




**Top Tips for Staying
Sane and Getting
More Advice!**



9: Top Tips for Staying Sane and Getting More Advice!

If you've made it this far, congratulations!

Starting or expanding a business can be both an incredibly rewarding and an incredibly frustrating process. But, once you've had a taste of running your own business it's hard to imagine working for anyone else ever again!

You will need ongoing support from those around you – your family, friends, and business advisory service providers. It is often worth asking how much professional advice will cost as it can often save you a lot of time and can be less expensive than you imagine.

Here are some key messages from existing business owners who are keen to see you succeed.

Key message 1: Stay true to yourself and your vision

Once you have identified what you want to do and how you want to do it, stay true to that vision. If people try to persuade you to adjust your business model and you're not comfortable with it, don't!

Trust your own judgement and research. If you think there is a market waiting for your product or service, be sure that you've tested that market before you decide to change direction. Things may not work immediately, and it will take a while for people to hear about you and what you are doing.

Remember the branding messages? It is important to be consistent and know what you are selling, so don't be tempted to change this too early even if others are telling you that you should.

Key message 2: Change course if you need to

However, if in your market research or early days of doing business, you discover that your assumptions about your customers, selling channels, or any other critical part of the business model are not correct, you can adjust your business model quickly so that you don't waste too much time or money on a model that won't work. Deciding whether to stick or twist is a key entrepreneurial skill!

Key message 3: Identify your strengths, and know your weaknesses and how to deal with them

You will not be good at everything! There will be some aspects of running a business that you will need support in managing. Identify early the aspects of the business that you are good at and those that you will need support to do.

If you are hopeless with paperwork and numbers, you can hire an accountant to help manage your accounts. If you don't understand social media but know it is important for your business, you can contract someone who can set up and manage your social media platforms.

In the early days of your business, you may rely on friends and family for assistance and guidance – but

knowing when you have exhausted their willingness to help and when it is time to contract professional help is a key judgement for all new business owners. Remember never to abuse an offer of support – particularly if it is coming from another small business. And it is always worth spending a bit more money contracting the help to safeguard a friendship.

There are some common tasks that you are likely to want to contract out to ensure that they are done professionally, including legal advice, accounting and financial statements, design work for your logo and other branding materials, and website design and maintenance.

Key message 4: Grow slowly

If things are going well it is tempting to want to push ahead and grow quickly.

When you go from the only person working in the business to managing a team, you'll realise that there is a lot of information on the company structure and policies that is in your head. Anyone else joining the team is not necessarily going to be on the same page as you about the business. As you grow, you'll need to start documenting many things that you take for granted to ensure that your suppliers, customers, and staff have reference documents they can refer to.

Don't underestimate how much time managing staff can take, and make sure you have the ability to stay on top of things and continue to deliver consistent quality as you expand.

Key message 5: Take others with you

All successful businesses and brands have many champions who support them in ways most businesses probably never see – they are the people that refer you to others, the people that put in a good word for you when others wonder if you're too small or too new to trust, the people who share your social media posts, the people who talk about you at events you're too busy to attend. Your champions are your fairy godmothers. Taking them along as part of your journey, appreciating them, and recognising their support is an important part of thanking them and ensuring they stay as champions. This can be as simple as providing them with personalised updates every six months or sending them a Christmas card.

In small countries, word of mouth and your reputation goes a long way.

Key message 6: Celebrate your successes humbly, be grateful, and say thank you

It is easy to get weighed down by the amount of work to do, but when something important happens make sure you take the time to celebrate your success and achievements – and make sure that all of the people that helped you get there are part of that celebration. This can be as simple as a Facebook post acknowledging their role or inviting everyone round for celebratory drinks!



Key message 7: Don't forget your friends

Your business will become your life. For the first few years, you'll be turning down dinner invitations, missing birthday parties, giving up your weekends, and it is easy to find yourself doing nothing but work. Make time to socialise with your friends and make sure you are not just talking about the business – this is as important for you as it is for them!

Key message 8: Never stop learning

As a business owner you will learn something new every day of your career – and you need to be open to that. You will have to keep in touch with market developments, work out how to motivate a team member, fix a glitch on your website, check out a bit of terminology you've never heard before... it's a necessity, but it's also a joy!

Key message 9: Separate your business and your life

Your business is not your life and it does not define you. If you work from home for the first few years it is easy to slip into bad habits of bringing work out into the living room. If you can have a dedicated office space that you can close the door on and forget about when you finish work, do it – otherwise you'll find that you never really finish!

Key message 10: Ask for help when you need it and work hard!

There are many organisations out there able to assist and willing you to succeed. The key to success, however, is you! Your commitment, dedication, energy, and drive is the key to a successful sustainable business.

Good luck Greenpreneurs!