

So You Want to Start a Business? 9 Sabotaging Behaviors to Avoid

With the downturn in the economy comes an increased interest in starting a business. You may be interested because you lost your job; because you have a great idea; or because you cannot find a job you are interested in. Regardless of the reason, you will find there is more information available than the average human being can consume in a lifetime. Colleges, universities, business organizations, governments and independent consultants and advisors all have suggestions on what you should do to be successful in your own business. Their advice usually covers: prepare a solid business plan, insure you have cash for at least six months, work with a good accountant and attorney, understand your market, understand your competition, and have a marketable product or service.

This is very good advice. But in our personal experience, business success or failure involves more. You can have an excellent business plan, good financing, a good product or service and good advisors, yet you may

inadvertently sabotage your business and fail.

Here's what you need to do to avoid sabotaging your business success.

●Don't let fear immobilize you

We believe the number one issue adversely affecting success in a new business is fear: fear of failure, fear of success, fear of criticism, fear of feeling unappreciated, fear of thinking no one will like your product or service or you. Understand that fear can immobilize you and learn to recognize it and deal with it.

●Develop real relationships

Another key reason people starting new businesses fail is because they don't take the time to establish real relationships. Nothing happens until a relationship is formed: no meeting, no sales opportunity, no business. Building relationships takes time. Take the time, build a relationship, and then you are ready to sell.

●Respond quickly

Quick response is a differentiator. The quicker you respond, the more responsive you appear. Emails not returned in days,

Forget the absurd advice that a quick response makes you look eager or desperate for the business. It makes you look - responsive.

●Don't be a pusher

Nobody likes a pusher. So when your buyer says yes -

stop selling. Forget the "this is a once in a life time deal, act now while the supply lasts" - really. And don't up sell, which is getting the buyer to buy more than they need. It's great for short term profits; terrible for a long term relationships.

●Don't quit at no

Nobody likes rejection, but sometimes we see it when it's not there. No is often an initial response to someone the buyer doesn't know, not a conclusion. Or it can come from a gatekeeper whose job it is to say no. Sure, sometimes a no is a no, but many times it's an initial reaction - almost a "knee jerk" reaction. Build the relationship and engage the client in meaningful dialog.

●Don't get stuck in perfection

There is no such thing as the perfect proposal, the perfect letter, the perfect response. Good is often good enough unless you are dealing with life and death situations, which most of us are not. The extra 20% you

put into your product, service, response is neither recognized nor appreciated by the recipient. But the fact that it took you too long to respond is recognized and not in a good way!

●**Don't wear your personal beliefs on your sleeve**

No one cares - really - about your opinions when you are in a sales situation. Your political, social, sports beliefs should stay with you. If you are asked to share your thoughts on any of these issues, your thoughts should stay with you.

●**Focus management**

We call this "the lights are on but nobody's home." Lack of focus in people and in organizations leads to ineffective performance. In people, it looks like you are not interested or are overwhelmed; in organizations, it looks like a version of the fad of the month which quickly blows morale as staff struggle to juggle changing priorities and new initiatives

●**Executive presence**

Executive presence is not about just looking the part, that's defined as the "empty suite". Executive presence is about being the part. It's about managing your image thoughtfully and not artificially. Like it or not, tired, overweight, out of shape and sloppy people who aren't aware of current

events and haven't read a book since high school or college present a very different image than people who take care of themselves and are intellectually curious.

A note to "Corporate Refugees", people who held management positions in corporations and who are starting a new business. Don't think that because you were held in high esteem in your last job, had all your calls promptly returned from your vendors, and if ethics allowed, had lunch, dinner and golf outings paid for by the vendor, that you will get a return call from them. You may not, and don't take it personally. We find that often this is the greatest shock corporate managers' experience when they start a business.

These are very difficult economic times. Starting a new business can be exhilarating and very rewarding - personally and professionally. Yes you need a solid business plan, financing, and a marketable product or service with a strong and compelling value proposition. But you need more. You need to stack the deck in your favor. The more difficult the economic environment, the more important it is to differentiate yourself. And it starts with eliminating the 9 sabotaging behaviors. The

good news is that it's your lowest cost and most effective strategy; *isn't that a new and affordable competitive advantage?*

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The information presented is based on the ideas and concepts presented in their forthcoming book **the damaging effects of self-sabotaging behaviors in business.**

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