, but it is raised or lowered according to the number of decisions in the future that it does not preclude, but allows, and those for which space is created. This statement has profound meaning for the futurity of decisions and the design of decisions by decision makers!
2. Always use cash flows and not accounting income to create your investment decision. Cash flows are the result of the total effects of implementing the project or investment scenario only AFTER all costs are removed!
3. Do not include sunk costs in your investment analysis. They are already spent, gone, kaput; use only the costs that will be incurred by the new project or investment. There will be a tendency to--see how much we've already invested--use sunk costs to justify going ahead with the project anyway--DON'T! It would be irrational to use past expenditures to consider a decision which can only affect the future!
4. You must consider "opportunity costs" as costs of the project or investment. If you use something that could be used for something else, the cost to replace the use of the something else must be included in your capital budgeting analysis. Always consider alternative uses of capital and resources as costs to the capital budgeting project or investment.
5. Look beyond. You must consider not just the first order of consequences, but the orders of consequences following your project decision. Build a scenario of contingencies given the project decision. Look at the downstream effects of the decision, what are the side effects? Are there hidden costs, if so add them to the decision. Will the project steal market share from ongoing investments? What is the expected effect of these losses?
6. What are the effects of the non-conformities. Don't let the assumptions you make about the present and the future be "blinding." In the world we live in today, things change--overnight! What about the nonconforming assumptions you make? How flexible are the beliefs that you have established the project parameters upon? Accounting for this now, will keep the value of the project in real terms.
7. Part of the reason that NPV calculations come out the way they do is because of IRR or Internal Rate of Return. IRR is designed to calculate the "discount" rate at which the cash flows of your project are discounted. Make sure that the IRR, discount rate, hurdle rate and the project discounting rate are sufficiently related or indexed to the market environment. If you used a discount rate of 5% and the real rate of inflation soared to 10% during the project--which happened in the early eighties--your project assumptions could create disaster for the company or your investment. Don't just assume that

because you have an IRR of x% that you should use that % to discount cash flows under NPV calculations.

8. Consider the utility of time not just the time value of money. With change occurring so rapidly, how quickly you get to the marketplace often determines how much utility is available for your investment decisions. It is extremely difficult to calculate the utility of ideas--often the marketplace is the only valuing entity--but as a planner you must gain a feel for what happens if you're not first, your project is outdated before you go online, or sudden shifts in macroeconomic factors change project assumptions. **THERE AREN'T ANY GUARANTEES--BUT**, he who ventures forth blindly, even though with courage and certainty, may need a parachute!

9. Consider risk management, contingency planning and disaster recovery as a cost of the project! Risk analysis, business interruption and disaster recovery are important factors when considering the ultimate cost or discountability of cash flows. What is the risk level of the project or investment? How can this "cost" be factored into the calculation? If the project is a complete failure, is wiped out by unforeseen contingencies or even hampered by personnel problems, what will be the effect on the company, organization or investment?

10. Last, but not least, a maxim from Professor Sharpe at Stanford University who says, " it is important to remember that investment opportunities may influence one's consumption decision and that consumption opportunities may influence one's investment decision."

[Go to Top](#)

## **48. How to Improve Listening Skills**

Most people spend roughly 70% of their waking hours in some form of verbal communication. Yet, how many of us have ever had any formal training in the art of listening? Here are ten things you can do to improve your listening skills.

### **1. Approach the listening experience from a state of**

To be centered is to be completely calm at a very deep level, to be without agendas or predispositions as to the outcome, and to be open to experience. Centeredness is a prerequisite to truly open listening. It sets the stage for the points below. For more on this topic, see Top Ten List #30, "Ten Ways to Develop Positive 'Ki' (Energy)"

### **2. Never rule out any topic of discussion as uninteresting.**

Creative people are always on the lookout for new information. While some conversations may be completely inane, it's wise to make sure the subject is not worthwhile before tuning out completely.

### **3. Accept the speaker's message**

On the face of it, this would seem to be an argument for gullibility--for believing almost anything anyone tells you. It's not. The point here is to withhold judgment during the immediate experience of listening. In accepting "as is", you're not making a determination as to the truth or falsity of the statement, you're simply acknowledging exactly what the speaker is saying--right or wrong, good or bad, true or false. This capacity for total acceptance frees the mind to listen for other clues, for example ...

### **4. Listen for the whole message.**

One estimate has it that 75% of all communication is non-verbal. If you take away the words, what's left? Plenty, it turns out. Beyond the words themselves is a host of clues as to what the speaker is communicating. Some examples: posture (rigid or relaxed, closed or open); facial expression (does it support the words?); hands (clenched, open, relaxed, tense?); eyes (does the speaker maintain eye contact?); voice tone (does it match the words?); movement (are the speaker's movements intense, relaxed, congruent (with the message) or conflicting; do they suggest that the whole speech is "staged"?) What you're looking for here are inconsistencies between what is said and what is really meant, clues that tell you the spoken message isn't really genuine. Get the idea?

### **5. Don't get hung up on the speaker's delivery.**

Then there are factors that simply reveal an awkwardness in delivery rather than any attempt to mislead. The key is being able to distinguish between the two. It's easy to get turned off when someone speaks haltingly, has an irritating voice, or just doesn't come across well. The key to good listening, however, is to get beyond the manner of delivery to the underlying message. In order for this to happen, you have to resolve not to judge the message by the delivery style. It's amazing how much more clearly you can "hear" once you've made the decision to really listen rather than to criticize.

### **6. Avoid structured listening.**

It's popular among some communications teachers to recommend a format for listening, either in the form of questions ("What is the speaker's main point? What is he/she really saying?) or key words (e.g., purpose, evidence, intent). The problem with this approach is that it creates a dialogue of noise in the listener's mind which interferes with clear reception. Better to operate from the openness of the centered state (above) and receive the information just as it comes, without any attempt to structure or judge it. Think of your mind as similar to the central processing unit of a computer in which the data comes in and is stored without change, available for subsequent access.

#### **7. Tune out distractions.**

Poor listeners are distracted by interruptions; good listeners tune them out and focus on the speaker and the message. It's a discipline that lends itself to specific techniques for maintaining one's focus. Here are some things that will help: Maintain eye contact with the speaker; lean forward in your chair; let the speaker's words "ring" in your ears; and turn in your chair, if necessary, to block out unwanted distractions.

#### **8. Be alert to your own prejudices.**

This goes along with #3 above, but it's so important that you may want to think specifically about the impact of your prejudices on your ability to really hear what's being communicated. Often, we are unaware how strongly our prejudices influence our willingness and ability to hear. The fact is: any prejudice, valid or not, tends to obscure the message.

#### **9. Resist the temptation to rebut.**

Why is it that, when we hear someone saying something with which we strongly disagree, we immediately begin mentally formulating a rebuttal? Many reasons, but one of the most common is our natural tendency to resist any new information that conflicts with what we believe. Keep in mind: you can always rebut later, when you've heard the whole message and had time to think about it.

#### **10. Take notes sparingly.**

The world seems to be split between those who take prolific notes and those who take few or none, with each side equally strong in its position. I come down toward the latter view for this reason: the more focused you are on writing down what is being said, the more likely you are to miss the nuances of the conversation. There are two good ways around this dilemma. You can write down only key words and then, after the conversation, meeting, etc., go back and fill in, or you can take notes pictorially, that is, by diagramming what the speaker is saying. It's a technique called, "mind-mapping" and it was first popularized by a writer named Tony Buzan well over a decade ago in a book entitled, "Use Your Head". You may want to look up his books; he's written several.

[Go to Top](#)

## **49. Managerial Decision Making Techniques in Business**

Most of us have never been taught to make wise decisions in our work or personal lives. Could you benefit from using a system that combines logical thinking with intuition? Ask yourself these empowering questions adapted from Dr. Spencer Johnson's book: YES or NO.

### **1. What do I really need from this decision?**

Distinguish between a want which is a WISH and a NEED which is a necessity. You may want a luxurious home, but may need a peaceful haven. You may want to buy a variety of inexpensive shoes, but you may need good quality Ferragamos to keep your feet from hurting. Successful people get their true needs met. When we pursue what we think we want, we feel empty even after we have it. Be sure to focus clearly on what will actually fulfill your needs and avoid being distracted by everything else.

### **2. What are my options?**

Asking this question puts you in a resourceful state to allow yourself to find effective solutions. Be open to having new thoughts flow into your consciousness. If you hear yourself saying: I have no options..., recognize that you are simply not aware of them right now. Inform yourself of options by gathering information, talking with others or working with a coach. A good example about the importance of getting information before making a decision is the classic story about Henry Ford. He took three regional managers to dinner and afterwards decided which one to select to be his national manager. When the successful candidate later asked Ford why he had been chosen, he replied: All of you were successful at selling, but you were the only one who tasted his food before salting it. I like a person who gets information before making a decision. What opportunities have you missed by not first getting the information needed before reaching a decision?

### **3. Take each option and ask: Then what would probably happen?**

Use your logical mind to narrow down your options to two or three. Then, use your imagination to focus in great detail on what would happen if you acted upon this choice. See what unfolds and feel the consequences as if you have already experienced this decision. Take it well into the future by asking: then what?...at least two more times

### **4. Have I thought it through completely?**

Take time to be aware of the worst case/best case scenarios and what you would do in either case. How would that be for you? The result of even one decision has a domino effect on ourselves and others. Our lives are shaped by our decisions every day.

### **5. What does my decision reveal about my beliefs?**

It's been said that we are what we believe. Your core beliefs form your self-image--your identity. They define how you feel about yourself and influence your decisions through your subconscious. Beliefs are largely choices we've made long ago and have forgotten. Your decisions mirror your personal thoughts and feelings; they reveal (to yourself and others) how you really view yourself and the world. By looking at the pattern of your past decisions you can identify limiting beliefs that are getting in the way of your wise

decision-making. If you are not able to see your own truth, ask what they see or get a coach to help.

#### **6. How does this decision fit my purpose or personal mission?**

If you have declared to live your life from a place of integrity, for example, ask yourself: Does this decision I'm about to make cause me to make a deposit in my personal integrity account? Check for congruence between what you say you believe and what you actually do. Being clear about who you are and what you stand for allows you to make better decisions.

#### **7. Am I trusting my intuition?**

Your intuition is your personal guide to help you sense what is right for you. To access it, determine how you feel about the decision. For most people, the best way to do this is to sit quietly, close your eyes and go within. Open to your body's wisdom. Do you feel calm or anxious? If you feel stressed or confused as a result of focusing on this decision, it's your inner wisdom letting you know this is probably not right for you now. On the other hand, if you feel lighter, peaceful or inspired, this is your validation to proceed. Think back to a time you made a successful decision and remember how that felt. Let your intuition be your teacher.

#### **8. Am I setting my ego aside and listening to my Higher Power?**

By accessing your intuition, you have learned what is inside of you; now for further guidance, especially for critical decisions, you need to go beyond yourself to make sure your ego isn't interfering. This step is a very private and personal one and you must decide for yourself how best to do this. Some people pray, meditate or commune with nature. I ask my Higher Power for guidance and then keep still to listen what comes to me.

#### **9. Do I really expect a positive outcome?**

Often we unwittingly sabotage our own success. We do this with positive intent to protect ourselves from fear, pain or disappointment should it not turn out. We know now that our dominant thoughts influence with events we experience and that it is better to act AS IF the desired outcome is already assured. The key word here is expect, not want. You may want to win the lottery, but you may not expect to be a multi-million dollar winner.

#### **10. What would I do if I deserved better?**

Some undermine their efforts due to a hidden belief that they don't deserve more. To see if this is true for you, look at your life. Do you find that you stop at a certain level of success? Do you have an internal thermostat that causes you to cool down whenever you go beyond your comfort zone? Most of us resist this idea that we don't let ourselves have anymore than we really believe we deserve. If you believe in your decision, then act on it!

[Go to Top](#)

## **50. Ways to Motivate Employees Effectively**

You've just been in a serious car accident. You've got massive internal injuries and a broken jaw. You're going to be in the hospital at least a month. Your jaw is wired shut so you can't use the phone. Will your business run easily and well while you recover? Will your customers be served while you are gone? If you've just experienced heart failure over this prospect, the following list is for you. The information below, if put into practice, will reduce your stress, increase your business' productivity, and give you the vacation you so richly deserve. Here's the top ten things you can do to make your business run as smoothly as possible.

### **1. Hire wisely.**

Most businesses hire bodies for particular jobs rather than people to help build a future. Your business is only as good as each individual employee's contribution to its functioning. Therefore, look for the three i's when you hire: intelligence, initiative, and integrity. For every position, from receptionist to packing clerk, hire only the best you can find. Conversely, if you have current employees who are not performing well, consider whether they are a wise investment of your money.

