

I learnt that the secret to running a **successful business** is actually quite simple.

- 1. Find a product or service that enough people actually want**
- 2. take in more money than you spend out**
- 3. make sure you have enough cash to trade**
- and 4. treat your customers like gods, - treat them how you would like to be treated.**

Here are my top 10 tips for starting, running and selling a successful business.

1. Do the research – Make sure you know your market and customers intimately. Don't make assumptions – they will be wrong! Make sure your product or service meets all legal and ethical laws before you start.

2. Look after the customers – then they will look after you. Treat them like you would like to be treated. Go the extra mile. Provide happy surprises. Look forward to customers complaining – they are the ones who tell you what needs to improve. Be grateful to them because many other customers just never come back.

3. Protect & invest in your brand: Brand value is not created accidentally. A brand needs careful management. Being ethical always pays off in the long-run.

4. Be cheeky and get noticed! When you are small or starting up, think out of the box about how to look bigger than you are. Cheeky is good. Rude is not so good! Think of publicity stunts, opportunities to get noticed.

5. Good data = good business decisions.

How can you work out which part of your business is working for you if you have not got the financial data to show you. You wouldn't ask a surgeon to operate on you before having lots of tests to work out what the problem is first. If you don't like spreadsheets then ask a book keeper or management accountant to prepare you lots of graphs!

6. Invest in the right people

Recruit the best staff you can afford. People are your only real asset. Don't try and do it on your own. Partnerships are great – people bring different skills. Good to have someone on the brakes and someone on the accelerator. Too much speed or too much caution can bring equally disappointing results!

Listen to your gut feel in interviews and be patient for more candidates. Hire people who fit into your office culture. Be prepared to pay more for great people – this will always pay dividends.

Reward the good staff.

Look to get your top team to buy in (ie. Sell them some equity in the business) then you are more likely to keep them and be on the same side of the table when it comes to discussing an exit.

7. Start with the end in mind.

If you want to sell your business on, think about how this will work. Can it run without a founder? Does the brand name contain the founders name, if so, what happens when you come to sell? Are all your legal and IP documents up to date? Think about succession planning.

8. Be passionate about what you do.

If you don't feel passionate about your business or job, then perhaps you haven't found the right idea yet. You need this passion to get you through the tough times.

“Success is going from failure to failure without a loss of enthusiasm”.

9. Understand the power of your own thoughts and intentions.

Can you see other people's thoughts No, of course not!

But just because something is invisible to the human eye, doesn't mean its not there or not powerful.

We are sitting here surrounded by radio signals, wi-fi, TV stations – even though we cant see them. Our thoughts are just the same, only vibrating in a different frequency.

Here is another surprising fact: *What you think about, you attract.*

Google the Law of Attraction if you are interesting in finding out more about it. The Law of Attraction doesn't care if you believe in it or not, just like the law of gravity doesn't care what you think about it – it still does what it does.

Your thoughts are more powerful than you can imagine. Or better phrased, your thoughts are *as powerful as you can imagine*.

They literally create your future. So be careful what you think about!

I think it's better to work with this system than living blind to it and never making the connection that many of things you worried all the time about came true.

Belief in your thoughts is also really important and belief in yourself too.

Henry Ford once said: "*Whether you believe you can or whether you believe you cant, you're right.*"

Life is a curving corridor... you can never see the future, so give it a go, be brave, start walking and see what comes into view.

10. Get out there, network and be open to co-incidences...

Use your thoughts positively and see who you meet on your travels.

From my experiences over the last 20 years I believe there are no such things as co-incidences. What seems like random events are all part of a bigger picture.

The universe works in mysterious ways to deliver you what you think about and you can never make a mistake. Events happen in life and these produce results to learn from.

You can guarantee that some of these experiences will be amazing and some of them painful, but the painful ones always provide the most opportunities for personal growth and learning.

So embrace it all and keep smiling! Life is not meant to taken too seriously :)