

# 8 TIPS FOR BUSINESS SUCCESS

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# Introduction

Business success, of course, takes a lot of hard work. It's good to work smart while you are putting in all the hard work. Make Your Mark is all about bringing you tools you need to work smarter. With that in mind, here are 8 tips for business success – these are ideas that keep cropping up with the clients we work with, and in the conversations, we have every day with fellow entrepreneurs.

There are hundreds of tips and tricks out there – these are the ones that we think are worth paying especially close attention today.

# 1. Team Building From Day One

Whatever happens in business, you want a team surrounding you that can really handle the job. Rapid growth is a great problem to have, but whether you are just starting a business, or you've been at it a while and are encountering a period of rapid growth – be careful about onboarding the wrong people.

Essentially, tip number one is to be intentional about team building from day one. Adding the wrong people to your team is like adding rotten milk to a recipe. You may do everything else right, but the end product will still be ruined. And if you don't get it right, the alternatives are all painful.

If you have a revolving door because you didn't hire the right people from the start, that constant onboarding takes time and energy from other business functions. In addition, it kills your moral and institutional knowledge. You need to treat your institutional knowledge the same way you would intellectual property. Protect it, nurture it and grow it.

And don't forget about the team members you already have in place. Are you intentional about training the people you have? It might be that you need new people with different skill sets. Or maybe you just need to train who you have.

Putting systems in place to interview well and train well are critical. If you do that right, you will have the right team with you whatever happens. Because with the wrong people in place, your business can die even from rapid growth.

## 2. Find Your Mentors

Running a business takes a great deal of energy. When a new challenge or a difficult situation arises, how do you work through that?

Think of the challenges you have faced even just over the past year. Maybe you had times when you were worried about money, worried about staffing, worried about your family – wondering about next steps to keep your business viable.

Part of figuring all of this out is finding mentors. Look for people who have experienced more, or experienced different things in business and life than you have up to this point.

Because facing challenges is all about getting perspective. A good mentor will provide this perspective from their own experience. Getting perspective on your work and life means finding a few people to bounce ideas off of people.

Good mentors will provide accountability and also be among your biggest cheerleaders. Having a group of people around you that are excited and positive about your success is a huge thing. You need people who know the challenges, because you may think there is only one way to do something, but with a little perspective, you might find there are other, even better ways to do something.

### 3. Get OK with Vulnerability

If you have found your support structure with a few mentors, you now have permission to be vulnerable.

As entrepreneurs, we expect a lot of ourselves. We think we need to be a solid rock in the midst of the shifting sands we often find ourselves in. We think we can do it by ourselves...Or at least we think others expect that of us. When we are concerned about people judging us, it is difficult to be vulnerable. That path gets isolating pretty quickly.

At Make Your Mark, we love to say, "What other people think of you is none of your business." Getting vulnerable with people means being real with people. And you can't get real if your main concern is what others are going to think of you. It's not easy to let that go, but you can't succeed as an army of one.

There is, of course, some discernment that comes with how and when to be vulnerable. You probably don't want to become a sobbing heap of humanity with everyone you meet.

But you do need to find those places and those people where you can let your guard down. Just letting people know the real journey you've been on – they probably think you've always been successful. Online we often present ourselves as having it all together and living the perfect life.

Find those people who you can be vulnerable with. It may be your mentors, or or simply peers. Tell them what's going on in your life. Let them know how things affect you – they can't help or give advice if you don't tell them where you are struggling.

What's the point of being closed off and isolated? That is not the way to protect yourself. Getting vulnerable is part of being a healthy human being.

## 4. Take Care of Yourself

See how we are pulling back the layers with these business tips? They all build on each other and interrelate. Make sure you are building a great team in your business, build a great team outside your business, and build emotional support for yourself...

That brings us to the next tip: Take care of yourself. When we are running a million miles an hour in a million different directions, our self-care habits often suffer. There's "no time" to go to the gym or get outside for a hike. We're grabbing food on the go, which often means the wrong kinds of foods for staying healthy.

Clear minds, clear thoughts, healthy body. There are volumes written on this, hours and hours of Youtube video dedicated to self-care. We know what to do.

This is very much like any other aspect of business. It's all in the implementation. Make taking care of yourself a priority, and then set up systems that make follow-through almost automatic.

## 5. Differentiate or Go Extinct

For many business owners, answering the question, “what makes your business different” is a difficult one. We’re right in the middle of it, so it’s hard sometimes to get perspective on this. But you have built a business and it’s all about your unique DNA. Like a fingerprint, what you bring to your business is completely unique.

