

So, You Want to Start a Business?

Written by Margaret Evans
Tuesday, 04 June 2013 09:53



Your Mission, Should You Choose to Accept It, is Focus!

Develop Yourself – Part 5 of 6

The most critical, influential, success-or-failure determining asset and resource that you have is you. Knowledge, skills, connections, timing, and more are all important to entrepreneurship but you are THE one thing you have control over. It is your mindset, your habits, your willingness to learn, to be open to changing your view, to practice focus, to discipline yourself, to take action, to persevere that can make or break you in business and in life. No amount of classroom work to learn how to write a business plan, make a pitch to investors, or create spreadsheets will assure your success – if not this time, then next time – the way developing the necessary behaviors and thought processes will.

Having said that, there are two points people struggle with repeatedly with regard to entrepreneurship – focusing and getting started. If you have decided you want to go into business but you aren't sure what that looks like or how to move forward, it's easy to get frustrated because you are excited, hopeful, impatient, and stymied all at once! Until you can focus on the ONE thing your business is about it's hard to start and often this is the point where people give up! Know, however, that when you develop the mastery of these two behaviors – focusing and taking action – you will be ahead of about 98% of all entrepreneurs!

Focus is defined as -

. The concentration of attention and energy towards something.

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- . Having maximum clarity on an object or goal
- . A direct, uninterrupted view of a central or fixed reference point.

The application of focus is defined as the ability -

- . To visualize and project concentration and energy
- . To know and understand the objective completely
- . To follow just one direct path onward.

A surprisingly difficult point in my book-writing journey was crafting the title and tagline of the book. When you decide what business you are in you are essentially coming up with the title and tagline. You must be able to succinctly define what you are selling so that you can tell me in thirty words or less and know for sure I will understand what you just said. Next, you must know with certainty that you are focused enough to execute on that promise. Achieving clarity can be ridiculously difficult and frustrating and yet, once you have it, you realize it's a beautiful thing and you wouldn't have gotten there without the pain and challenge of constantly asking exactly what you are doing, why, and how you are going to do it.

For example, I read about a company that makes coolers with a price tag of \$300. Why? Their tagline says it all: "Wildly Stronger. Keep Ice Longer." (<http://www.yeticoolers.com/>) They keep your ice frozen and are bear proof! YETI knows what they are selling and exactly who they are selling to: hunters and outdoor enthusiasts. As their customer I know clearly what they sell and exactly why I'm willing to seek out their cooler and pay a premium for it. YETI focused and then applied that focus to create a product and a company around that product.

How can you do the same? First, look into the future and visualize what you hope to achieve. Maybe as the founders of YETI visualized a campsite, they realized the one compelling hole in the market and the thing that excited them the most was the challenge of creating cold, secure food storage. Knowing that allowed them to let go of producing tents, hiking boots, or sleeping bags and focus on figuring out how to make the best cooler for back country use. Do you see how their story just became far more clear, compelling and easy to repeat? This doesn't restrict them to being a one-hit wonder. Learn to focus, do one thing well, succeed, and then repeat the process for the next product or service if you choose to have more than one.

Now it's your turn. Play around with how you can simplify, build quality, price, and product into your description in as few words as possible. Then run it by potential customers to see how they react. Test out the concept, the words, the story. Stay with it for an extended period of time and

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prove you can succeed with what you know will win. Not only will focus help you get started, it will help you stick to it when you hit bumps along the way because you will know exactly what you want to accomplish!

How do you start? Once you are focused, knowing what to do next will be readily apparent. That's the beauty of focus – it not only crystalizes your vision, it crystalizes your action plan. In the cooler example, it's easy to make a list of next steps: get a prototype made, do some early marketing, and presell some orders. If you still find yourself procrastinating, keep it simple and easy. Do one thing, something you can check off a list daily until it becomes habit. Make calls. Ask questions. Solicit feedback. See if customers can repeat your offer back to you. Enlist a friend or colleague and commit to taking simple action steps with a deadline. Schedule regular times to talk to your accountability partner to acknowledge you have made progress as promised.

Remember, you are the one thing you have control over. Be willing to do the work to know and understand your objective completely. When you are determined to achieve focus, getting started will follow naturally. Achieving maximum clarity of what one product or service you can offer that the market wants will provide the path for you to know exactly what to do and allow you to keep doing it, all the way to your goal of success! Accept your objective. Master focus and join an elite group - entrepreneurs who know what to do and how to start!

Beaufort resident Jamie Wolf is the author of 'Start Over! Start Now! Ten Keys to SUCCESS in Business and Life' and ten accompanying guidebooks. ☐ If you're ready to be Master of your Fate and Captain of your Soul, she invites you to come on board! Jamie offers online courses and coaching for entrepreneurs and people interested in starting over or in starting their own business. Visit her at <http://www.thestartover.com>

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