### **2. Build a team, not your ego.**

Many employers let their egos dominate their interactions with their employees. Stop the pattern. Instead, trust your employees to do their jobs. Make each employee feel that they are an invaluable member of the company team. Let each employee know they are an integral part of the company's end product. Set the example for positive interaction at all times between members of the team even when ideas or performance must be corrected.

### **3. Reward well.**

When you get good employees, reward them financially and emotionally. Be sure their pay is at least at market rate. Take time often to acknowledge each employee's contribution. The two biggest loyalty builders are two simple words-- thank you.

### **4. Be hands on.**

Know each employee's job and how to do it. This not only gives you an automatic reserve employee and trainer (yourself), but has an added bonus. If you show an employee that you are willing to learn or have learned his/her job, you are communicating that you believe their work has value. Every employee needs to know that whether they are emptying trash cans, setting the presses, or selling the large accounts, their work is worthwhile and valuable.

### **5. Make your employees versatile.**

In a small company, every employee should know how to do at least two jobs, particularly on the technical and service sides. For critical tasks, at least three employees should know how to do each job. Thus, you always have an on-the-premises reserve who can step in when needed.

### **6. Give away tasks, but not ultimate leadership.**

What is it you do best? Are you the idea man, the best salesman in your company, the organizer? Find your best talent and then delegate all other tasks to your employees. Train them appropriately to do their job, let them know you have confidence in their

ability to perform well, and then let them do their jobs. Adding responsibility with confidence will increase your employee's willingness to work and their pride in the company's end result. At the same time, you must maintain ultimate leadership. In any well run ship, the captain makes final decisions and you are still the captain, albeit a benign one.

#### **7. Communicate, communicate, communicate.**

You must talk with your employees, solicit their suggestions, and positively correct their mistakes. Conversely, you must create an atmosphere where employees are willing and able to talk with you. The two best sources of information on how your business is doing and how to improve it are your employees and your customers. Pay attention to both.

#### **8. Give your best and always and encourage the same in your employees.**

Pride in the company and its product or service always begins at the top. If you give a half effort or let a sloppily produced product go out the door to a client, you are sending a message to your employees that you do not respect your clients or your work. Your employees will adopt that view as well. If you set the example of giving the extra effort, pitching in when needed, caring about your fellow team members, working as a unit to be the best in your particular business, and taking care of the bottom line, your employees worth having and keeping will follow suit.

#### **9. Encourage innovation and creation.**

Give your employees a stake in the future. Once a month, have a meeting where the employees make suggestions on how to improve your product, service, efficiency, or bottom line. Give monetary rewards when the ideas produce increases to the bottom line. Give positive encouragement for the process.

#### **10. Have a second in command.**

No general goes into battle without a major who can take over if he is felled by a bullet. You are your business' general and must act accordingly. Find someone you trust within your company who has the same goals, ideals, and a similar business style. Train him/her appropriately. Let others know he/she has your confidence and authority when you are gone. When that is done, leave on vacation and test the theory out. If you have completed steps 1-9 above, your business will run easily and well and you will have regained a healthy balance in your life.

[Go to Top](#)

## **51. How to Motivate Your Salespeople**

1. Expectations: Quotas
2. Threat: Fire the bottom 10% of the sales team each quarter.
3. Pow-wows: Daily or weekly meetings/gatherings of all salespeople rally 'round the flag.
4. Ranking: Posting/displaying the recent results each sales person.
5. Sales conferences off-site.
6. Bonuses: For short-term/special product production.
7. Awards: Salesperson of the month, rookie of the year, etc.
8. A coach: To manage actions, hold to account, keep the focus.
9. Product and sales technique training to improve competencies.
10. A high-value, well supported product.

[Go to Top](#)

## **52. Myths About Sales Techniques**

Are you anxious about selling yourself and your services because of a negative view of selling? Let's bust a few myths!

### **1. A salesperson can sell you something you don't want.**

People buy to satisfy needs and wants. A salesperson may help a customer to identify their needs and wants but customers only buy when they believe the product or service they are offered will satisfy them. Selling is not about seducing or coercing the client into buying something for which they have no use or desire.

### **2. Successful salespeople use a lot of tricks and gimmicks.**

Tricks and gimmicks are the tools of the old style salesperson. Today's buyers are too sophisticated to put up with these tactics. Tricks and gimmicks may still be used by some salespeople in some industries but these techniques are not the skills used by today's sales professional.

### **3. Successful salespeople are aggressive.**

The best salespeople are not aggressive, by the usual definition of that word. They are self motivated, enthusiastic and personable. The irritating pushiness that the public tolerates as part of buying is the trademark of the untrained, unprofessional salesperson. Top salespeople in any field are sincere, knowledgeable, considerate, helpful and empathetic.

### **4. Great salespeople are born, not made.**

Great salespeople are not born, they are trained. They resemble star athletes or entertainers in that they may have personality or physical traits which enhance their abilities. However desire, training, practice and experience will enable anyone to reach a successful level of sales performance.

### **5. Selling is something you do to people.**

Selling is something you do with people, not something you do to them. A sales presentation is conversational in style. It should be comfortable, not confronting. The client needs information and looks to the salesperson for guidance and advice. The salesperson is helpful and supportive as the client considers the presentation and makes a decision.

### **6. Selling a professional service requires a compromise in ethics.**

The salesperson is motivated only by a desire to satisfy their customer's needs and wants. Professionals always place their client's best interests ahead of their own. Trust is essential to a successful sales relationship and a professional never compromises his/her integrity to achieve success.

### **7. The public does not trust or like salespeople.**

People do not like or trust poorly trained, poorly informed, ineffective 'salespeople'. They often share stories about unethical and pushy sales service, but in the next breath praise the experience of dealing with their stock broker, real estate agent, or car dealer.

They say, "She's different, you can trust her." Today's consumer wants sales service they can trust and rely on, and they will remain loyal to salespeople who provide it.

#### **8. To be effective in sales you must adopt a new personality.**

The more open you are with your client, the more you reveal who you are, the less you try to role play an imagined sales personality, the more effective you will be. The more you share your values, feelings and experiences with your clients the more comfortable they become.

#### **9. Marketing is replacing selling.**

Selling is part of the marketing process. Sometimes, professionals use the term 'marketing' instead of selling, believing it is more acceptable. There is also a mistaken belief that marketing can replace selling and eliminate the need for direct, one-to-one customer contact. This may be true for some products or services where the salesperson acts simply as an order taker. For most products and services, however, selling is a necessary and valuable part of the marketing strategy.

#### **10. All successful salespeople are hard closers.**

Surveys show that today's top salespeople seldom spend much time on closing. Instead they focus on finding customer needs, demonstrating benefits and asking for customer feedback. The professional salesperson, after making sure his client has all the information needed to make a decision, simply asks if they would like to take the next step.

[Go to Top](#)

### **53. How to Get the Skills of a Natural Leader**

Leadership exists on a continuum from managing self to managing others to managing the organization. Natural leadership does not mean that you either have it or you don't. It does mean that you are willing to assess your style and behavior, and that you are willing to learn and grow.

#### **1. The only person you can change is yourself.**

Self-management comes before managing others or managing an organization. Understanding the impact of your behavior is crucial to leadership.

#### **2. You must feel comfortable being in a leadership role.**

Leadership calls for authenticity. If you are not comfortable with the role, others will sense it and withhold the full measure of whatever it is they have to contribute.

#### **3. Being a natural leader involves being able to adjust your style to the skill level and commitment of others in any given situation.**

Reading the people/task mix requires skill, flexibility and intuition.

#### **4. Natural leaders develop other leaders**

Leaders of today must share skills, insight and power to bring along others who have the potential to lead. This includes giving others the opportunity to lead. Someone once said that leadership is like manure. Left in a pile it starts to smell really bad and does no good. Spread around evenly it promotes growth and doesn't smell bad at all.

#### **5. As a leader, you must make sure information flows freely in all directions.**

The culture must be such that withholding information to strengthen one's own power or for any reason is absolutely not tolerated.

#### **6. Leaders have to be accessible.**

You have to create a culture in which people feel they can tell you the bad news as well as the good news. You cannot isolate yourself or let others isolate you.

#### **7. Leadership in modern organizations means sometimes fading into the background . . . when it is natural to do so.**

You do not have to plan every tactic or lead every charge. Hire good people who can articulate your vision as well as you can (maybe even better) and then let them do it.

#### **8. Leaders need to provide support.**

Become a sponsor for someone else's idea or project. Make sure you provide the resources and structure others need to succeed.

#### **9. Leaders must create a culture that encourages risk and tolerates mistakes.**

In these times, playing it safe in business is the riskiest strategy.

#### **10. Leadership skills can be developed.**

Natural does not mean born with. Leadership skills can be learned and this learning circles back to self-management.

[Go to Top](#)

## 54. Effective Business Negotiation Techniques

Learning how to negotiate removes pressure, stress and friction from your life. You see, negotiating is like chess -- if you don't know how to play you will be intimidated by the activity, especially if your opponent knows the game. Negotiating is a predictable event that has rules, planned moves, and counter moves. But, unlike chess, negotiating is an activity you can't avoid, so learn the rules. This article discusses the five underlying facts about negotiating, win-win negotiating, and the definition of a good negotiator.

### Five Underlying Facts About Negotiating

**1. You are negotiating all the time.** Whether you are buying supplies, selling products or services, discussing pay with employees, buying a car, disagreeing with your spouse, or dealing with your children, you are always negotiating. It's just that some of what you negotiate, are considered by you as normal activity.

**2. Everything you want is presently owned or controlled by someone else.** Doesn't that statement seem like "a given?" But think of the implications. To get what you want means you have to negotiate with the person that has it.

**3. There are predictable responses to strategic maneuvers or gambits.** It is critical to understand this because if strategies are predictable then they can be managed. If a gambit such as "nibbling" for extras at the end of a negotiation is employed on you then you can request "trade-offs" to either stop it or get extras for yourself.

**4. There are three critical factors to every negotiation:**

**The understanding of power** -- Who has the power in the negotiation? Understanding this will help you in your strategies. Does the person you are dealing with have the power to make the decision? Are you in a weak negotiating position? If so, can you bring in factors or strategies that mitigate that?

**The information factor** -- What the opponent wants, what they require, and understanding the elements about the object negotiated for are all informational items that are critical for a smooth negotiation or to use to your advantage.

**The time element** -- Time is an important element to negotiation. If someone wants your product but is desperate because they need it quickly, it's a big factor in the strength of your position. You know they have little time to compare other products. You can guarantee speed for more money.

**5. People are different and have different personality styles that must be accounted for in negotiations.** Strategies are affected by the people within the negotiation. If you play to the needs and desires of the person, you will be more successful in the negotiation.

### Win-Win Negotiating

Understanding the underlying facts about negotiations gives you a base to work from in any negotiation, but win-win is a central theme that must be concentrated on. Keep in mind three simple rules:

**1. Never narrow negotiations down to one issue.** Doing so leaves the participants in the position of having a winner or a loser. When single-issue negotiations become a

factor, broaden the scope of the negotiations. If immediate delivery is important to a customer and you can't meet the schedule, maybe a partial shipment will resolve their problem while you produce the rest.

**2. Never assume you know what the other party wants.** What you think you are negotiating for may be totally different from what they are. You may be selling them on quality, when what they need is medium quality, low price and large volume. Always keep an eye on their wants and needs.

**3. Understand that people are different and have different perspectives on negotiations.** Some may want to negotiate and build a long term business relationship. Others may want the deal, and a handshake and it's over. Price is generally an important factor but never assume that money is the only issue. Other issues can change the price they are willing to accept or the price you are willing to accept, like financing, quality, and speed.

### **The Negotiator**

Let's now direct our attention to the negotiator - You. To be a good negotiator requires five things:

**1. Understand that negotiating is always a two-way affair** - If you ignore that fact, you will ignore the needs of the other party and put a stake in the heart of the negotiation.

**2. Desire to acquire the skills of negotiating** - Negotiating is a learned activity. Constantly evaluate your performance and determine how you can improve.

**3. Understand how the human factor and gambits affect negotiating** - Knowing one gambit and using it always is not enough. It may not work on some people. They may have an affective counter to the gambit. Then you are lost or may not recognize tactics being used on you.

**4. Be willing to practice** - Pay attention to what you are doing during negotiations. Plan them and re-evaluate your performance. Prepare for negotiations by practicing with someone.

**5. Desire to create Win-Win situations** - You don't want to negotiate with someone who only wants to destroy you. If you both win, a future deal is possible.

As you understand the rules and the process of negotiations, the stress, pressure and friction that currently get in your way will disappear. You will actually learn to enjoy the process.

[Go to Top](#)

## **55. How to Succeed with an Online PR Marketing Campaign**

### **1. Set goals for your campaign**

increase sales, attract advertisers, drive traffic to your site, build brand awareness

### **2. Develop unique selling proposition (USP)**

about your company, its products and services; create key message points about the benefits to end users

### **3. Determine your target audiences**

Internet industry, advertisers, consumers, Wall Street, etc.

