

How to start a business From scratch



By
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Brief Bio of the author:

Ken has been an entrepreneur most of his life. Below is a list of the various businesses he has started over his life. He has incorporated businesses all over the world – UK, Hong Kong, Canada, USA, South Africa, Panama and others.

1. A financial brokerage business
2. A greeting card manufacturing business
3. An animation Company
4. A recording studio
5. A tea importing & manufacturing Company
6. An advertising Company
7. A website & software development Company
8. A private bank
9. An online payment system – similar to PayPal
10. A direct marketing Company
11. An NGO to promote fair wages worldwide
12. A business consulting company

Why start your own business?

There are many reasons why you should consider starting your own business. Here are a few;

1. Unlimited earning possibilities. As an employee your earnings are always capped and limited.
2. Self determination. When you own your own business, you can do it the way you think is best instead of being forced to do things the way your employer thinks.
3. You can get to do something you really love and can be passionate about.
4. You can make a real difference for your family and your customers.
5. You cannot get laid off.

Why people often don't start their own business

There are 2 main reasons most people cite as to why they never acted on their business ideas.

1. Don't know how to go about it.
2. Don't have the financial means to do it.

This booklet will cover the basics on how to start and run a business successfully but the second reason – “lack of money”, I want to briefly talk about here.

While it is true that it takes money to make money, it is not necessarily true that it takes a lot of your own money to do it. The primary thing you need to do (which we discuss later), is to have a solid business plan that could make money. The reason why that is so critical is because with such a plan you will be able to;

1. Borrow money from a bank
2. Obtain business grants – where available

3. Borrow money from people you know who would help you by investing in your business
4. Raise money by means of crowd-funding, like Kickstarter
5. Attract investors who invest in start-up businesses – often called Angel Investors

A great business idea will get you the money you need from others so don't let that hold you back from pursuing your dream.

For starting with the basics as I said, it will take some money. I have started many businesses with just \$500, which for many people is not a huge risk.

You can often find the needed start-up money yourself from these sources;

1. Credit cards
2. Savings
3. Parents or family
4. By selling something you own but can do without
5. By getting a part-time job and using those earnings

Most successful companies borrow or raise capital in stages – as they grow and prove they are profitable so take the first step – get your basics done, start the business, prove it is profitable and you will be able to raise more money as you go along.

Sometimes you can also negotiate with suppliers or service providers. My son once offered to do a company's website in trade for shares in the company. It was certainly a bit risky, but they had a great business plan. So, he did. 2 years later the company was doing great and sold out to a bigger company. My son was able to cash in his shares and raised enough money to buy a commercial building which is now making him money every month.

Introduction.

This booklet is intended as a general guide to help you start any kind of business from scratch. We will take you through some basic steps as well as give you some general tips to get you started.

Even if you don't have much money you can start a business because if you have a great business idea and a solid plan it is not that hard to get either business loans or investors who will finance everything. Also, there are many creative ways to finance various aspects of the business that will not require up-front money as previously mentioned.

Over my life I have started a dozen businesses but as with all things, you need to learn how, and this book is written to show you step by step exactly how to do it.

I will show you the tools you need and the things you need to think through from the start.

Business Startup Recipe

If you were to cook a certain meal, you would consult a recipe to ensure you do it right. Following that recipe will yield the same results every time but if you skip any of the ingredients or use the wrong ingredients it could turn into a disaster. This booklet is in a sense a recipe book. All the ingredients we will discuss are necessary if you intend to do it right. If you are too much in a rush or too lazy to do your homework, expect your business idea to fail – it always does. So please be systematic and thorough.

Years ago, I trained as a helicopter pilot. One of the most important things I was taught was to ALWAYS use a checklist to go through before and after every flight. You simply cannot rely on your memory because all it takes is forgetting one thing and that could spell disaster.

