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WORDS OF WISDOM FROM FEMALE BUSINESS OWNERS

Follow these words of wisdom from women who have all embarked upon the journey you are about to begin. Let helpful mantras become the cornerstones of your business. Be patient and set realistic goals, love the process, take risks and don't be afraid of failure. Find your niche, market yourself, network and, finally, enjoy what you have accomplished.

Be Patient and Set Realistic Goals

Creating your own company is no easy task. It's one thing to have a brilliant idea or unique product, but it's another to transform that idea into a company. Creating a website, marketing plan, public relations campaign and business model can become overwhelming. Getting lost in the details can easily detract from the original ambition of doing what you love.

Take it slowly, and set realistic goals. You can't write out an entire website in one afternoon. Don't punish yourself if you aren't able to make every deadline you have set, though. Patience, as they say, is a virtue, and good things do come to those who wait.



Love the Process

No successful company materializes overnight. "Out of everything that I have learned, I feel that the most important lesson is to love the process. No matter what we are trying to achieve or what the result might be, the journey of getting there is just as rewarding and special as the goal itself," notes Sara Blette of Make My Notebook. "I have also learned that it is OK not to do everything myself; there are only so many hours in the day and only so much I can actually do. Sounds so simple... but it took a while to grasp." Don't be afraid to delegate or to ask for help when you get stuck.

Take Risks

Alana Morris, owner of a successful public relations firm VOCA, lives by two mantras that came to her at separate times. "Several years before starting VOCA, I was having dinner during a business trip to New York and received a fortune cookie, inside of which was the fortune, 'Always take a job that's too big for you.' When thinking of starting my own company, I was scared to death. But in looking at my options — go work for someone else (again), start a public relations arm of advertising agency, etc. — they all felt too safe. I knew I could do those things because there would be a safety net. Starting my own company... that was a job that was too big for me. And therefore exactly what I should be doing. It offered the greatest risk, but also the greatest reward."

Morris also holds another idea close to her heart. "'What would you attempt to do if you knew you could not fail?' And this reminds me day in and day out to not let the fear of failure rule my decisions, as a person and as a business owner," explains the accomplished businesswoman.

Find Your Niche, Market Yourself and Network

Jamie Brewster McLeod always knew she wanted to be an architect. Growing up as a fourth-generation Montanian with Yellowstone National Park at her doorstep, she knew she wanted to design impressive

buildings like the lodges in her surroundings. While she worked for other companies throughout her career, five years ago she knew it was time to set out on her own and begin **Brewster McLeod Architects**. "I saw a need in the market for something that I could provide. People were looking for a boutique architecture firm. They wanted a hands-on architect who didn't work for a large company. I saw the opportunity and developed my niche," explains **Brewster McLeod**.

Finding your niche is one thing, but capitalizing on it is another. "You have to network. You have to get out there and meet people and not be afraid to sell them your product or company. Clients aren't going to fall in your lap; you need to make it happen," notes the architect. "And once you do land those clients, remember customer service. It's a down economy. People want more for their money. They want value, and you need to over-deliver. That starts with customer service and relationships."

Enjoy Your Accomplishments

Don't forget to take a moment every now and then and reflect on the hard work you have put into starting your own company. Accomplishments can be small, such as writing a proposal, making a good networking connection or even picking out company letterhead. Celebrate your work, be proud of yourself, and realize not every woman is capable of what you have done.

More advice at:

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