### **4. Begin a publicity program**

write a press release about significant company announcements (ie: new product launch, a strategic partnership, a new source of funding, advertising sponsorship, an experienced executive joining the company)

### **5. Select appropriate spokespersons for the media--yourself, your marketing manager, your technical expert**

### **6. Create a target media list**

business editor and Internet/technology reporter for local newspaper, advertising and interactive trade editors, business reporters, TV reporters covering cyberspace

### **7. Send release to reporters by E-mail or fax by 8 A.M. of the day you issue it**

follow up with a phone call by late morning; talk to your messages points; you'll only have time to give the top line of the story

### **8. Follow what reporters are writing every day and know their interests**

### **9. pot industry trends by checking online media and traditional print and broadcast coverage daily or several times a day**

### **10. Build relationships with reporters**

invite them to lunch; see them at industry events.

[Go to Top](#)

## **56. How to Work Effectively in a Home Office**

There are many successful home business models ranging from total chaos to very structured. So there is no single recipe that must be followed to be successful. Many home businesses are started by refugees from corporate America who are used to the structure and socialization aspects of the corporation. For these owners, the following secrets will help provide the structure they may need when they first start.

### **1. Negotiate an agreement with the other inhabitants and live up.**

to that agreement. Frequently there is a re-entry problem with the other inhabitants. Your spouse may be used to being alone during the day, and may be unhappy with your increased presence. Have a kick-off meeting to negotiate an agreement that will avoid conflict.

### **2. Set aside a separate area for the business.**

If possible, dedicate a room or part of the basement to the business. This helps everyone feel that the home is still a home. It also provides a basis for a home office income tax deduction.

### **3. Schedule separate blocks of work time and free time.**

There can be many distractions during the day. It is helpful if you have a schedule for the day so you can minimize interruptions and distractions.

### **4. Start every work day at the scheduled time.**

Form a habit of starting on time and keeping to the schedule. This makes it easier to minimize distractions.

### **5. Don't sleep late or watch daytime TV during work time.**

It's tempting sometimes, but successful businesses are built on the days that you don't feel like it, not on the days that you do feel like it.

### **6. Wear your work uniform when you are working.**

When I started my consulting practice, I found it helpful to dress business casual (for men this is wearing a tie without a food stain). It made me feel more like I was supposed to be working.

### **7. Work on high value tasks during your peak productive hours.**

Most people have specific part of the day that they are more productive. I find my optimum schedule is to start about one hour after sunrise, work continuously for four hours, then go out. I can work another two hours after I return. That six hour work schedule has consistently produced more work product than I used to produce in two days in the corporate environment.

### **8. Accomplish your Single Daily Action before you finish the workday.**

Have a Single Daily Action every day which is the most important action for that day. When you are starting your practice, this is likely to be marketing-related.

### **9. Build a supportive community and nurture it every day.**

I think the chief complaint about home business is that it can get lonely and isolated. Make it a practice to talk to people every day, even when your focus is on completing an important project.

## **10. Manage your thoughts.**

Sometimes it is easy to become discouraged and/or negative. Create a method of maintaining a realistic positive outlook and re-energizing yourself when the voice of your Evil Twin intrudes.

[Go to Top](#)

## **57. How to Organize Paperwork for Business**

We must all be efficient and productive in today's business world. Being organized helps you handle tasks quickly so that you have more time and space to do what you truly want to do.

### **1. One-time mail system.**

Have an In Box on your desk for new mail/information. Look at your mail once a day. Review each piece of mail once to decide whether to do it, delegate it or dump it. If it adds value to your business or is required for doing business, do it or delegate it. If not, then dump it. If you keep it, then categorize it using the A, B, C system. Use your time wisely.

### **2. Categories for performing your work.**

Set up desk trays labeled A, B, and C. Items in category A must be handled today. Category B items must be handled this week. Category C items are generally filing that must be kept because they have some value, such as invoices, tax returns, and statements.

### **3. Prioritize your work within categories A and B.**

Sort the categories into 1, 2, and 3. A1 must be done NOW, it is "hot" or "urgent." A2 can be done this AM. A3 can be done by the end of the day. B1 is done on Monday. B2 done by Wednesday. B3 done by the end of the week. Make the decision once, then do the work.

### **4. Filing.**

Set a day and time each week for filing. Don't let it stack up. Give yourself space to work.

### **5. Purge your files on a regular schedule.**

For example, purge files every six months. Send these documents to storage. This gives you more space to work.

### **6. Storing records.**

Store documents in boxes. Mark the contents of each box. For instance, clients A-F2013. Mark the destruction date on the box, D = June 02. Base your destruction date on the legal requirements for your industry.

### **7. Toss out stored documents on a regular schedule.**

For example, two times per year, visit the storage area and remove boxes that are beyond the destruction date. Depending on your industry, they may need to be shredded rather than put in the trash.

### **8. Color code your records.**

For example, clients with first names beginning with A-F are in Orange folders; G-K Yellow; L-P Blue; Q-Z Green. This will save you time when you are searching for a file. You can also apply this to AP, AR, Payroll, and Taxes. This can also be done by year. For example, 2012 AP is blue; 2013 AP is purple.

### **9. Hot files.**

Put a red cover on files that you consider "hot." These could be urgent projects, legally or financially sensitive, or important VIP clients. Keep these visually at your fingertips.

### **10. Use out guides.**

If you work with other people and share files, create a check-out system so that files are not lost. Put the file name, taken-by name, and date on a card and place it in an out guide box. When you can't find what you want, check the box to see if your co-worker is using the file. Be sure to remove the card from the box when you return the file.

[Go to Top](#)

## **58. How to Overcome Fear and Anxiety**

When faced with fear, we often talk ourselves out of taking action. Most of the time, we have nothing to lose and everything to gain!

### **1. Breathe!**

When we are excited, we get body sensations that can stop us. Stop, take some deep breaths and then proceed. This is especially important to help your voice sound calm when your knees are shaking.

### **2. Remember, it isn't about you!**

When you get rejection, it is usually because the other person doesn't need what you are offering. It isn't personal. They may just be having a bad day. Or if they are genuinely a nasty person, they gave you a break by not prolonging the relationship!

### **3. Picture The WORST**

Can you live through that? We awfulize most things and imagine the outcome far worse than it usually is. Ask yourself, what is the worst that can happen? Most of the time, you can handle it!

### **4. Master The Topic**

If we feel confident in our knowledge, the fear about sharing it with others decreases. Even if they don't see value or agree with us, we feel okay, because we have developed an expertise that gives us confidence in ourselves.

### **5. Put something at stake or give yourself reward**

A reward or penalty that is big enough will motivate sometimes. A sales trainer coached a real estate agent in making regular prospecting calls to write a check for \$1000 to his ex-wife and have his secretary send it any day he did not make the number of prospecting calls he said he would.

### **6. Get a Buddy**

Taking on something fearful with another person often will get you through it and keep you from having those dialogues in your head that try to talk you out of it. A coach can also help shine light into those dark areas!

### **7. Talk about it out loud**

Once you identify the fear and talk about it out loud, it will often diminish. Another technique is to close your eyes and picture yourself doing that thing you are afraid to do. Now run through the same scene but do it very fast. Now run through it very slow, next make it silly, make it brighter, make it dimmer. Has some of the fear dissipated?

### **8. Read something inspirational or listen to tapes.**

Play your favorite motivational tape or read something inspirational right before you take action to help your mind focus on what is POSSIBLE rather than what could derail you. Think about how you will feel when you have taken action. Write down the top 10 feelings you'll have when you have done this thing!

### **9. Use your strengths-take the easy way!**

Sometimes we focus on thinking we "should" do things that just aren't our strengths. Take a look to see if you can accomplish what you want some other way. What easy ones can you do first? How can you leverage what you already have without having to tackle an unknown.

**10. If you have a frog to swallow, do it quickly**

Don't look at it too long. Sometimes, there is no way around the fact, you are going to have to take an action that is fearful. The longer you fret about it, there more energy you waste. JUST DO IT!!!!

[Go to Top](#)

## **59. Personal Growth Plan Development Tips**

Personal growth seems to occur in spurts. We gain a little, lose a little, surge ahead or slide into a holding pattern where in growth seems to be stagnated. Here are ten ways to get back on track.

### **1. Recognize that growth continues, despite our best efforts to thwart it.**

There's a saying: God's time and mortals' time differ. Nowhere is that more true than in the area of personal growth. Growth can be likened to fermentation; it often occurs well below the surface and appears dormant for long periods. Still, much is going on, if only we have the good sense to realize it. And, there ARE things we can do to break through the surface layers...

### **2. Engage in the process; give up attachment to the result.**

We live in a results-oriented world. That's both good and bad. In the short term, it enables us to get more done faster. In the long term, however, it conceals a great life truth: ultimately, ALL is process, and as we engage in the process and relinquish our obsession with results, the results occur spontaneously, easily. To be involved fully in the process is to be fully in the present.

### **3. Work on one thing at a time.**

High achievers and type A's pride themselves on their ability to keep several balls in the air at one time. For many, it works, but there is a price. Multi-tasking, as it's come called, splits your focus, reduces the energy devoted to any single task and--when the balls mysteriously begin to get out of control--leaves the serious multi-tasker at a loss for words or acts. But to work on one thing at a time is tantamount to enjoying the beauty of a single rose, savoring the clean clear taste of cold spring water, and feeling the exhilaration of a new day. Single tasking gets the body and the mind going again, inspires and invigorates.

### **4. Stop thinking, writing and speaking in the first person.**

Here's a fun exercise. It's called, an I inventory and it goes like this. Review our correspondence file, the letters you've written, and note how often you begin a sentence with, I. Then, pay attention to your conversations with others. How often do you use that word, I? If you journal, take a yellow (better yet, red) marker and overline every single I. All of these are good measures of your preoccupation with yourself. Try taking a vacation from the word, I. You may find it both refreshing and stimulating.

### **5. Realize that it can take great effort to achieve a state of effortless achievement.**

Sounds like double talk, doesn't it! But it's true. In order to achieve effortlessly, which is a measure of alignment, you must get beyond concepts that serve as comfort zones e.g., self-importance, personal attachment, and even enlightenment. With respect to enlightenment, it's not so much a state to be achieved as one to be recognized. If you're having trouble with this one, think of Jesus's words: Before Abraham was, I am (The Bible, John 8:58).

### **6. Look for the lesson in pain.**

This is not a plea for a life of self sacrifice, or an argument that pain is necessary and good. It's just that sometimes, pain IS. Stopping, taking time to examine what's really going on in the present state of pain, prevents this all too common emotion from developing into anger, resentment and resignation. Looking at pain dispassionately, openly, allows you to learn the lesson and move ahead.

#### **7. Let go of your need to have an opinion.**

When things go wrong, friends offend, and our progress seems to be grinding to a halt, it's natural to have an opinion, to explain, justify and defend. Natural, yes; understandable, yes; but productive? No! To give up the need to have an opinion in such instances is to free the mind to receive answers.

#### **8. Walk away from it.**

Years ago, I was going through a rough time, but was determined to stick with it until I won out. A friend who sensed my frustration asked if I would tell her about it. With some hesitation, I told her of the problem, the struggles, and the seeming lack of progress. She listened patiently and, after I finished, hesitated a moment, and then said something I'll never forget: "You know, sometimes wisdom is knowing when to walk away from it." So, when IS it time to walk away? From a distance of some years now, I would say it's when the course you are "stubbornly" pursuing is not producing results and you have no real feeling that it will!

#### **9. Follow your path rather than your plan.**

The distinction relates to specificity. Paths are often winding, indistinct and surprising in where they lead. Plans are clear, definite, and designed to eliminate uncertainty. To follow a path is to be open to discovery, to the sudden turns that yield joy, insight and challenge. But, to really follow a path requires courage and a willingness to give up certainty. To follow a path is to go forward when you can see only a single step ahead, confident that the next step will appear.

#### **10. HEAR what is being said.**

Have you ever had a friend offer you some unwelcome advice and preface it with, "You're not going to want to hear this, but ..." Well, often when new information comes to us that conflicts with what we know, believe, think, or want, we DON'T hear it. Even while we're "listening", we're preparing our replies, defenses and rebuttals. In short, we're blocking our chance to learn. To "hear", as opposed to simply listening, is to withhold judgment, to go beyond the actual words, and to really be open to the possible lesson that may be lurking just beneath the surface. the difference between listening and hearing is that, somewhere in between, there's a filter, and it's usually our resistance to new and sometimes conflicting information.

[Go to Top](#)

## **60. How to Chair a Meeting Effectively**

### **1. Have somebody in charge who people respect and will defer to.**

For better or for worse, this is the most efficient way.

### **2. Have each attendee or key attendees have something to REPORT, not just discuss.**

This creates ownership and responsibility.

