



CHANGE YOUR CAREER AND CHANGE YOUR LIFE BY STARTING YOUR OWN BUSINESS

Even if you're not a born entrepreneur, at some point in your life you've probably toyed with the idea of starting your own business. Perhaps you've even opted out of your mainstream career to strike out on your own. If you have, you're among the legions of men and women who have made the choice to start their own businesses.

Unfortunately, many dreams of self-employment turn into nightmares, primarily because many of those who start businesses don't know how to critically assess business opportunities, how to create a business plan, how to read a financial report, or how to design and implement a marketing plan. Truly, the difference between those who succeed and those who fail most often boils down to whether or not the person has acquired the knowledge necessary to launch and operate a business.

What most aspiring entrepreneurs don't realize is that the skill set necessary to start a business isn't out of reach. It's simply a matter of finding the right tools and using them to your best advantage. These tools can be found in books, through online college courses, through training, or through the mentorship of a successful businessperson.

In a nutshell, these are the steps you need to take in order to change your career and change your life through starting your own business:

1. Identify and build on your strengths. If you are a creative person who thrives on the unexpected, starting a bookkeeping business that requires endless hours of number crunching is a recipe for disaster. You need to assess your talents and interests, and then discover how you can use them to create a niche and demand for your product or service.
2. Create a business plan. A business plan is both your vision for your business and your roadmap to achieve your goals. It must include defining your product or service, identifying your competitors and differentiating yourself from them, and pinpointing funding and financial opportunities.
3. Lay the groundwork. Businesses aren't built in a day, and you have to go through the mundane tasks of setting up bank accounts, securing business licenses, and jumping through the necessary regulatory hoops.
4. Create a marketing plan. Whether or not your business includes e-commerce, you can be sure that the Internet will play a major role in marketing your new business. But there are many other ways of garnering low cost or free advertising and marketing, and you need to make it your business to learn about them. You must also identify your target market and come up with a strategy to bring your product or service to that market.
5. Pay attention to the details. Many businesses fail because of a lack of attention to details - whether that means sloppy accounting practices, poor inventory control, or missing the deadline for a funding source. Launching a business is a balancing act, and you and your team must walk the high wire with aplomb.
6. Acknowledge and dismiss fear. Fear is what often holds us back from achieving our dreams. There's no doubt that leaving your career to start your own business is a downright frightening proposition. But with the right tools, you can acknowledge your fears for what they are, and then boldly move forward on your new career path of self-employment.

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