Ingredients for a business

1. A product or service that solves a common problem or meets a want or need.
2. A plan on how to run it. (business plan).
3. A great name & logo (brand)
4. Properly registered.
5. A web domain and website.
6. Capital for acquiring whatever is needed.
7. Good record keeping system. (accounting)
8. Marketing systems. Several avenues are best – directories, social media, SEO, Google ads etc.
9. Banking Services
10. Learning & research program – daily inspiration, learning new things relative to your business and for personal growth and ongoing research on trends and new developments that could affect your business.

At first glance this may seem overwhelming but how do you eat an elephant? One mouthful at a time. If you do this step by step it will not be that overwhelming and in fact be very rewarding.

This book is intended to be used as a manual to help you create a business you will love and will make you lots of money. Entrepreneurs can sometimes be rash and try to launch too quickly before doing everything we will mention below. That is why many of them fail. How do I know? Because I have done that myself and learned from it. I can be your guide because I have dared to venture into the unknown and learned which paths to take and which ones to avoid.

If you need help, just email me at kenc@crauseco.com.

I also work as a business consultant if you need more hands-on help and am available to speak at conferences and private corporate events.

Happy bank balance = happy wife = happy life

WHERE TO START

You may already have an idea of the type of business you would like to start, but if not no problem. We are going to start off by exploring what type of business you should start.

Definition of a Business.

An entity created to meet a need or a want by others, for which they would pay you money. For the business to be desirable, it must solve a problem that your target customer has, better than anyone else is solving it. This is where innovation comes in. It matters little if someone is already doing that business. The question is, "Can you do it better?"

If the product or service, you are going to offer in the market is unique or new then you will need to do some work polling your potential customers (are they men? Women? Young? Old? Married? Single? Divorced? Wealthy? Professionals? Students? Carpenters? Doctors? Etc.) to see if they even want or need it and if so, how badly? But if it is an existing business type then its easy because you already know there is a market so all you must do is be better than everyone else in the market.

How to know what kind of business you should start.

The first consideration is your experience, knowledge and passion. Trying to start a business you know nothing about is very risky unless you are prepared to spend months learning everything you can about that type of business from those who have been in it before you begin. There is no need to risk your time and money and waste much of it in the school of hard knocks. No need to re-invent the wheel – learn everything you can from others with knowledge and experience.

The general rule is to look at what you already know about, have training in or are passionate about. So, what type of business does your knowledge, passion and experience lend itself to? Are you interested in Computers? Accounting? Manufacturing things? Farming? Construction? Automobiles? Transportation? Accommodation? Real estate?

What general area interests you? _____

What do you know a lot about and have experience in? _____

What kinds of services does that industry provide or need? For example, when the gold rush was on in California, the prospectors needed a wide array of things to be successful. The market was the same group of people, but their needs were many. Below is a brief example.

1. Transportation to get there – pack mules.
2. Equipment to mine – picks, shovels, wagons, clothes, matches, knives, ropes etc.
3. Food. The type would be canned or preserved mostly since they were in the bush – no fridges or ovens.
4. Water. A steady supply of drinking water and water for their mules was critical. What would they need to store and transport water or purify water?
5. Accommodation – hotels, lodges and of course tents or wagons when out prospecting.
6. Guides to show them where to look.
7. Legal information – where and what rules had to be obeyed?

8. Security – what if you found gold? How do you protect it from being stolen? In those days you likely needed at least a gun or two, and a lock box that could be easily concealed. Above that you needed to keep your big mouth shut. Lip zippers would've been helpful especially after a few drinks. Prospectors were notorious drinkers of alcohol and hence often said too much when under the influence.

Ok so this gives you an idea of all the businesses that were needed to supply the needs of prospectors. So, in the industry you are interested or have experience in, take some time now to write out a list of all the needs or wants of the people you plan to serve. Don't rush this exercise. Think deeply about every aspect. If you are having trouble thinking about this simply ask someone else to help.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.