### **3. Do most of the work of the meeting BEFORE the meeting itself.**

It's hard to get work done/alliances made/problems solved DURING a meeting -- take care of most of this 1-1 before the meeting itself.

### **4. Start the meeting on time, every time.**

And, don't accept comments from those who are late. People will learn soon enough to be on time.

### **5. Schedule some meetings WITHOUT formalized agendas.**

These would include brain storming sessions, open forums, etc. A formal agenda would squelch input and creativity. A highly valuable meeting doesn't have to be oriented around/justified by a preset agenda!

### **6. Schedule random meetings, not just regular ones.**

Staff meetings at 8am every Monday, don't always work well. Folks get into a routine, get bored, etc. Schedule meetings designed to accomplish something.

### **7. Have the first 15 minutes be chatty, catch up time; then get into the meeting.**

Warm everyone up by casual chatter for the first part of the meeting. this releases any pent up energy in the room, leaving folks more open.

### **8. Schedule TeleMeetings and Chat meetings, not just in-person meetings.**

Some meetings are BETTER if they AREN'T in person/onsite. Use teleconferencing and web chat rooms when possible.

### **9. Don't make the meeting a production.**

Slides are cool; handouts are nice. But they are expensive and may not really cause the type input/collaboration that meetings are best for. Ask yourself: "Am I trying to educate/impress/enroll folks or do I need their help to solve/create something?" If the former, do the dog and pony show; if the latter, don't.

### **10. Label the TYPE of meeting it's going to be on the announcement memo.**

Is the meeting going to be a discussion? Or a reporting session? Or a brainstorming opportunity? Or a value-added session? Or a problem-solving one? Or a crisis one? Give attendees the CONTEXT for the meeting, not just the time, date, location and agenda.

[Go to Top](#)

## **61. Do You Suffer from These Entrepreneur Weaknesses**

It's easy to criticize an entrepreneur, especially if you're married to one, work for one or are coaching/consulting one. Entrepreneurs, like any pioneer, have their own set of (always evolving) rules and strategies. Many entrepreneurs are successful in spite of themselves. The key in working well, and enjoying, entrepreneurs is to fully understand their weaknesses, because these are often their biggest strengths, although YOU may not think so! Here is a list of weakness and the strengths that they "are." Sub-point 2

### **1. Can't Focus, lots of ideas, runs in circles.**

If the entrepreneur could focus, they'd be a bookkeeper (no offense to bookkeepers; I was a CPA for years). The entrepreneur's currency is ideas, often a flood of ideas. This is good. Encourage MORE ideas, don't try to pin them down. When they feel your support in challenging them to come up with more and BETTER ideas, the flow is restored and they'll find the one to really NATURALLY focus on. Really. The reason they can't focus is that they haven't yet flushed out all of the half-baked ones.

### **2. Not good with details.**

Duh. Why should they be. Sure, it would be great if they would focus on details, and in fact, many entrepreneurial-types fail or have lots of stress (think ValuJet's CEO), specifically because they won't or cannot sweat the details. But given many won't deal with details well, suggest they give up even trying. Sure, this may create a mess, but challenge the entrepreneur to solve the mess as if the mess was a new business! That'll get 'em thinking! (Entrepreneurs are like kids; it's good to divert them.)

### **3. Feel odd, different, alone, strange.**

Entrepreneurs are simply wired differently and they SHOULD feel this way, because it's TRUE and there is nothing wrong with it at all. In fact, if you can help the entrepreneur to relish their unique, contrary, leading edge ways, you'll help them feel better about themselves (their different-ness), which will increase the flow of ideas and success. Educate the entrepreneur to understand not just themselves as individuals but to understand about the species called Homo entrepreneurs.

### **4. Good at starting business, bad at running them.**

This is very true of many entrepreneurs, but you know, many entrepreneurs think that they have an obligation to run their businesses and become a great manager. 90% will never be great managers; they shouldn't even try -- too much stress on everyone! The solution: Help the entrepreneur to set a "sell date" right now, so they know they're getting out and when! This relieves some of the pressure and also forces the entrepreneur to create a sell-able company vs one that is just a monument to their ego (and I mean this lovingly). It's essential that you and the entrepreneur get that there's no reason an entrepreneur can't start and sell 25 businesses. Selling is not failure; it's good business and lets the entrepreneur play instead of being saddled with responsibilities and accountabilities that they just don't want, but feel that they should have. Help the entrepreneur to "get" that they'd really rather NOT run their business and that they prefer to start new ones. This will turn a perceived weakness into a profitable strength.

### **5. Chaos reigns in the company.**

This is fairly common, for several reasons. First, the entrepreneur LIKES chaos and is unlikely to attract or be able to hire a manager that is cross-platform: able to both manage the people/operations and ALSO be able to put up with the personality or constant flow of ideas and changes that the entrepreneur is likely to have. A solution is to design the company so that it can afford the chaos and the financial stress that chaos usually bring. A second solution is to educate the entrepreneur and staff that chaos CAN be good business and not to worry about it. Another solution is to ask the entrepreneur to solve the chaos problem by thinking of it as a foundering business that the entrepreneur has purchased. His/her job; Turn it into a profit center! This will get the juices flowing. Another solution is to help the entrepreneur to create fully automated and foolproof systems, usually managed by outside contractors or vendors who are not IN the business day to day. This works well, because it forces the employees/owner to use the systems, which are mostly computer based. Boys will be boys and it's better to save them from themselves sometimes! Systems to this. Remember: Creation IS messy! It shouldn't have to be, but often is.

#### **6. They fail. And fail again.**

This one's tricky if you look at the failing business as a problem or as a reflection on the entrepreneur's ability and strengths. In this case, their weaknesses were bigger than their strengths and the business failed. But, just like a kid has to fall a couple of times when learning to ride a bike, so do entrepreneurs fail as they learn how to be successful. Remember, it's the SPARK that the entrepreneur has that is the REAL source of profitability. It's just that there is often a learning curve as the entrepreneur learns to compensate for his/her weaknesses by delegating, outsourcing, maturing, and learning new skills. The Spark usually wins in the end. Note: Just like you can't really tell much to an adolescent because "they know it all," you often can't tell much to an entrepreneur because they DO know it all! Don't try to parent the entrepreneur; you'll lose. Just love them and be there when they fail. That helps them learn faster.

#### **7. They exaggerate and are too optimistic.**

This is good! Encourage the entrepreneur to exaggerate as much they want to. This is a reverse way to get them to tell the truth. It works. Exaggeration and pipe dreaming are as important to the entrepreneur as faith and believing are to Christians and other religions. It just comes along with the lifestyle. It's part and parcel. It's hard to have one without the other. Entrepreneurs are so out in front of the rest of us that they NEED to exaggerate how well things are going, in order to keep the faith -- hey it's lonely out in front (or in left field, depending on how savvy the entrepreneur is!). Exaggeration, pipe dreaming and denial are the tools and comforts of the trade of entrepreneurism. Sure, many entrepreneurs grow through this, but don't try to take away their blankie until they're ready. They need it.

#### **8. Always at the edge financially.**

This one's a toughie, because of the "unnecessary" stress it can cause to the entrepreneur, the business, employees, families. What I've sought to do is to educate the entrepreneur who is always at the edge that there is an emotional dilemma that they are trying to heal, via their business. The psychological source of this "always at the edge" may be an addiction to adrenaline, the pleasure/high of "pulling it off" at the last

minute, of the high that victory brings, the need to be better than everyone else/compensate and even the inability to establish a reserve of cash and time so that they function without this stress. In my own case, I pushed so hard that I was always just barely making it, even though sales kept growing significantly. When I learned that this was because of self esteem (technically, a "havingness level" problem (meaning that I couldn't let myself "have" what I was earning)), I was able to make a couple of minor changes and establish such a healthy reserve that I am set for life (and can play with projects such as these Top Ten Lists!) The traps the entrepreneur will fall into is to increase their lifestyle just as quickly as their company grows. Mistake. But, back to why being at the edge financially is a such a strength. It's because the entrepreneur has proven, time and time again, that they are resourceful, can survive and bounce back from adversity. This is GREAT! Now, direct the entrepreneur to direct this energy into creating a healthy savings account instead of leveraging so much, and you'll have a successful entrepreneur.

#### **9. Family of the entrepreneur, suffers.**

Another toughie. You didn't just marry a man/woman or a businessman/woman. You married an ENTREPRENEUR! And he/she didn't come with instructions, warning labels or antidotes. Oops! If entrepreneurial genes were find-able in the DNA, they'd be considered a strong, strong drug. Reality aside, it's best that you develop your own strong interests and let your husband/wife do their own thing. You'll always be #2 (well, maybe # 1 and half). You can have a great marriage if you get this.

#### **10. Sales dip.**

Sales dip because the entrepreneur has turned over some or all of the sales function to others. Take this as an invitation for the entrepreneur to get back to selling, where they usually shine.

[Go to Top](#)

## **62. How to Solve a Problem Step by Step**

1. Ignore it for a while; see if it solves itself.
2. Declare it to be a crisis and invest many resources to solve it.
3. Give the problem to someone who's job it is to solve it.
4. Identify the source of the problem first.
5. Throw money at it.
6. Get that it's NOT a problem at all and treat it like the opportunity that it is!
7. Do the opposite of what you'd normally do to solve the problem.
8. Identify the 5 steps that will solve the problem.
9. Extend your boundaries immediately so that this type of problem doesn't happen again.
10. Change yourself, or increase your context/perspective, so that it's no longer a problem.

[Go to Top](#)

## **63. How to Protect Intellectual Property Rights**

No matter whether you are an employee, an employer, a small business owner, and entrepreneur, an artist, or a corporate executive, it pays to know a few things about intellectual property- the stuff we know, think up, learn, or create, that is valuable to us or could be valuable to other people. This list is designed to give an overview of different types of intellectual property, how they can be protected, why you will want to know, and why the system works the way it does.

### **1. What do we mean by "Intellectual Property"?**

Intellectual property is created or discovered. It includes things you write, invent, design, discover, speak, sing, sculpt, draw, learn over time, etc. Some examples of intellectual property are: a political campaign plan, a list of 10000 people who play golf, the McDonald's golden arches, the process for making Prozac, the styling for next year's Cadilacs, the recipe for Coca Cola, the design for the Pentium computer chip, and the theme music to a James Bond movie. You might create intellectual property yourself, or you might purchase it or hire someone to create it. Any way you slice it, intellectual property is something that cost someone some effort to bring into existence, and it often isn't something the creator wants to give away for free. The creation of intellectual property is a big part of what we call "progress" in the world. To protect those who take the time and the risks to create these things that move the world forward, laws have evolved to protect different kinds of intellectual property in different ways. Different forms of protection for intellectual property include patents, trademarks, copyrights, and trade secrets.

### **2. Patents -**

There are several types of patents. The two most common types of patents are utility patents and design patents. Under the present laws, most utility and design patents last 20 years from the date of application (if they issue). You don't get your patent automatically just by applying for it. There are certain "tests" your patent application must pass in order for your patent to issue. Whether your patent application passes these tests is decided by a government official called a patent examiner. This can take many exchanges between you (or your patent attorney or agent) and the patent office. Your legal patent rights to the intellectual property you are patenting don't start until your patent issues, which usually takes between six months and two years from the date of application. There are a myriad of options when pursuing patents. The short-term expenses associated with these options can range from a few hundred dollars, well up into the tens of thousands of dollars. Having a patent consultant or coach to advise you on these options can be invaluable. Often a patent consultant or coach can outline a strategy that will work well for your business, and avoid some or all of the high attorney's fees that are often associated with applying for a patent. An invention does not need to be a work of genius to be patentable. The patent system was designed to protect people's hard work and creativity. It was designed to encourage businesses to undertake new developments, even when these developments require the risky investment of time and money. The patent office is a branch of the United States Department of Commerce. Patents exist to promote the growth of technology and business, and keep our country's economy strong. Utility patents cover what many of us

are used to thinking of as "inventions", such as the incandescent light bulb, the zipper, the stapler, the pop-top can, the twin-blade razor, or the process for making a drug. Utility patents can also patent an improvement to something that already exists, such as halogen light bulbs, which are an improvement over regular light bulbs. Design patents usually protect the artistic form of something functional, such as a child's sled designed to look like a caterpillar. While the sled is not a new invention, the form looking like a caterpillar may be attractive to kids, and may let you sell more sleds, thus being an innovation worthy of protection.

### **3. Trademarks -**

Trademarks are far simpler than patents. Trademarks are used to protect intellectual property such as brand names, logos, etc. You don't have to apply to anyone to have trademark rights. Something can be your legal trademark as soon as you declare that it is (there are specific legal ways to make this declaration), provided a few conditions are met. The first condition is that no one else is using the trademark for a similar use. The second condition is that the trademark is not a descriptive phrase that people might use normally, such as "soft facial tissue". The third requirement is that you USE the trademark (for instance, by printing it on things you sell, or in your advertising literature). Printing "TM" as a superscript or in parenthesis next to the thing you are trademarking is a sufficient legal declaration to give you your rights, providing you have met the listed conditions. You may also want to register your trademark. This puts your trademark into a public record, which will show up to anyone who tries to register such a trade mark later without knowing about yours. This is a useful way of putting people on notice of your rights. Trademarks don't expire in a set time like patents, but if you stop using your trademark, you can lose your rights to it.

