



Eleven Tips for Start-Up Entrepreneurs

1. Follow Your Passion

There are some chores that you as an entrepreneur must endure. If you are passionate enough about the other facets of the business, you will put up with what you don't particularly enjoy. If you find something you love, I assure you that your work will be considerably easier.

2. Have a Clear Idea About What You Want to Do

As a small business owner, you must understand what your customer wants. This means asking yourself hard questions: Is there the need for your service? What are realistic charges for your service? What are you seeking to do? What are your objectives, both in what you plan to provide to others that is marketable and what you hope to get out of it for yourself? Where are you going to operate? You must also have a realistic view of what your start-up costs will be. And most important, you must focus on your core business.

3. Fine a Niche

In today's competitive marketplace, it's not possible to be all things to all people. What's more, it takes vast resources to dominate your marketplace. If multibillion-dollar companies can't do it, neither can your start-up company. Even large, established companies look for ways to fill a niche. To the novice entrepreneur, I recommend you find a niche - offer a service that isn't currently being filled. Interestingly, some niches are too small for big corporations to pursue, but these same niches provide excellent opportunities for a small businessperson.

4. Be the Best You Can Be

Martin Luther King, Jr., put it eloquently when he said, "If a man is called a street cleaner, he should sweep the streets even as Michelangelo painted or Beethoven composed music or Shakespeare wrote poetry. He should sweep streets so well that all the hosts in heaven and earth will pause to say, 'Here lives a great street sweeper who did his job well.'"

5. Make a Difference

If you chase the money, you'll never get it; but if you chase after your dream to



serve others, the money will follow you. Find something to do with a purpose that goes beyond just earning a living, beyond just supporting yourself. This is what will drive you to do your very best.

6. *Keep It Simple*

Stick to the basics. If you do, everything else will fall into place. With everything that goes on around us, it's easy to get sidetracked by distractions. The secret is to do what you do best and stick to it. Don't make things more complicated than they are. It sounds easy, but evidently it's not as easy as it sounds, because people all over tend to complicate what is otherwise uncomplicated.

7. *Watch Your Overhead*

With a bankroll of only \$3,000, I didn't have any choice - I had to watch my overhead. It taught me discipline, which I have been mindful of throughout my business career. Of course, even with a small bankroll, with credit, the temptation to overspend is always present. Simply put, don't do it! Establish a budget and stick to it.

8. *Go With Your Instincts*

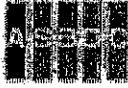
If I have to work too hard to sell myself on an idea, it's probably not a good idea. Unless Jay strongly objected and convinced me of a flaw in my judgment, I stuck with my intuition. Jay respected my intuition even when it didn't make good business sense to him. Was my intuition always right? Of course not! No entrepreneur is ever 100 percent right. If you're always right, then you're not taking enough risks.

9. *Value Your Time and Be a Good Time Manager*

Studies estimate that the average person watches three to four hours of television a day. It's amazing what you can accomplish by putting those hours to valuable use. Most people waste more time than they spend working. Once you realize what a precious commodity time is, it's amazing how much you can get done.

10. *Brush Up on Your Computer Skills*

I realize that I must develop better computer skills, which are necessary even



away from the business - in my personal life. So for anyone starting a business today, your computer skills are essential. This same advice applies to anyone who is returning to the workplace. We live in a computer-driven business world, and computer skills will play an even bigger role in the future.

11. *It's Only a Business*

When I got wrapped up in the business, it was hard to take a breather and unwind. Fortunately that's what I eventually learned to do. Thinking that it was only a business put things in perspective. My family was my number one priority. They are the reason why I started the business. Sure, on rare occasions I became so focused on a pressing problem that I momentarily put the business before my family. But it happens rarely, and whenever I catch myself falling into that trap, I say to myself, "Doris, it's only a business!" Then I feel at peace with myself again.

Doris Christopher *The Pampered Chef: The Story of One of America's Most Beloved Companies*. 2005. Random House, Inc. p41-48.