The next consideration is how are other businesses in that field operating and how many of them are offering the same services or products? Is there a big or small demand by consumers for it? If for example you want to start a Sushi restaurant, how many other Sushi restaurants are there in the area you wish to operate? Given the number of people in the area they serve, how many people in that location even like Sushi? Are the restaurants making money at it or are they struggling to survive? You may have to be creative to get this market information which is good. Time to put on your "Sherlock Holmes" hat. The more you know the better. Business intelligence is often under-rated, yet it could make the difference between success or failure.

Another example that may help is the food chain McDonalds. What was so special about McDonalds? Was it their food quality? I don't think so. People really didn't need another hamburger restaurant. What they needed was something fast and predictable. In a world where people are rushing around more than ever, few have the time to wait for their burger to be cooked from scratch. McDonalds came up with a way to make it faster, serve it faster, make it reasonably palatable and relatively affordable. All of these were factors but the primary one was and still is speed. Burger King totally misunderstood why customers supported McDonalds instead of their burger company. They spent millions of dollars on food quality advertising asserting their burgers were healthier and tasted better. But they failed – because they could not turn out their burgers as fast as McDonalds or as consistently.

So, when you consider the needs of your customers don't just think in terms of the actual product. Consider convenience. Is it easy and fast? A new group of businesses has now emerged that will pick up your food from any restaurant and deliver it to you hot and fresh. In Canada a company called "Skip the Dishes" is growing rapidly. People are inherently lazy or often just too busy to go pick up the food themselves (mostly in city environments). Restaurants exist because people like variety and are too tired

or busy to cook themselves. So be sure to take these aspects into consideration in your field of business. Can you do it faster? Can you make it more convenient? Can you make it more reliable? It's things like this that often make the difference between the winners and losers in the world of business.

Where are the customers located?

This is very important because you will waste your time setting up your business in a location where few of your ideal customers live. If you were a fisherman, you know that it's pointless to try fishing in a place where few or no fish are. So, you need to consider if you should relocate to run your business or if you can reach your ideal customers remotely. Amazon has found a way to do that efficiently through their online sales and delivery systems.

So where are your potential customers located? Where is there a lot of them? Do you need to be local to serve them or can you do it remotely? Again, please don't go on until you have spent some time thinking deeply about this and writing down where they are. They could be in another country for example. The internet has made it easier to reach people anywhere in the world so don't restrict your thinking to local only.

My best locations are:

Can you make money at it?

The "secret" in running a business is to do something that makes a profit. This means that your customers are 1. Able financially to and 2. Willing to pay what you would need to charge in order to pay all your operational expenses and salaries and still leave you with a decent amount of money in the bank (no less than 10% of gross sales). Simply just covering expenses and wages makes you a self-employed labourer but not a business.

What is the average income of the people who live in the area you plan to operate your business? If you don't know, you can find that information by doing a web search for that demographic information. Governments usually collect such data. So do some homework and find out. The best research here is to have income broken down by sex, age, location etc. If your target customers are women, then you want to know specifically about them.

Write down here what you found out.

Okay so now that you know that, do you think those people are making enough money to afford (more or less) what you plan to sell.

BUSINESS PLAN

Now you get into the nitty gritty of your business idea. You will think through every aspect of your business on paper and put together a plan on how to run it. Failure to do this results in many would be businesses failing shortly after launching so this is a CRITICAL step.

This aspect can be very daunting, but it can also be an opportunity to be very creative. You get to set up and run your business on paper before actually running it. Then you get to tweak it as you go along. Also, if you will need to borrow money for your business, you will not be able to do so without a business plan.

There are numerous companies that offer to draft you a business plan, but they could never do the job you can and should. It is after all your business idea and since you are going to need to refer to it and update it periodically you cannot have someone else do that for you and be effective.

I suggest you check out BYOBo\$\$ Co-op. <https://byoboscoop.com> This company offers help step by step to do a business plan and then to manage and update it as you go along. In addition, they provide just about everything you will need to run a successful business in one package. Below is a list of the features they offer in designing your business plan.