### **4. Copyrights -**

Copyrights are even simpler than trademarks. You can copyright anything you write (like a book, a newspaper article, a marketing report, or a song), simply by stating (again in a specific way, and usually at the beginning or end of the material) that you reserve the copyright to the material. You can also copyright photographs, artworks, drawings, sculptures, etc. When you declare your copyright, you need to say who the copyright belongs to, and it is also customary to include the year of the copyright. A typical copyright notice might be "Copyright 1997 by Lee Weinstein, All rights Reserved". A more detailed copyright notice appears at the end of this Top Ten list.

### **5. Trade Secrets -**

Trade secrets may appear to be even simpler than copyrights. To keep something a trade secret, you either don't tell anyone, or you require everyone who you do tell to sign a document acknowledging that the intellectual property they received is a trade secret, and promising to keep it secret. A great example of a trade secret is the recipe for Coca Cola. If the recipe were patented, then when the patent expired, everyone would have the right and the know-how to make a soda that was exactly identical (though under different names, since the name Coca Cola is trade marked). Kept as a trade secret, the recipe has been much more valuable, but keeping a secret that valuable may not be simple. Keeping patentable intellectual property as a trade secret can be risky. If someone else independently invents the invention and does patent it,

the original inventor may lose the right to make his own invention! The law works this way in order to promote things being disclosed so they can eventually be used by all.

## **6. Offensive Rights -**

Does this mean that your rights are offensive to others? Well, maybe sometimes. What this really means is that having reserved your rights with a patent, trademark, copyright, or trade secret gives you the right to go on the offensive against anyone who infringes on your rights. The bad news is, it's up to YOU to do this. There are no "Intellectual Property Police" running around looking for people who plagiarize your book, bootleg your songs, steal your customer lists, and copy your logo. You (or your attorney or representative), have to contact infringers, present your demands, negotiate, or take them to court, etc. The other bad news is that if you don't follow the rules to properly protect your intellectual property, you run the risk of losing your rights (or, equivalently, giving them away). Having a coach to keep your awareness up in this arena can make a big difference and save a lot of headaches.

## **7. Professional Help -**

There are several professionals who can be of great assistance in giving you or your business a strong intellectual property position: patent attorneys, patent agents, and intellectual property consultants and coaches. Patent attorneys (also called intellectual property attorneys) are a special type of attorney who have an engineering or science background as well as a law background. They are legally allowed to represent you in your interactions with the United States Patent and Trademark Office. A word of caution, though: the vast majority of patents are not well written. Great patent attorneys are as rare as great composers or great scientists. The writing of the patent claims themselves has a lot of art and creativity to it. It is not simply a matter of knowledge. Patent agents have similar training and backgrounds to patent attorneys, only they don't have a law degree. A great patent agent can be just as good as a great patent attorney, and just as hard to find. Intellectual property consultants can be of tremendous assistance in saving money and getting a higher quality patent. They are often experts in certain fields and can work with the inventor to economically craft a great draft patent application. A patent attorney or agent can then go over the application to make sure all the complex regulations of the patent office have been followed, and perhaps provide legal pointers. Individuals and businesses can often get a much better patent for their money by having the inventor get involved in the patent application writing process, and having the inventor be responsible that the claims are not easy to get around once the patent application is written. Usually the person who invented something can be one of the first to see the way to get around the way his invention has been protected. This insight enables the patent attorney, agent, or intellectual property consultant to keep making the claims better as they or the inventor find flaws, before the patent application is filed.

## **8. Types of Patent Applications -**

under the new laws, there are two types of patent applications: Provisional Patent Applications (PPA's), and Regular Patent Applications (RPA's). PPA's don't count as real patent applications unless an RPA is filed within a year of the PPA. The great thing about PPA's is that they are much cheaper and require much less rigor to file than and

RPA, and they buy you TIME. For instance, if you invent a new feature that everyone would love to have on their compact disc player, but no one has thought of, you might spend the \$150 it would cost you to submit the PPA (plus your time, and probably some time of a consultant or coach). Then you have a year to go out and sell your invention to someone like Sony, or get investors and develop it further yourself. By the end of a year from when you filed the PPA, you, or the person who bought the rights from you, must file the RPA (which is more time-consuming and expensive). The other advantage of filing a PPA first is that it can add a year to the time your patent will last, if it issues.

## **9. Employee Agreements -**

There are two ways to look at Employee Intellectual Property Agreements - from the side of the employer and from the side of the employee. Employers usually want to make sure that the intellectual property developed with their resources belongs to them, so it is common for employers to have employees sign an intellectual property agreement as a condition of employment. A writer working for hire may sign away his or her copyrights on a particular job. An engineer may sign away rights to the things he or she invents on the job or in the field of business that the employer is engaged in. At first it may seem like the employer would want the employee to sign away any and all rights to all intellectual property created, but there are several problems with this. First, it is likely that in the event of a court challenge, some or all of such an aggressive contract would not be upheld by the court. Second, many progressive employers (such as many universities, and high-tech companies like Hewlett Packard) have found that they can attract and keep the most creative employees by letting them have some of the rights to their own creations. There is tremendous variety in Intellectual Property Contracts. Examples include the complex deals that some musical performers work out with record companies. Intellectual property coaches, consultants, and attorneys can help employers and employees both make sure they are getting a "good deal".

## **10. Non-Disclosure Agreements -**

Sometimes it becomes desirable to disclose intellectual property (that you are currently keeping secret) to an "outsider". For example, you might want to show some of your "good stuff" to someone considering investing in your business. When you do this, you will want to protect your rights by having person you are showing the secrets to sign a Non-Disclosure Agreement. Like many legal documents, such agreements range from simple to complex. The savvy businessperson who has seen a number of such agreements may be comfortable writing his or her own agreement, but it is often prudent to consult an intellectual property coach, consultant, or attorney to make sure that everything relevant is covered. Templates for such agreements are available. Often a suitable document can be generated by simple adjustments to such a template.

[Go to Top](#)

## **64. Creative Public Relations Technique**

Businesses sometimes fail because their owners fail to use creative tools and techniques to get the added exposure they need. The following ideas are geared toward the smaller business, but would work for larger businesses as well. Some of the concepts are simple, and they have also proven to be effective over time with millions of small and large businesses.

### **1. Put your business and your name in highly visible places, no matter how unusual.**

We all see billboards, Yellow Pages ads, and ads on the place mats at pancake houses and local restaurants. Try putting your business name and or logo on bus stop benches; ballpark walls; city buses; pens people sign charge card slips with at your business (often they take the pen anyway...might as well have your advertising on it!); T-shirts you, your friends, and clients and relatives wear(not unlike "Coach wear"); symphony, auto show, or concert program "inside ads;" plastic cups or mugs you use for your guests/clients in your office, etc. Keep the ads neat and the message clear. People DO remember names from events and places they go where they have personal or special interests.

### **2. Join or volunteer time to a few good local business organizations.**

This can be the Better Business Bureau, Chamber of Commerce, Kiwanis, Variety Club, United Way, small business clubs, breakfast clubs, business associations, your neighborhood business groups; anything that will expose you and your face and name and services to others who might need it, know someone who needs it, or even be your competitor. Knowing your competitors, what the \*successful\* ones are doing, and where THEY "mingle," can help you strategize where you might get some exposure of your OWN! If you can see what your competitors' strengths are, chances are you can also see where they have \*weak\* areas. If you can, use YOUR business and your expertise to fill in where they are weak.

### **3. Speak or write publicly about your profession or your business.**

This sounds self-serving. Of course it is! The KEY is to make it very subtle! Media folks will accept a story if they see it is interesting and about something where there is an "angle" that would appeal to many people. They will NOT be drawn to interview you or publish an article strictly on \*your\* business! Famous authors do not travel the country signing books in small town book stores to learn U.S. geography! Any good, honest exposure you can get through an article in a trade journal, one of the clubs you have joined, or a charity function, puts your face, your name, and your business name, its services & \*results\*, in front of the public. If you dislike public speaking, write an article for a business magazine related to your specialty or the service or products you sell. Most of those trade publications are looking for contributors with knowledge who will write for free or little money, to fill space and keep their readers interested. It's FAR better than having an ad in the same magazine! It gives you ten times the credibility to WRITE for a magazine than to have an ad in one! Make sure your name and all other pertinent short author "bio" copy is current and accurate. The "pen is often mightier than the ad."

#### **4. Get with the times and get "online!"**

Sure there are millions of people competing with one another on the Internet! Turn it around and know that there are \*many\* times the same number of consumers, looking for the best deal, the best service for the money, and the most qualified person to meet their needs. Here you can spend next to nothing or you can spend a lot. Learning how other people in your business use the "Web" will give you ideas as to where you might "beef up" your services, the quality of your goods, and the way you present your business and yourself as the owner to the public, who can either help your business sustain itself and grow, or not. See what other similar businesses do \*not\* offer that you could or do and play on that. The information is right before you. You have but to learn to access it and then the world and all of the world's businesses are in front of you!

#### **5. Sponsor or be a co-sponsor for a local charity event.**

Pick an event that is well-attended, and also one in which you might already have some interest. Taking the time off to man the telethon phones, attend a dinner or party or play or gaming event for a charitable function serves you in several ways. The two most important are that you are doing something for the benefit of others, which helps you spiritually and will give you a good feeling, and it gives you and your business some public exposure within a very positive and a very humanistic environment.

#### **6. Get involved with civic groups and committees.**

Pick your interest or one that you feel would be of interest to potential clients or current customers of yours: school boards, hospitals, libraries, art centers/museums, zoning committees, city council, neighborhood improvement, PTA, Boy Scouts, church groups, etc. Depending on the size of your city, you will have more or less choice. If your town is very small, get involved with something in the closest large town from your home. The more people you know and meet, the more people will know about you and "what you do" and what you have to offer. Simple truth.

#### **7. Voice your opinion in print.**

This "attention getter" has pros and cons. If you send a letter to the editor or write an article for your local paper's "editorial page," you are sure to have people who agree with you and will possibly give you some business or mention your name, as well as people who disagree with you BIG time and who you might even LOSE as a customer. If you write about something that is lighthearted, not related to religion or politics, and something you feel certain most of the people you really would want or already have as clients or customers would enjoy or be "neutral" on, you're safe. Again your name and maybe your business (many people use their business address in letters to the editor to keep their private address private) will be where many people from town and out of town might see it. Careful thought on the right topic, well phrased, can affect many people in a positive way for you.

#### **8. Advertise or offer to give your clientele more than your competitors are giving.**

Reason number one why to check out what your competition offers, gives, sells, and is all about with their business! It sometimes takes only a few cents less, better value for the money, extra courteous service, or other services or options, to make a client or customer choose you over one of your competitors...including the much larger ones!

Develop or hone some skill or special "extra" you can offer people if they use your firm or buy from your company. Advertise that special extra! Small but thoughtful or useful gifts or services can actually make a difference in the kind of highly competitive marketplace of the late 20th century. This will be even more important in the 21st century. Know your strengths and play them up. Know your competition's weaknesses or things they simply cannot or do not give and find a way to fill some or all of those weak areas and voids yourself! Provide the best and most comprehensive and professional services or merchandise for the best prices, delivered in the best manner, on time, and you will be ahead of all but the very TOP people in your field. Much of what you can do will cost nothing but an investment in time and some extra "personalized" effort.

#### **9. Send out a newsletter to clients and potential clients.**

Simple newsletters can be done at home or office and copies can be made and sent out to mailing lists of your current clients/customers and other mailing groups. Don't make the mistake of filling the newsletter with ads and specials like everyone has in newspaper inserts! Write about what your business offers, what you do and how you do it, your staff, \*special features or skills your business or firm has to offer\*. Give the reader free hints, advice, etc. Let them see you are knowledgeable, friendly and not just out to send them junk mail filled with coupons or ads for products or services you are selling. They will be pleasantly surprised and they will remember you and your business if you do things with thought and good intentions. It's also a form of advertising, so it is a legitimate business tax deduction for most people.

#### **10. Give free workshops or seminars to draw your special interest "target group."**

If applicable and possible, decide on a topic or an aspect of your business, product line or knowledge gained from your business or the skills you sell. Advertise a workshop or seminar open to the public at your store or other appropriate place. (If demonstrating a skill, you may need to be in a place where you have the equipment to do so and where people in attendance can all see you doing it.) It can be all day long or last 1-4 hours, depending on your topic and your business. Again, the point is to offer some free, useful, interesting value and information to people who are used to paying you or your competitors for it! You need not tell them all you know so they would never need you again! Just give them enough to let them see that you know your business and are personable. You'll be surprised how many people will walk in the door or call you the week following a free weekend seminar or talk! Cost to you? Nothing but time, unless you pay to rent a room for your seminar or speech. If it is well publicized, and on a topic that you know, you will bring out the crowds; it will pay for itself with one or a few new clients or customers within a short time.

