

Start-Up Business Advice – 6 Must Read Tips



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Chambers are often asked for advice on how to start a business. Building your own business from the ground up is no easy task. There is no template or formula to creating a hugely successful business. There is just sheer hard work, determination and a will to

succeed. Apple founder Steve Jobs once famously said *“If you really look closely, most overnight successes took a long time.”*

1. Make Sure You Have Support

Starting up your own business is a difficult task and this can be made even more so if you feel that you are not being supported by the ones closest to you. How can you expect to succeed if you feel that those nearest and dearest to you do not believe in your abilities? If you're married and/or have kids, you should also be asking your family how they feel about your working from home, as your decision will affect them both financially and psychologically. If the response is negative, spend time addressing any concerns. If you are unable to change their minds decide whether your goal is worth continuing against their wishes. This does not just end with family, asking close friends, colleagues or peers for their support can give you that added confidence.

2. Research

In any start-up, you don't know what you don't know. This is especially true when you're entering an unfamiliar industry.

Get started through research, studying the competition and talking to mentors. The first thing when thinking of establishing a new business is to take the time to do research on your market. This doesn't have to involve substantial costs, you can find out key information by taking the time and undertaking it yourself. This will allow you to perform a **SWOT analysis**, assessing your competitor's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats within the marketplace. It will also give a clear picture without any further investment at this time as to the viability of your proposition.

3. Business Plan

Numerous studies have shown that one of the major reasons new businesses fail is poor planning. If you are planning on starting up a business, you *must* have a business plan. This will serve as a road map to guide you, and communicate with your bank or investors what you're doing and why they should invest in you.

It should include a mission statement, executive summary, product or service offerings, target market, marketing plan, industry and competitive analysis.

A detailed and comprehensive business plan should ideally be able to answer the following questions;

- What primary product(s) or service(s) will you provide?
- What will you charge for your products(s) or services(s)?
- What does it cost you to deliver this product or service?
- How many pieces must you sell or how many clients must you secure to generate the revenue you desire?
- Who is the target market for your product(s) or service(s)?
- Why will they buy from you?
- How exactly will you reach your target market to sell to them?
- How will you get going right now with your currently available resources? What do you absolutely need that you'll need help with?
- What could stand in your way of generating sales—and how will you overcome such obstacles?
- What benchmarks must you reach to qualify your business as a success?

4. Find the Right Funding

Potential sources of funding include a small-business loan from your local bank, tapping into your savings, money from other investments, borrowing from family/friends and, as a last resort, credit cards. Ideally, this investment will help you break even after a year, but keep in mind that even successful businesses can remain in debt for the first few years. The best way to start a business is to start out small and dip your toe in, so to speak. The advantages to testing your market will ensure you do not end up in a hole, with nothing to show. There are a lot of successful businesses, which have started out with a very minimal investment a great product and a great business strategy.

The amount of avenues in which you can obtain capital is large and research can help you uncover them.

5. Learn Why Others Have Failed

People naturally want to emulate success by analyzing successful business models, but it's more important to learn from companies that have failed. You can learn from success stories but that same is true of failures. Learning from others mistakes significantly decreases your chances of following the same path. Former US Secretary of

State Colin Powell once said *“There are no secrets to success. It is the result of preparation, hard work, and learning from failure.”*

There can be thousands of factors that contribute to business success, but when a business fails, it’s often easy to pinpoint the reasons. You must avoid making these mistakes yourself.

6. Getting Your Name Out There – Networking

There is usually a local or national trade show expo or conference in every industry, where the “who’s who” all gathers in one place. Your local chamber may even host a business expo. Attend these events. You’ll have the chance to learn the lay of the land, meet hundreds of people in person and learn about what’s new in your industry. It’s also a great place to form new partnerships. Bring lots of business cards!

The moment your business strategy has evolved, start attending networking events. Becoming a member of your local chamber will probably give you access to a whole host of networking events throughout the year. If not, reach out on social media for ways to grow your network.

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