- Automatic Financials - No hassling with formulas. Financial tables, charts, and reports automatically calculated.
- Step by Step Instruction - Fill-in-the-blank simplicity walks you through the entire process beginning to end.
- 500+ Sample Plans - 500+ sample business plans covering all industries to defeat writer's block
- Expert Advice - Expert video tutorials and definition of key terms from renowned business plan experts.
- SBA-Approved Form - Produces lender-approved, professional, visually impressive documents
- One-Page Pitch - Build an infographic executive summary for quick pitching.
- Performance Dashboards - Visual dashboards for real-time tracking against budgets and sales goals. NOTE: If when you are done this you find the business is viable, then you must write out your goals.
- QuickBooks & Xero Integration - Real-time syncing with your accounting software for at-a-glance reports.
- Access Anywhere, Anytime - Update your plan and track your business health from anywhere with internet.
- Custom Themes - Choose from 10 different eye-catching, professional themes when you print your plan or download to PDF.
- Export Your Plan - Export your business plan at anytime to Word or PDF format. Your pitch can be exported to PowerPoint for beautiful slideshow presentation
- Collaboration Tools - Collaborate easily across your team. Share plans securely with partners and investors.
- Multiple Plans - Create as many business plans as you need (one plan active at a time or upgrade to add more active plans).
- Benchmark Data - Find out how your company is doing compared to others in like industry, size, or locale.
- Milestones - Create milestones for the key events in your plan and start tracking your progress.
- Multi-Device – System is cloud-based so PCs, Macs, and tablets are all usable.
- Expert Toll-Free Support - Phone, email, and chat support.
- Secure & Confidential - Your business data is complete locked down and safe. Guaranteed.

Developing your business plan should not be rushed. Make sure you take the time to think through everything carefully. When I started my first business, I was advised to develop a business plan in order

to borrow the money I needed to start it. I hired a company at what was a huge amount of money to me at the time and they did a great job. I was able with it to get a loan from my bank and start my business. But being young and inexperienced, I threw it in a drawer after that and never looked at it again. Needless to say, within 2 years my business failed. I did not understand that it was in reality, my manual of operations and needed to be consulted and revised frequently.

Regardless of how well thought out your plan is, the real world often throws a curve ball and things change making our plan not work as anticipated. This is why it needs to be reviewed frequently and updated according to market conditions and experience. Failure to do this will sooner or later result in your business failing.

For example, a very old massive company in North America, called Sears recently folded after over 100 years of being in business. They built their business originally with a catalog and local depots where orders were shipped to. But they failed to change with the world of the internet and Amazon came along, beat them at their own game and put them out of business. I don't care how long you have been in business, nor how great a business you have, if you do not continually monitor trends, watch your competitors and revise your business plan, you will become just like Sears – a “has been” company.

In your business plan you will need to ascertain what you will need to start and run your business according to your chosen strategy, what it will cost, what sales you anticipate making etc. A good business plan always includes a well thought out marketing or advertising plan. Do NOT fly by the seat of your pants when it comes to marketing – trying this and that like a drunk. You need to be laser focused and consistent.

Now that you have completed your business plan here is what I recommend.

1. Run it by someone you know who has a successful business
2. Run it by your accountant
3. Find a mentor or group you can connect with and run it by them. Again, I really like a feature offered by BYOBo\$\$ called COPS. They connect businesspeople in small groups who act as focus groups. This is the perfect place to present your business plan and get excellent feedback.

PRACTICAL BUSINESS SET UP

Ok so now you should have an idea of what type of business you want to start and where you want to run it and have fully thought through your business plan. So, its time to start to put together everything you need to get the business started.

Naming your business.

So, the first step is to decide what name you are going to give your business and there are several things that will determine that.