[Go to Top](#)

## 65. How to Increase Your Sales

When potential customers are shopping around, how can your products or services stand out? Try these 10 tips to increase your sales.

**Begin by differentiating your services or products by who you and your company are.**

What differentiates you? More training, more experience, better methods, a better team? Come up with your key points.

**If people can buy a similar product or service for less, be ready to overcome that obstacle.**

Agree with the potential customer that they can buy for less but show them that they may be comparing apples to oranges.

**Sell based on value.**

Describe what they will get from your product or service.

**Stress the quality of your product or service.**

Point out what you are providing for the same investment as the competitor.

**Talk about dependability.**

How long have you been in business? What's your experience or background? How about testimonials and benefits?

**Have some advantages that differentiate you.**

What can you provide that others don't? Come up with something special or exclusive. Ask your customers what they might suggest.

**Give outstanding follow-up services.**

Frequently, customers complain that after the sale, there is no follow-up. Differentiate yourself by providing a unique follow-up service. That alone will be a refreshing change for customers!

**Offer a money back guarantee.**

Great point for differentiation.

**Take credit cards if most of your competitors don't.**

**Target a niche that your competitor doesn't sell to.**

Want to be different - just sell to people that no one else has marketed to... it takes a bit of research but can really pay off.

[Go to Top](#)

## **66. How to Improve Your Business Sales Proposal**

Do you create sales proposals or sales presentations to potential clients? These 10 ten steps will improve your effectiveness. Sales proposal template strategies:

### **1. Thank you.**

Sounds obvious, huh? You'd be surprised how often the words are overlooked. Be sure to thank the potential client for the opportunity to present to them. Tell them you respect how valuable their time is and that you appreciate them giving some of it to you.

### **2. Provide an outline.**

Prepare an agenda of what you will be presenting. This gives the potential client an idea of what to expect.

### **3. State your expectation.**

Let the potential client know up-front what you expect they will get from the proposal. This lets them know how you want them to respond to the proposal. You may say something like, "after I have completed the presentation, you will be able to see how my services give you much greater value for less money."

### **4. Sell yourself along with the product or service.**

Don't be afraid to toot your own horn. Come prepared with a resume of your qualifications or summary of your experience or accounts you personally manage. People buy from people and because of people - not the services or products sold.

### **5. Be needs based.**

Don't try to propose what the potential client doesn't need. Be realistic and check in with the potential client. Otherwise, don't waste your time or their time with the proposal.

### **6. State the results.**

Often sales people leave this step out and expect the prospect will "get it." State the results that your product or services will deliver. Be careful not to overstate and be honest about the outcomes. Under promising and over delivering will pay off.

### **7. Use media.**

Make your proposal interesting by painting a picture of your product or services. Do a hands-on demonstration, or use charts, graphs, etc. Get your prospect involved and imagining their use of the product or service during the proposal.

### **8. Talk about the money.**

This is where salespeople get uncomfortable and hesitate. State the cost and explain all costs. Don't keep anything hidden. Don't be embarrassed by the pricing. Expect the client will not be scared by the costs. Don't judge their pocketbooks.

### **9. Follow up.**

Don't leave the presentation without agreed upon follow-up. Select the next logical step and get the potential client to agree to it. It may be meeting again, visiting a customer using the product or service, or coming to your office for another presentation of some

sort. Choose the date and time and make a firm commitment before you walk out the door.

10. **"No" doesn't mean it's over.**

Some of my proposals have been rejected by the prospect the first time. I don't pout. I just continue my relationship with them. I keep in touch through calls, mailings, newsletters, and invitations to seminars. You never know when the right time may be or the mood may shift. Many initial "no's" have become "yes" later on. Keep in touch.

[Go to Top](#)

## **67. Do You Make These Common Mistakes in Selling?**

Do you wish that your quest for clients and customers were more fruitful? It will be if you avoid falling into these common traps.

### **1. Does selling often feel like begging?**

Too often, salespeople fail to think of their time with a prospect as an interview to find out whether the prospect qualifies to do business with their company. Instead of asking the questions that will determine whether it's possible to move the prospect to the level of customer, salespeople often find themselves hoping...wishing...and even begging for the opportunity to "just show my wares" and maybe make a sale.

Think of yourself as a doctor instead. A physician examines the patient thoroughly before making a recommendation, using various instruments to conduct the examination. In selling, questions are the instrument to conduct a qualifying examination of the prospect.

### **2. Do you talk too much?**

Salespeople who are too focused on their pitch end up dominating the time with a prospect with their talk, while the prospect must listen (whether they're interested or not). As a result, for every hour spent in front of a prospect, five minutes is spent selling the product or service - and 55 minutes saying things that might actually be buying it back. Result: no order, canceled order or "I'll think it over."

The 80/20 Rule (80 percent of your business comes from 20 percent of your clients) applies to selling, as well. The goal should be to get the prospect to do 80 percent of the talking, while you do only 20 percent.

### **3. Do you make too many presumptions?**

Most companies are no longer in the business of selling products but of providing solutions. This is fine, except that often salespeople try to tell the prospect the solution before they even understand the problem. If salespeople were held accountable for their solutions, as doctors are for their prescriptions, they would be forced - at the risk of malpractice - to examine the problem thoroughly before proposing a cure. The salesperson must ask questions up front to get a complete understanding of the prospect's perspective.

### **4. Do you answer unasked questions?**

When a customer says something like, "Your price is too high," salespeople often switch into a defensive mode. They'll begin a lengthy speech on quality or value, or they might respond with a concession or price reduction. If customers can get a discount by merely making a statement, they will reason that they shouldn't buy before trying something more powerful to get an even better price. "Your price is too high" is not a question; it does not require an answer.

### **5. Do you fail to get the prospect to reveal budget up front?**

How can the salesperson possibly propose a solution without knowing the prospect's priority on a problem? Knowing whether money has been allocated for a project can help distinguish someone who is ready to solve a problem from someone who is merely

fishing around. The amount of money the prospect is willing to invest to solve a problem will help determine whether a solution is feasible, and if so, which approach will be best

#### **6. Do you make too many follow-up calls?**

Whether because of a stubborn attitude that every prospect can be fumed into a customer or ignorance that a sale is truly dead, salespeople sometimes spend too much time chasing accounts that don't qualify for a product or service. This fact should have been detected far earlier in the sales interview process.

#### **7. Do you fail to get a prospect's commitment to purchase before making a presentation?**

Salespeople jump too easily at any opportunity to show how smart they are by making a presentation about their product's or service's features and benefits. They forget their true goal - to make a sale - and end up merely educating their prospects, who then have all the information they need to buy from a competitor.

#### **8. Do you chat about everything and avoid starting the sale?**

Building rapport is essential, but not if the small talk doesn't end and the sale doesn't begin. Unfortunately, the prospect usually recognizes this before the salesperson. The result: the salesperson is back on the street wondering how he or she did with that prospect.

#### **9. Do you prefer to hear "I want to think it over" rather than "no"?**

Prospects frequently end a sales interview with the standard "think it over" line. The salesperson often accepts this indecision. It's easier to tell a manager or convince yourself that the prospect may buy in the future than to admit that the prospect is not a qualified candidate for the product or service. After all, isn't it the salesperson's job to go out and get prospects to say yes? Getting the prospect to say no can make you feel rejected or a failure. But a no allows you to go on to more promising prospects.

#### **10. Do you have a systematic approach to selling?**

When you find yourself ad-libbing or pursuing a hit-or-miss approach to a sale, the prospect controls the selling process. Salespeople who are disorganized in their presentation often leave a sales call confused and unsure of where they stand. This happens because they don't know where they have been and what the next step should be. Following a specific sequence, and controlling the steps through the selling process, is vital to an organized, professional sales effort.

[Go to Top](#)

## 68. What to Do When a Prospective Customer Says No

### **Clarify the No.**

"Is that no right now, no forever, or no I don't like you?"

### **Identify the No.**

"Most people say no to this product/service at first. Would you tell me which part you are saying no to?"

### **Accept the No.**

"I understand completely. It worth thinking about first."

### **Keep talking/listening.**

"I accept your No, Bob. But can we discuss it/keep talking about you?"

### **Ask a thinking question.**

"Would you tell me where you want to be financially in 10 years, Bob?"

### **Ask an empathy question.**

"Is it the price, Bob?"

### **Ask a trick question.**

"If I can completely resolve your concerns about this product/service, would you be inclined to buy?"

### **Ask for permission to ask again.**

"OK, Bob, I hear you. Will you give me the option of letting you know of any news regarding this product/service over the course of the next 12 months?"

### **Get some other energy in there.**

"Bob, would you find it helpful if I asked a happy customer of mine call you this week to share THEIR experience of this product/service? They won't sell you; but you can ask any question of him/her.

### **Get permission to keep in touch.**

May I send you my quarterly newsletter for a year?

[Go to Top](#)

## 69. How to Succeed in Small Business

William A. Ward once said, "Four steps to achievement: Plan purposefully. Prepare prayerfully. Proceed positively. Pursue persistently". Use Ward's advice while pursuing the following tips for small business success. Critical success factors in business:

- 1. Stay current.** Join an industry association related to your product or offering. Subscribe to all the magazines that cover your business. (They are tax deductible!) Look at joining an organization like NASE (National Association of Self employed). They have great sources of advice and information as well as great discounts on insurance, rental cars, and other business expenses. Read and constantly be researching topics about your business. It's easy on the internet!
- 2. Make sure you have a financial plan.** Also a budget and a measurement process to keep track of how you are doing monthly. If you don't know where you stand financially and have no short term and long term financial goals, then you are just letting fate dictate your success and we know those odds aren't too good. Control your own destiny!
- 3. Cash forecasting.** It sounds boring and difficult, but it's not. Keep it simple. Look at your next 3 months projected income or revenue, then just lay next to it all the expenditures you need to keep the business running. The difference is your cash flow. You must do this to avoid surprises. Most businesses hit the brick wall because they fail to understand their cash flow.
- 4. Get an advisory board or a mentor.** Sounds crazy for a small operation? It's not! The board can be family members that you trust, or friends. Ask them to be your board of directors and review your business plans and results with them. Having someone to bounce ideas off and get an objective opinion is critical. Or, hire a Business Coach.
- 5. Maintain a balance between work, play and family.** This is critical for long term success. We all put in crazy hours on a short term basis to get a hot project done or the product out the door, but if you do this on a long term, regular basis it is a dangerous sign that you are losing perspective. You need to be able to step away on a regular basis and get your batteries re-charged. And also have time for family because if they suffer it is almost a sure bet your business will suffer too.
- 6. Network.** It's easy to get isolated in a home business or your own small business operation. Force yourself to get out and meet with others that can provide a business support structure for you. One of the benefits of a corporation is the workings of teams and the on going support structure it provides. You need to create that for yourself. Don't think you can do it all by yourself; By talking to others in business you will find out great ideas and it will help motivate you.
- 7. Discipline/Motivation.** One of the hardest aspects of a small business or home based business is creating the discipline or motivation to work each day. It is so easy to get distracted and put off the essential tasks that need to get done. Keep your work place and hours separate from the rest of your responsibilities. Develop a to-do list EVERYDAY. Set goals for the week. Review how you are doing against them. We all struggle with this and it is one of the key elements of success.

**8. Don't rest on your laurels.** Be prepared to always change. Force change. Look for things to do more efficiently or how to improve your offering or product. Constantly evaluate your competition and benchmark yourself against them.

**9. Do something you love.** If you are in a business that you hate, then it is a good bet you won't be successful. Find where your true talents and skills are and get in a business that exploits them. The saying, "if you do what you love and the money will follow" is so true. Remember success is more attitude than aptitude and never forget that failure is only the opportunity to begin again more intelligently.

**10. Don't Give up.** Some of the most successful entrepreneurs failed several times before doing extremely well. So, if you're failing, fail. And fail fast. And learn. And try again, with this new wisdom. Do NOT give up. Yet, do not suffer, either.