Some simple first steps to understanding what makes you different is asking yourself why you started down this path at all? Owning a business is hard, it would be much easier to be employed someplace else. But you wanted to do something different. Why? You also chose to go into a particular type of business. Why? What opportunity did you see that captured your attention and passion? Why did you think you could do it better than what was currently being done?

Differentiation is about uncovering your distinct voice in the marketplace. Figure out your competitive advantage. How do you deliver a level of value that is unrivaled in some way? Nail down your secret sauce – how is it that you can deliver that value the way no one else can?

Figure out what differentiates you, and then deliver that to the five senses.

## 6. Leverage the Power of Influence

You may not think about it, or even believe it about yourself, but we all have influence. We all have the ability to impact how others make decisions – it might be a small group of people that we influence, but we are all influencers.

So how do you leverage that influence? Influence is not being a card-grabber and email spammer. It isn't about manipulation or greed either. Influence is simply about the impact our words, actions and ideas have on others.

Here is the interesting thing about influence: The heart of influence is what you can give, not what you can get. Authentic influencers give influence back and forth. The minute you give influence away, it comes right back to you. When you make an introduction or offer your help in some way, that show of support will be reciprocated. Influence done right is a virtuous circle of listening, caring and making a difference in the lives of those you influence.

Influence is also offering advice. When we receive a critique, sometimes it raises our defenses. But when an influential person is giving you feedback, they are investing in you so. It's not them criticizing you – they are trying to help.

So be willing to receive help from influencers, and offer your own influence to help others.

## 7. Delegate

Being an entrepreneur is not the same thing as being self-employed. When you start out your business, you are most likely a jack of all trades, doing whatever it takes to get the business off the ground.

But if you are going to grow beyond that, you have got to delegate. Doing everything can make us think we are the only ones equipped to do anything. That's a great way to be self-employed, rather than being an entrepreneur.

As an entrepreneur, your goal is to set the business up so you don't have to be there. Don't misunderstand, I don't mean set up the business and walk away from it. I mean entrepreneurs set up systems and have trusted people around them – so they can step away from the day-to-day. This is partly to do the job of big-picture thinking about the business, but it should create time freedom for you as well.

What often happens when we think we are the only person who can possibly do the job right, is we are comparing ourselves at our best with a person who is just starting out in the role. Delegating means finding the right people and also allowing those people time to grow into the role.

There's no point in hiring someone and then doing the job for them. So be careful about how you determine success in a role. No one will do it exactly like you, but does success mean exactly duplicating you? Or does it mean hitting certain benchmarks?

If you think you can continue to do everything in your business and no one will do it as good as you, you will never achieve freedom. Delegate tasks and let employees learn to do their best.

## 8. Set Up Repeatable Systems

Make Your Mark is all about setting up systems to help you succeed, so this tip is what we do all day every day. The tip to end all business tips is...set up repeatable systems so your business can run without you babysitting it.

Setting up systems to support your business is the real key to scalability. Systems are the little engines that run your business. They are just a series of processes that happen during a business day – and often beyond the workday.

Here's the trick: if systems are only in your head, you can't staff up and scale. Repeatable, scalable systems written down and field tested – that is how you grow a business beyond yourself.

Here is a simple 4 step formula that our friend Matt Furloc uses in all of his multiple business endeavors. It's a system for creating systems:

- Identify the process – this becomes the title of your process. Example: Answering the Phone
- Identify the result you want to get: An appointment, a person directed to the right department, a question answered
- List the resources behind the system – who are the people or other resources to support this system?
- Describe the process in steps. Describe the process at a 5th-grade level – keep it simple.

## 8. Set Up Repeatable Systems Continued

That's it. You can do this. Take all of those processes out of your brain and get them out on paper.

Once a system is out there in writing, give it to the key staff member. Have them read it, and have them ask questions. Watch them implement – are you getting the result you wanted to get? Adjust and tweak the system as needed.

By systematizing your business process, you are creating an operating manual that gets the results you want.

This also makes your business more valuable. This is a business that not only can run without you doing it. You now have a valuable model that can potentially be purchased when the time is right.

Another benefit is that you are creating buy-in from employees. Systems empower your people to do their best and replicate it and train others. So now, you are creating trainers – when you are asking people to create and analyze systems, you are putting them on a management track.

Even if you are a solopreneur, get started and create those systems, so you are ready with systems in place when you start to hire and scale up your business.

There are a million business tips out there, but most of the tips are untested or complicated. These are distilled from conversations with entrepreneurs and business leaders from all over the world. They work, they are uncomplicated, they are doable. The rest is up to you!