Step one is to write down as many name ideas as you can think up. In doing so take the following into consideration.

1. Is it easy to say by your target audience? If people have difficulty pronouncing it, it will have a negative impact on your business.
2. Is it unique? This is not always necessary though. Sometimes if your name is similar to a well-known company the familiarity to consumers can be helpful provided that company has a great reputation but be careful you are not too similar otherwise you could get sued.
3. Does the name give your company credibility? For example, “Jack’s roofing” doesn’t sound like much of a company because it is centered on an individual, so it sounds like a one-man company.
4. Is it short? The shorter the better.
5. Is it easy to remember? If so, why do you think it is?

Okay now that you have a bunch of ideas you need to know if you can get a domain name for a website with any of those names. In today’s world you would be very foolish not to have a website since most people now use the web to familiarize themselves with your business before contacting you or doing business with you. You need to do a domain name search. There are several companies that offer that – I use GoDaddy myself <https://sso.godaddy.com> . Today it is still preferable to get a web domain with a .com extension but there are many new variants available that may or may not be useful. Once you have checked all your name ideas and seen some variants (GoDaddy provides alternative recommendations to help). Hopefully you will find a name that works and that you can acquire. But before you spend a dime buying a domain, you will need to do the next step – register your business. Once you know that the name can be registered as a business in your country or State, then come back and purchase your domain. I would recommend you purchase it for at least a 3-year term.

Registering your business

Okay so now you have a domain name that will work, you must find out if you can use that name to register your business in the country or State you plan to operate in. By registering your business with the government, you achieve the following.

1. Credibility – If you are a registered business you are likely not a fraud.
2. Ability to open a bank account. Obviously, you will need a bank account to handle your business finances.
3. If your business is not properly registered, you could personally become liable if things go wrong and lose everything – not worth it.
4. There are often tax advantages and regulations that favour businesses over individuals. Obviously, you want to keep your taxes to a bare minimum.

Business Registration Types

The type of business structure does vary by country but here are a few basic options – we will discuss each type.

1. Sole proprietor
2. Registered Partnership
3. Incorporated Private Company (there are numerous types)
4. Incorporated Public Company
5. Co-operative

Sole Proprietor

In this structure you are the business and the business is you. The only difference is the name. But for tax and liability purposes, it is the least desirable structure. You can however open a separate bank account under the name of the business and start your business this way. Many small businesses do start out this way because it is much cheaper to set up. But once the company starts making a lot of money then it becomes a target for lawsuits, and you want to reduce your tax bill so you would want to at some stage incorporate the company instead.

Registered Partnership

This structure is similar in every way to a sole proprietor business excepting that you and at least one other person are jointly starting the business. Many partnerships fail due to them being poorly structured. Often its family members or friends that make up the partnership. People cannot imagine they would ever not get along – but they will, unless they clearly define what responsibilities each partner will take care of and what happens if they don't. Business is business and despite relationships you must run it as if you were strangers yet enjoying a close relationship. There must be mutual respect, and all parties must contribute something different based on their experience and talents. The benefit of partnerships is that you have more than one head working on things and it can be a lot more fun working with others than by yourself as a sole proprietor.

Private Incorporated Company

In this structure the business becomes a totally separate legal entity from you personally.

Advantages are;

1. Limited liability risk
2. Greater credibility in the marketplace
3. Reduced taxes

Disadvantages are;

1. Increased costs of operation – annual reporting to the government
2. Increased cost of doing tax returns
3. Additional accounting costs

As mentioned earlier there are a wide array of different private corporation structures which I cannot address in this book. I therefore recommend you contact either a lawyer or accountant in your country to discuss the various structures and their implications.

Public Corporation

This type of structure is only necessary when you decide to make your company a public owned company where people can purchase shares in the company. This is where the term “going public”

comes into play. Private companies that have grown substantially may want to expand even further and a way to do that is to sell shares in the company to private investors on the open market – known as the stock market. This is a massive and very expensive undertaking and requires experts in law and accounting.