[Go to Top](#)

## 70. How to Achieve Goals Effectively

Goals can be helpful or they can be counter-productive by being too high, too complicated unfocused, or simply unrealistic. These ideas can help you be in a better place to reach or if necessary, revise any goals you might set for your self, whether they are short term or long term goals. Setting and achieving goals effectively:

1. Set reasonable goals for yourself. They can be \*large\* goals; just be realistic. Don't set yourself up to miss your goal.
2. Don't make excuses. And if you fail, try another tact, angle, plan, or direction.
3. Have a solid plan or strategy for reaching your goal (s).
4. Be willing to make sacrifices to get what you want.
5. Stay "in action" and don't allow yourself to get side tracked or to slow down just because things become difficult.
6. Don't blame others for anything. It serves no purpose, it takes you out of focus of your goals, and it is a big "energy drainer."
7. If you slip at one stage of your goal, re-plan it, and start in on it. Do not let much time go by, or you will lose your momentum, which can be an important tool in reaching a goal.
8. Be consistent in your vision and in your highest desires.
9. Ask for help from everyone you trust, respect and admire in helping you reach your goals. You'll be surprised at how willing many people are to help you.
10. Use positive "self-talk" and continue to believe in yourself and in your ability to get where you want to go or to do what you want to get done! Be persistent and keep your mind and heart in your project. "Faint heart never won fair lady."

[Go to Top](#)

## **71. How to Build and Manage a Brand**

The following issues are important to consider when building a brand, even if that brand is called YOU, Inc. here are effective brand positioning and marketing.

### **1. Great Brands tie into our emotions.**

It is crucial that this link be present and underlying all brand building efforts. If your brand efforts don't touch people at an emotional level, their power to leverage and attract is nil. If your own brand building efforts (You, Inc.) are not emotionally driven then your power to sustain your brand building efforts will be weak!

### **2. Brands are never-ending stories!**

Branding is a journey. The path that a brand takes is always a bit unknown. This is a key point. We do not always know what lies in the "implicate order." Therefore branding is both recognition and management of the present as well as creating the space and opportunity for emergent possibilities within the context of the journey.

### **3. Brands have lasting value and transcend fad.**

While it is cool...to be cool, what matters is what lasts. Moving our brand into a position where it has to be cool to survive is sounding a death bell. Coolness is a result of the brand acceptance not the brand intention. It will pay to remember that!

### **4. Great Brands are consistent in appearance.**

WYSIWYG! Everything you do to promote your brand needs design consistency. Continuous management of appearance is critical to creating brand equity and leverage. The biggest part of attraction that many people forget, is that people need to know you're there! Brand consistency must be seamless and transparent...the effects are clear, the intention is subtle elegance.

### **5. Brands re-create categories!**

Look what blockbuster did for video. Boston Market for fast food. Nike for sports. Starbucks for coffee. Each and everyone of these great brands have one thing in common, they became protagonists in view of a simple goal, to reinvent the entire category.

### **6. You can brand ANYTHING, even You!**

What makes people desire one thing over another? How does one brand attract people over another? Anything can be managed as a brand by following simple rules and by consistently outperforming the other items in the category. This performance doesn't have to be validated only accepted!

### **7. Great Brands have a clear identity!**

Successful brands know themselves and what they are about. They have become clear regarding their own boundaries and the need to position themselves for success considering all the possibilities in the whole. Sometimes knowing what NOT to do is the key to brand identity.

### **8. Brand building is a marathon not a sprint!**

In today's world of possibilities and global exchange, the only thing is brand. Price has been shown to be superfluous in the presence of a strong performing brand. People want dependability...a known quantity that differentiates itself from the pack of also-rans. People want to feel important and they leverage that through brand identification. Building a brand is a constant and continuous journey...a long-term approach.

#### **9. Brands are involved!**

Brand builders consistently show up at the right time, in the right place and in the right way. A knack for great brand building is precisely knowing when to say when. Consider your brand's identity, your branding intention and your brand investment and make continuous deposits towards building brand equity.

#### **10. Brands benefit the consumer!**

What is your feature-benefit ratio? If people are not better off having used your brand, you're in big trouble! That takes two loci of action, one being, that you as a brand manager place your brand in a position to succeed or don't do it; and two that the benefits appear to the consumer in a holistic way. It's kind of like the brand that keeps on giving. Buckminster Fuller is credited with saying that "when you flush a toilet, it goes somewhere." When people use your products and services, the same thing happens. If you sacrifice the long-term value in a holistic sense for some short-term gain, you are endangering your brand equity!

[Go to Top](#)

## **72. How to Negotiate Effectively**

Hardly a day passes that we are not involved in some type of negotiation. This negotiation may be as simple as attempting to convince a friend to see the movie we choose or as complicated as negotiating a percentage of a business offering or mediating a labor dispute. The following are some suggestions regarding win win negotiation techniques. At any rate, effective negotiation is an art...one that requires preparation and practice in order to be successful. Consider these ten tips for preparing for negotiation and improve your odds for a win-win resolution.

### **1. Know what you REALLY want.**

Many people enter negotiation only to find they did not have a clear desired outcome defined in their own mind. Write down your desired outcome as concisely as possible and use this outcome as the center point of your preparation.

### **2. Know your opposition.**

Learn as much as possible about who you are negotiating with, what they want, their strengths and weaknesses, and their likes and dislikes.

### **3. Consider the impact of timing and method of negotiation.**

Whenever possible, negotiate face to face. It is easier to say NO over the telephone and in writing. Initiate the negotiation process so that you have the advantage of preparation and timing.

### **4. Prepare your presentation...point by point.**

Outline your presentation carefully. Place emphasis on benefits to the other party.

### **5. Anticipate reactions, objections and responses.**

If possible, brainstorm with others who have had similar negotiations to get a jump on what to expect. For each objection or reaction, list positive responses, alternatives and examples that counteract the negatives.

### **6. Structure your presentation to ensure agreement on one or two points at the beginning of the negotiation.**

For example, "I think we can agree right away that we have a problem and that we both/all want to resolve it." Initial agreement on minor issues or points early on in the negotiation process sets a positive atmosphere for agreement in later, more significant stages.

### **7. Determine paybacks and consequences for each party in the negotiation.**

A clear understanding of paybacks and consequences makes it easier to determine when and how to make concessions and when and how to stick to your demands/requests.

### **8. Prepare options rather than ultimatums.**

An ultimatum should be used only as a last resort when you are sure you can back it up and the other party knows you can back it up. Even then, in virtually every negotiation

there are options and alternatives that reduce defensiveness and lead to positive resolution for all parties.

**9. Get comfortable with silence.**

Many negotiators feel compelled to jump in with arguments and comments each time there is a pause in the interaction. Practice withholding comments and responses. Silence can be a very powerful negotiation tool.

**10. Close all negotiations by clearly outlining agreement.**

When agreement or conclusions have been reached and you are ready to end your negotiation, review the agreement that has been reached. Then, end your negotiation on a positive note...commending those involved and emphasizing the progress made.

[Go to Top](#)

### **73. How to Be a Good Team Leader**

Teams have been touted as a way to replace managers, evoke initiative, assist in leadership development and save the Queen. In reality, the synergy that's possible in teamwork usually turns out to be chaos. Here are 10 tips on making the most of your team.

#### **1. Give the team (or have them create) a big enough vision or outcome.**

If the goal isn't bigger than the personalities of the team members, the team's effectiveness will be mediocre, due to ego.

#### **2. Train all team members in the standards of behavior of the team's communication, response and interaction.**

These ground rules are designed to keep the team's communication clean and make team membership mean something. Bad attitudes, delayed responses, nattering, gossiping, whining or politicking are grounds for exclusion.

#### **3. Have the team vote the Team Leader.**

Leadership is still required in a team environment. Not a manager, but a Team Leader. A Team Leader should have the confidence of everyone and not the person with the power to hire and fire, unless the members are OK with that.

#### **4. Install structures to support the team and keep it moving.**

Daily or weekly reporting, public display of team goals/results, etc., helps everyone on the team get that they ARE on a team and that the team is accomplishing something.

#### **5. Teams need a member/manager who manages the details and flow of idea and information.**

Have one team member be the person who makes sure that ideas are catalogued, agreements are kept, promises are made and that input from team members "goes" somewhere good and not into the ethers.

#### **6. Include periodic meetings where the agenda is how the team can work better together -- and no other agenda for that meeting.**

It's KEY that two things happen, otherwise these "effectiveness" meetings become too personal/venting/gripe sessions. First, make it a ground rule that any unresolved/uncommunicated issues among/between team members must be completed resolved PRIOR to the next effectiveness meeting. This will help the meetings be positive and healthy progress/bragging sessions vs hurtful or finger-pointing slugfests. Second, have every team member make one suggestion for team effectiveness improvement prior to the meeting, so they can propose it during the meeting.

#### **7. Know when a team approach is called and know when it's "not enough."**

#### **8. Continual, accurate and frequent acknowledgment**

A big part of what makes the synergy of a team work is that individual team members are publicly acknowledged for what they've done to help the team and/or forward the outcome/goal. However, keep this praise accurate vs manipulative puffery.

**9. Team meetings should be exciting moments of creating, not reporting.**

Pose a great question or significant problem for the meeting, don't make it be a boring reporting session -- that's why God invented email and copy machines. If there's any reporting to do, keep it short shares about the wins and progress.

**10. Teams work best when people enjoy each other's company.**

[Go to Top](#)

## **74. How to Take Action and Get Started**

Sometimes getting started can be the toughest part of the day, especially on Mondays! What's worse, a bad start can make for a bad day and even a bad week. Here are ten ways to ensure that you get moving quickly and effectively on Monday or any other day!

### **1. Take time to get organized.**

How's your work space? Is it crowded, sloppy, piled high with yesterday's business, surrounded by memorabilia from family outings and favorite leisure activities? Remember: every item within range of your eyes or ears impacts upon you--if only subconsciously--and splits your focus. Get rid of everything that is extraneous in your work place or office and have an assigned place for EVERYTHING. It takes time to get organized but, once accomplished, it pays off in less wasted moments.

### **2. Begin the night before.**

Don't wait until Monday morning to decide what you're going to do for the day or week. Set aside time on Sunday to: (a) decide what you want to do and accomplish for the week, and (b) schedule your next day (Monday). And here's a tip: select a time when you are relaxed, not rushed, and give yourself a chance to muse about what you want to achieve during the week.

### **3. Prioritize your plan.**

If your plan is actually a TO DO list, you probably have far more items on it than you can hope to accomplish in any reasonable time. That's where prioritizing comes in. I don't have any problems with TO DO lists as long as they're prioritized. In fact, putting items on the list that need to be done, but are of low priority has the effect of removing them from my mind--I can check back now and then, but I don't worry about them. And, guess what: when I DO check back, I often find that the need to get them done has simply evaporated. But, back to prioritizing. A simple system is: A equals Very important, B equals Important, C equals Not very important. If you have a D in your system, drop it and all the items under it!

### **4. Honor your personal work styles.**

When you are most creative? When is the best time to: do routine chores? exercise? study? nap? (yes, nap! - see below) communicate? Each person has an ideal work style that operates as a function of being a certain body and personality type. Understand and honor that style and you will be more effective; ignore it, and you will work at less than optimum capacity. My style is to do creative work (writing, speculative thinking, planning) in the morning (sometimes very early at 0400 or so, even while in bed). Everyone is different and you have to determine what is right for you.

### **5. Cat nap.**

If you're a Type A, you may have trouble with this one! The fact is, nearly everyone encounters a low point in energy, usually about 1:00 PM every day depending, of course, on what time they've gotten up and how much sleep they've had the night before. You can train yourself, using a simple 1 to 10 count-down method, to sleep for 5, 10, or 15 minutes. With practice, you'll wake up within a few seconds of the time you've chosen, AND you'll be more refreshed by this kind of meditative sleep which is

more beneficial than normal sleep by a ratio of roughly 4:1. No, your nap won't keep you from getting to sleep at night. If anything, you will drift off more easily and gain greater benefits, because your nap sleeps help alleviate deep set and subtly building stress. I've trained myself to nap almost anywhere for period from five to thirty minutes. Even with minimum time, I wake up refreshed and ready to go.

#### **6. Schedule time by blocks rather than tasks.**

Have you ever allotted an hour to complete a task and then found that it took two hours thereby screwing up the rest of your day and schedule? It's a common occurrence and, when it happens, the result is greatly increased stress. The most common examples are tasks such as expense-keeping, writing or research projects, and phone calls. One way to alleviate the stress of these objective-oriented tasks is to simply allot a given amount of time to them, say an hour, and then move on to the next task. This practice ensures that you will make measurable progress on each task without getting bogged down.

#### **7. Make the first touch the deciding one.**

You've heard the standard advice: handle everything only once. Unfortunately, that's not always possible or prudent, and here's where the organization achieved through step one above comes in. Your first task with respect to new materials coming in to you (letters, assignments, calls, etc.) is to DECIDE what to do about them. In each case, your organization should support your decision. For example, in opening your mail (and e-mail), there will be some letters that you will want to answer immediately (probably very few), others you will want to answer within a specified period of time, others you will want to put on hold until you get more information, and still others that will be immediately destined for the circular file. The important thing here is to have identified the possible categories before hand and then be ruthless about adhering to them. In the case of correspondence, you may want to have a separate file for each category AND a procedure for periodically reviewing each file to ensure that you act on it. This same principle works with tasks you are assigned or jobs that pop up. Your first action is to determine the category in which they fall: do, delegate, defer, or drop.