Co-operative

In years gone by these companies were more common and in poor countries today they are still an option that is being widely used. In a cooperative the company is comprised of members who typically pay some sort of membership fee annually. The members then buy products or services from the Co-op and based on their purchases get a dividend pay-out once a year based on the company net profits. So, nobody owns a Co-op. The company elects its leadership like a public corporation, but you CANNOT buy or sell shares in the co-op. Everyone has the same share or interest so long as they pay their membership fees.

Banking

Once your business is registered and your tax accounts are set up, you want to purchase your domain and then decide on a bank that you want to hold your business accounts with. Again, there are so many banks that have different benefits and restrictions that we could not cover that here. You will have to do your own research on which bank in your area is;

1. Conveniently located to your business
2. Offers a wide array of business services at the lowest rates
3. Is pro small business – you can check that out by looking at their advertising – do they promote small business?
4. Offers online banking services

You will need to make an appointment with a bank officer to open your business account. They will need a copy of your business registration documents to do this.

So, at this stage you will have done the following;

1. Determined what type of business you want to start
2. Determined where it will be located (in general terms not a specific address)
3. Registered your business
4. Purchased your domain name
5. Opened a business bank account

LEGAL ISSUES

One other aspect you need to consider is any legal requirements you may need. These will include the following;

1. Business licence.
2. Liability issues – you may need insurance.
3. Other licensing requirements.
4. Any laws that may apply to your business – What you don't know could hurt you.

5. Any need for legal documents. If you live in North America, I recommend you check out a company called Legal Shield <https://www.legalshield.com/> . They provide a great deal of legal services for a very small monthly fee. I have used them for years and they have saved me tens of thousands of dollars.

ACCOUNTING

There is a saying, “the devil is in the details” but I say “wisdom is in the details”. I cannot emphasize enough how important it is for you to keep accurate details of everything you do in your business. This means accurate bookkeeping but also a journal so that you can look back to see what worked or didn’t and figure out why.

Numbers don’t lie so keeping detailed records so that you can compare results over time periods can tell you where you are going. Too many entrepreneurs hate bookkeeping or record keeping of any kind. If that is you then I suggest you hire yourself a good bookkeeper who can keep everything straight for your business. You may also want them to handle tax reporting and payroll as well. If they can’t do that then find an accountant who can. But shop around – accounting rates can vary a lot depending on the accountant. There are also online accounting and payroll services who may help at a very reasonable fee.

Ideally though you should try to keep the books yourself and take the extra time each day to enter sales (income) and expenditures. Great software is available such as Quickbooks but there are others that are cheaper.

BUDGETING

Most aspects of your business will be covered in your business plan including a budget, but I just want to make a few recommendations regarding budgets.

1. Budgets should always be handled in terms of percentages and not dollar amounts. Your accountant should be able to help you determine what percentages you should allocate and where.
2. Stick to your budget – don’t run your company on a whim.
3. If possible, try to budget for at least 6 months of operating expenses before you start. A new business takes a bit of time to get going and making money so you must allow for this otherwise you will quickly run out of money and go out of business.

MARKETING

Success in marketing is learning how to stand out from the crowd – being and doing something different.

Before we discuss some specific things, you should do, it will be necessary to understand the fundamentals.

Sales is not the same as marketing. Let me give you an example. If you were to go salmon fishing you would need to rig up your fishing gear with a large flasher and trail behind that, a lure (bait) and hook – usually about 4-5 feet behind it. The sole purpose of the flasher is to get the fishes’ attention. Once you

have their attention, they see the bait and if it is presented right – looks and smells right, the fish will bite on the bait and swallow the hook. The bait presentation is what sales does, the flasher is what marketing does and the two are fundamentally different even though many people try to lump them together. If you want to be more effective in the market you will need to look at and utilize them as 2 different aspects though connected.

Definition of Marketing: Marketing is everything you do in order to get prospective customers to visit your website or come to your business premises where you will pitch them your product or service. Marketing therefore is intended to get interest to “take a look”. Any activity a business does to attract customers to “take a look” therefore is marketing. This is why modern-day marketers employ the following tools;

1. Writing useful informative blogs. These are intended to garner credibility and good will while leading prospects to take a look at some great offer you want to pitch to them. Using blogging as a marketing tool can be powerful. You start by giving the reader some interesting information either in writing or a video (called a vlog). Then suggesting a great solution to the problems they raise in the blog. Once people click on the link to “take a look” they are presented with a sales pitch for a product or service.
2. Using advertising to attract people to a “landing page” – a one-page website with more reasons to check out your offer. In exchange for their name and email address you generally offer to send them something for free – something they would like to have.
3. The above tools are very powerful and should be employed today. Advertising can be employed to do both but as a marketing tool it is more effectual. The insurance Company Geico advertised this, “15 minutes could save you 15%”. This is marketing at its finest. The idea of enticing people to check it – i.e. get a quote worked and it worked extremely well for them resulting in massive sales.
4. A full page ad in a newspaper that simply indicates you are having a massive sale (e.g. 75% sale) but directs them to a web page where all the specials are or to get them to come to your store to check it out on a specific day (the buy now factor), would get better results than advertising the specials themselves. In advertising, “Less is More”. Simply put, a headline in white space will get more attention than a busy ad. The same goes for all online advertising.
5. If you decide to use social media to find customers, be sure to design ads that will entice them to take a look at your offer – don’t try to sell your product or service directly using social media.

Definition of Sales: Sales is getting the customer to want to take action on the offer you are presenting to them. In order to do this, you need to employ techniques to get them to take action NOW. This could be a limited time offer – act now before the special ends; Or a limited quantity left – better buy it now; or get extra benefits if you buy now. These are all well known time tested and proven techniques in sales.

Salespeople know that people sometimes buy on impulse – just like a fish biting the hook even though it may not really be hungry. How many things have you bought on the spur of the moment? Why did you do it? It was all about the pitch. Before you have a chance to think clearly, they make you an offer that is hard to resist. I am not suggesting we want sell people things they don’t really want or need but we do want people to take action NOW. Studies show that when people are left to “think about it” they seldom come back and buy. They get distracted by other things, land up spending their money on

something else or just lose the emotional drive to buy. If your sales pitch does not have a strong “buy now factor” it will at best produce mediocre results.

So, whether your business is selling products or offering a service, you need to employ the above techniques in order to get great results.

Repeat Sales

One often overlooked method of increasing sales is the lack of active sales offers to existing customers or clients or building trust and rapport with existing companies. Studies have shown that in our over-communicated busy world, people will forget you very quickly. Once someone has bought something from you and had a good experience, they are more likely to buy from you again if you give them a reason to.

For this reason, you want to collect email addresses of your customers so that you can send them offers from time to time. Now a word of caution is necessary with this. You do not want to anger or annoy your customers, so don't send them daily specials or offers. Again, less is more. If you have a sale every week then the sale is meaningless and less likely to get people to take action since they already know another sale will come along soon. Instead keep these specials limited to no more than 1 a month and no less than 4 a year. You will need to create a database email system to do this effectively and automatically. There are several software packages you can purchase that will do this for you. If you subscribe to the BYOBOSS Co-op their services include this.

When is a customer a prospect?

Another important aspect in business is timing. For example, if you wanted to run a giftware business, you know that the only time people buy gifts is on special occasions. These include birthdays, anniversaries, graduations etc. Of course, holidays such as Christmas are a given. But since people will only buy a gift for a birthday, or anniversary would it not make sense to know when that is? If you collected birthdates or anniversary dates of people and knew who their family or friends were (Think Facebook), you could send gift idea recommendations to their friends or family weeks in advance. Perhaps even offer a service to send out gift ideas or recommendations for a birthday party or like the florists do – you can order the gift, and have it wrapped and delivered for your customer. Many busy executives would appreciate a service like that.