#### **8. Follow the WIFO principle, selectively.**

WIFO stands for worst in, first out. Have you ever kept postponing a project because you just didn't want to do it? Chances are, if you look back at the experience, you'll find that you spend nearly as much time worry and rescheduling it as you did actually DOING it! There's a way around this one. Simply, DO IT-- either on a task or time basis. I've found this to be a powerful tool, because invariably those tasks that I've put off are easier and less time consuming than I expected, WHEN I simply get on with them.

#### **9. Schedule a clean-up day or half-day at least weekly.**

No matter how good you are at scheduling, there will always be times when your desk is piled high, your files over-stuffed, and your plan/schedule crowded with extra added tasks. You may find it helpful to pick a time each week (maybe Saturday morning) as a clean-up period, a time when you dispose of all those little things that have built up during the week and when you mentally review your priorities.

#### **10. Become fully present-focused.**

One of the virtues of scheduling activities by time blocks rather than by objective benchmarks is that it allows you to become totally absorbed for a set period of time in what you're doing. Believe it or not, total absorption is relaxing. It's splitting your attention--between what you're currently doing and what you have to do next--that is exhausting. When you become totally focused on what you are doing at the moment, a free-flowing momentum and pace occur, and you get the job done faster, easier, and time flies. The steps leading to total absorption in the task are: (a) Organize and task and set aside the time, (b) Remove all that is extraneous from your work space, (c) Rehearse the task mentally.

[Go to Top](#)

## **75. How to Build a Team at Work**

Teams just don't happen they are built. The following are tips that you, as a team leader or an individual member, may use regarding team building training ideas for work.

### **1. Develop a Vision**

Identify the challenging, inspiring goals you want your team to achieve. Define how you want people outside of your team (your customers, your peers outside of your team, the corporation as a whole) to perceive your team. Get all team members involved in helping writing this team vision. Formulate this team vision into a team mission statement. Then have your team's mission statement professionally printed and post it in the work place for all to see.

### **2. Over Communicate**

Make certain that your people know what is going on corporate wide, as well as all members know about team both successes and failures. Let your fellow teammates know about new products, new customers, new business partnerships, etc. Inform them of everything from changes in employee benefits to changes in corporate mission or goals. The more knowledge employees have, the better they can identify with an organization. If you are going to make an error, tell them too much, rather than too little. Individuals can't feel as though you're an important part of a team if the team leader keeps them in the dark most of the time.

### **3. Be Approachable**

Make certain that your people feel comfortable coming to you with problems. A breakdown in communication can be a death sentence to a team. Even the best team leader can't correct a problem he or she doesn't know exists. Present yourself as a resource. You are there to help, to coordinate, to run interference for team members when necessary. You are a sounding board if someone needs to discuss an idea or a problem. In addition, walk around, ask questions, and show interest and concern. Don't sit in your office and wait for team members to come to you.

### **4. Build Rapport**

Plan a short stand-up meeting each morning before the start of the work day. When something changes or when new information of interest arrives keep your people informed. Make certain your people have not only all of the information they need to perform their current jobs, but enough to look ahead and anticipate future opportunities for the team as a whole. Give your team members a feeling that they are ahead of the industry curve. Have occasional informal off-site meetings away from the work place. Encourage team members to enjoy themselves and get to know one another at these meetings.

### **5. Fully Delegate**

You may well be the expert in your field. Perhaps, no one else in your entire team knows as much as you do. But, it is time to start respecting and using the expertise of your team players. A high performance team has members who can assume responsibility and make decisions independently. To do this effectively, they must be allowed the opportunity to learn by doing. People respond in amazing ways when they

are given control over the work they do. If asked, most employees can provide several suggestions on how to improve work-flow. The more control you give your people over their own areas, the more ownership they will feel, the more interest they will have, and the harder they will try to do a good job.

#### **6. Lead by Example**

You can't motivate a team to feel good about their work if you, as their leader, don't. Similarly, team members won't feel ownership or go the extra mile if you don't. You must set an example by demonstrating passion about your work and displaying confidence in the team to do a good job.

#### **7. Provide Feedback**

Be sure to tell your people how they are doing in as timely manner -- not 6 months after the fact. There are no stronger modifiers of behavior than immediate positive or negative reinforcement.

#### **8. Offer Rewards**

Consider non-monetary awards such as; public acknowledgment, increased responsibility, status, titles, work space, special parking place close to the door, etc. Keep in mind to praise your people in public and discipline them in private.

#### **9. Encourage Growth**

Encourage your people to develop personally and professionally. Suggest training programs, books, seminars, workshops, courses, and journal articles they can read to eliminate weaknesses and fine-tune strengths.

#### **10. Celebrate Accomplishments**

Share good news. Have a party. Make noise about it. Let everyone know when the team or a team member does something really noteworthy. Give team members personal "at-a-boys," so long as they are sincere. Keep the criticisms to a minimum.

[Go to Top](#)

## **76. Are You Making Any of These Common Marketing Mistakes?**

How do you judge the effectiveness of your small business marketing efforts? Easy...does it produce results? Great looking ads, fancy logos and flashy web sites are worthless if they don't bring business to your door. This list of 10 common marketing mistakes can help you produce better results.

### **1. Not Having a Clearly Defined USP.**

Do you want to fit in or stand out? In order to thrive in today's cluttered marketplace, every business owner must be able to clearly articulate an answer to the question, "Why should someone do business with you rather than your competitor?" "What makes you unique? Your answer to these questions constitutes your Unique Selling Proposition. Do you offer 24-hour, 7 day a week service? Do you offer the lowest price? Do you offer a no risk guarantee? A strong USP helps you to stand out in a crowded field.

### **2. Selling Features Rather than Benefits.**

Someone once said, "No one ever bought a drill bit. Millions of people have bought a hole" People don't buy features, they buy benefits. They are tuned into Radio Station W.I.I.F.M. (What's in it for me?) Tell them clearly how the features of your product/service will help them, make their life easier, etc.

### **3. Not using headlines in print advertisements.**

You have at most a couple of seconds to grab someone's attention when they read a newspaper, magazine etc. Using an attention-grabbing headline ensures that the reader will continue to read the rest of the advertisement. The headline is an ad for the ad. Take a look at some newspaper ads. Which ones attract your attention? You will probably find they have utilized an effective headline.

### **4. Not testing headlines, price points, packages, pitches, everything.**

How do you know what ad, what price, what offer most appeals to customers? By putting them to a vote. Test everything. Rather than running one newspaper ad for three weeks, why not run three different ads for three weeks and measure which draws better? Rather than putting all your advertising into newspaper, why not split between newspaper and direct mail and measure the results? Why not price your products/services at different points and see which sells more? Is cheaper always better? Not necessarily. Each situation is unique. One price may outperform another for a myriad of reasons. Your job is not to know why, but to find what works. Test, test, test.

### **5. Making it difficult to do business with you.**

Are your sales staff knowledgeable about your products? Does someone answer your phone promptly and in a friendly manner? Can people find your phone number, location? Can customers find things easily in your store? Put yourselves in your customer's shoes. Don't make them work-they won't. I've seen a web site that undoubtedly cost the company thousands of dollars and NOWHERE could I find a phone number or email address. Your customer has better things to do than struggle to do business with you.

### **6. Not finding out what your customer's needs are.**

What is the first step in filling your customer's needs? Discovering what they are. What's most important to them? Don't even try to guess. You may think price is most important

when what they really want is fast service. You may believe fast service is what they want when what they desperately want is a friendly, personal touch. How do you find out? People won't tell you unless you ask. So ask.

### **7. Not maintaining an up to date customer database.**

Your customer list is pure gold. Rather than always working to bring new customers in the door, why not take advantage of the good will you have already built with your existing clientele? Experiment with extending special offers to your customer base. Ask for referrals. Send them a card on their birthday. Call and ask what they most enjoyed about doing business with you (or what they disliked doing business with you). You worked hard to develop these relationships. Recognize their value and work hard to "re-delight" them.

### **8. Not eliminating the risk.**

What stops a customer from buying from you? Are they unsure that your offer is worth their hard-earned money? Make it easy to decide to buy from you. How can you reduce their risk? If you are in a service business, let them try your service at no cost. If you are a lawyer or consultant offer them a free consultation. Offer them a money back, no questions asked guarantee on any product they buy. Why not? Are you afraid people will take advantage of you? Give it a try for a month. You may be very pleasantly surprised. Not confident in your product or service? Then go to work on improving your service.

### **9. Not educating your customers**

Don't just claim that your service is better. Explain why. Are your staff better trained? Do you utilize a technology that increases service turnaround or quality? Don't expect people to just take your word for things. Quality, Service and Value mean nothing. Everyone claims to offer these. Make these claims real for the customer by offering credible explanations why they should do business with you.

### **10. Not knowing what works, and sticking with it.**

Do you know which ads are effective? What media pulls best? What offer gets the best reaction? By testing (see above) you will. When you find something that works, don't change it until you find something that works better. Just because you're sick of an ad/offer isn't a good enough reason to change it. You can supplement with other ads and offers. If it works, keep it.

[Go to Top](#)

## **77. How to Write a Compelling Mission Statement**

Most individual or corporate mission statements contain industry buzzwords, are so complex that no one can recite them, and do nothing to inspire. The more elaborate it is, the less likely it is understood and remembered. Having a clear and concise mission statement for yourself and your Company becomes your guiding compass as you journey through life. The following tips will help you write good sample mission statement and vision statement.

### **1. Your mission is larger than a job.**

Ideally your job will align with your mission. For example, you could be employed as a teacher while your mission is education. To limit your personality and unique abilities to such boundaries causes a profound loss of identity when your job or career changes. The average person can expect to have seven employment changes in a lifetime.

### **2. Your mission is much more than your role.**

We all have various roles we fulfill: spouse, parent, manager, friend...In our culture, men tend to define themselves by what they do professionally. Often, women define themselves by their roles or relationships. Linking your role to your mission places you in a vulnerable position because your role is likely to change--most notably through death or divorce. Who were you before your roles?

### **3. Your mission is not your To-Do List.**

As Stephen Covey so masterfully points out in First Things First, there is a huge distinction between what is important and what is urgent. Most people fill their to-do lists with activities which appear to require immediate attention. When writing your mission statement, contemplate the big picture and focus on your core values. Develop your mission first, then list corresponding goals. Otherwise, you can be very busy following a to-do list without creating anything worthwhile.

### **4. You are already living your mission on some level.**

Living your mission may not require massive changes. You can begin right where you are now. Increase your awareness daily of what's really important to you. What do you want to be known for? Increased focus allows you to receive, recognize and fully integrate your mission.

### **5. You are born with a purpose.**

Everyone's life is important enough to warrant a mission. In the classic movie: It's a Wonderful Life, Jimmy Stewart portrays a suicidal businessman who experiences what the lives of his friends and loved ones would be like WITHOUT him. Mostly, we don't have this overview or the understanding of how interconnected we are. Every thought we have, word we speak and action we take affects the entire universe.

### **6. Your mission may not appear to be grand.**

You don't have to be another Mother Theresa or significantly contribute to the Gross National Product. You've heard the saying: For want of a nail, the shoe was lost; for want of a shoe, the horse was lost; for want of a horse, the battle was lost. The

blacksmith responsible for Paul Revere's horse's feet indirectly helped lead a nation to freedom. Positively affect one life and you can be considered successful.

### **7. Your mission is a perfect fit for you.**

Your mission is not something you loathe doing. Years ago, I feared God would want me to be a missionary living in a grass hut and I wanted to postpone this event as long as possible. It was irrational. Think of this: what CEO in his/her right mind would have the sales team switch to accounting? When you are living your mission, you experience pure joy. It is not hard and does not involve suffering. Rather, it resonates with the essence of who you are 100%: at work, at home, at a party and alone. Accept a mission that fits you, not the needs or expectations of others.

### **8. Your mission is not the same as that of your peers.**

While crafting your mission statement, temporarily disassociate yourself from your peers. We are often influenced by and take as our own the values and goals of those in our network, thus inhibiting self-discovery. This distancing will allow you to concentrate on what is important and unique to you.

### **9. Your mission is your true heart's desire.**

You may be in a career that parallels your dream. I'd like to have a dollar for every magazine editor, advertising copywriter or reporter whose real dream is to be a full-time novelist. Go for the REAL THING. Ask yourself: Is this the highest thing I could do in my life?

### **10. Your mission inspires you to take action.**

Great leaders can state their mission succinctly. Nelson Mandela's mission was to end apartheid; Mother Theresa 's mission is to show compassion to the dying. If you don't feel passionate about your mission, it isn't your mission. Choose action verbs that are meaningful to you. For example, my mission is to breathe, ignite and magnify personal power. Join the 1% of the people in the world who have a clear sense of who they are and where they are going.

[Go to Top](#)

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