Situations create opportunities

Look for situations that may trigger a need for your products or services. News reports, posts on Facebook and if you can get them, referrals from people who know people experiencing a situation. Below are some situations that indicate there may be a need for something you could provide.

1. A car accident – the person experiencing this will need a body shop to repair the vehicle, a towing service to haul the vehicle away, perhaps a new car altogether. If injuries are sustained, they may need help at home – cleaning the house or with meals.

2. The birth of a baby. This person may need or want professional pictures of their darling, they may be interested in starting an education savings plan for the baby, baby care services or help with housework.
3. Getting laid off. People who experience this may have a need for counselling, for re-training (a career college), the need to draft a new resume and help finding a new job. They may need debt counselling or help from a food bank or similar organization to get through.
4. A record heat wave. People experiencing this may need air conditioning or fans. They may even consider putting in a swimming pool or want more cold drinks.
5. A rash of winter storms. People experiencing this may need a power generator (since there are power outages for long periods of time), firewood for their woodstove, catering services to provide hot meals. They may also need more blankets or warm clothing. They may just want to get away to a warm beach somewhere.

A timely approach is sure to get you way more business for far less money than anything else. Sometimes the best results in marketing are achieved through networking with other businesses or people that could help you identify when their customers, friends or family may be in need for your services.

WEBSITE

In your business plan you would have researched and found suitable premises for your business. If your business does not require a place for customers to come to, then you can run your business from home and maybe a warehouse or storage unit if you are selling products online and delivering them.

Regardless, the next most important thing you need to do is get a website set up. Website service providers are a dime a dozen and prices are all over the map. In my experience the more expensive web designers are often not the place to start. I highly recommend you begin with a simple basic website first. Again, you cannot just leave this to someone else. You need to know what you want the website to do and what content should be on it. This will help the person you hire to do a better job for you.

Possible options:

1. Find a freelance web designer in Fiverr - <https://www.fiverr.com/>
2. Check out Freelancer - <https://www.freelancer.in/>
3. GoDaddy provides website design and hosting services - <https://ca.godaddy.com/>
4. Local designers in your area

Website Checklist

1. A general rule of thumb is to create content that covers who you are, what you offer, where you are located and where you do business, and what your hours are for support and how to contact you.
2. Keep it simple – too many columns and graphics is confusing. Avoid fancy but do use great headlines or statements to get attention. Also ensure any graphics you use say something in and of themselves.
3. Have a great logo designed for your business and have it clearly displayed on every page – familiarity helps people recognize you. Again, Fiverr may be a great choice for a designer.

4. If possible, get a website that you can change content on yourself (known as a CMS website). If you don't do that then it will be a huge expense and headache to send updates to someone else to do for you.
5. If you sell multiple products create a search function rather than display everything. Instead you could segment it into general categories.

There is so much to learn in business and it can be a lot of fun. Always check out other ideas. I know many entrepreneurs who go to trade shows overseas just to get ideas for their market.

If you have taken the steps mentioned above, you will have a well thought out business plan and your company structure would be set up. Obviously, there are so many different types of business ventures to engage in like mining, transportation, education, food industry, retail, manufacturing, professional services like counselling, dentistry and so on.

If possible, try to join a group of other businesspeople so that you can share your ideas with them and they with you. There is nothing more encouraging than a group of other people also passionate about business and who are trying to make a success.

And lastly, I want to encourage you to take time every day to feed your mind with knowledge and encouraging, motivating talks. Your business will only be as good as you are yourself. The stronger you are mentally and emotionally the better your business will be.

I want to wish you all the very best of success with your business venture and if you don't know someone you can run ideas by, I would be happy to help if you are serious. You can reach me by email at kenc@crauseco.com