

THE ENTREPRENEUR'S GUIDE TO SMOOTH OPERATIONS

BY: RENEE CORMIER

www.reneecormier.com



Introduction

This guide presents as a series of questions and answers that every business person should have in their field of knowledge. It touches on the subjects of leadership, sales, marketing, operations and more. My hope is that you will find this booklet to be a valuable resource for your business and that you will learn things you never knew before. Those who have come into the business world without ever having taken a corporate journey may find it especially helpful. Having said that, many corporations are plagued by leadership problems which ultimately hurt the bottom line, so there is something here for every type of entrepreneur.

The questions addressed in this booklet are listed below. The answers are the result of my drawing on more than 20 years of learning, teaching, working and building various businesses of my own. Few coaches have as diverse a background as I do. I am a former public relations/communications professional, published author, employee engagement specialist, sales and marketing strategist, entrepreneur and educator. In my career I have held leadership roles in sales and marketing, developed and implemented national marketing strategies and was responsible for teams as large as 28. I bring a wide range of experience and talent to my work. My business acumen, passion for my work and natural talent for business strategy, make me an important resource for my clients.

Questions:

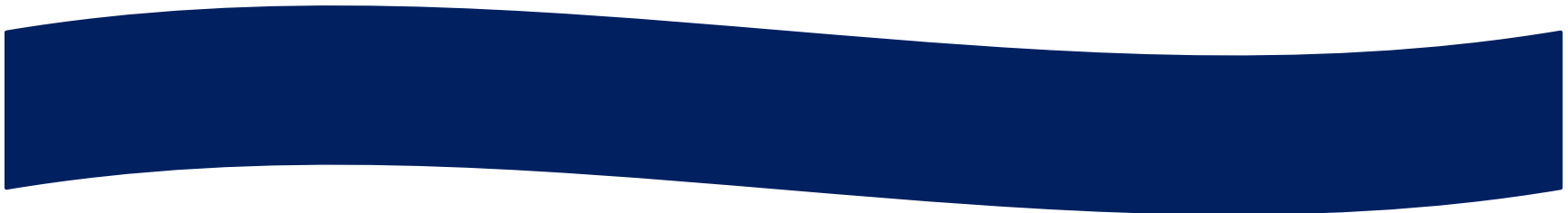
1. How can I create a fuller picture of the nature of my business?
2. Where should I spend my money?
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5. How can maximize the value of my employees?
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Question #1. How can I create a fuller picture of the nature of my business?



Before I answer this question, I think I may need to clarify why you may want to be able to see your business from a fuller perspective. The answer is simple. We tend to miss opportunities when we don't take the time to fully reassess our position. If you don't want to stagnate, you need to regularly take the time to step back and realign your objectives. Interestingly, this works in both business and in day to day life.

In order to create a fuller picture of the nature of your business, you really need to understand it from every angle. I know, it's your business and

you probably feel like you know it inside out (and you most likely do), but there are things larger companies do that smaller businesses could really benefit from that allow you to see your business from a different angle. Sometimes being able to look at things from a different perspective is the best way to [figure out what's missing](#).

Below are some things you can do to help you get a fuller understanding of the nature of your business and hopefully kick up your results a notch.

1. Conduct a Competitive Analysis: Understanding the strengths and weaknesses of your competitors allows you to be more strategic in how you run your own business. I could write an entire chapter on that, but there are plenty of resources online that can help you. This link to [Edward Lowe Foundation](#) provides you with great information on how to conduct your own competitive analysis. The information you garner about your competition from following the suggested steps will prove to be highly valuable. Trust me when I tell you that knowledge is power.

2. Conduct Market Research: Market research doesn't have to involve hiring an expensive marketing firm to find out what your customers think. There are many inexpensive online tools and questionnaires that you can send out to anyone who has made an inquiry or purchase from you. Are you collecting customer data? You'd better start soon. That information is like gold to your business. You can't assume your customers are getting everything they need from you, and what about the people who don't do business with you? Why are they taking their business elsewhere? Inquiring minds want to know.

3. Develop Customer Profiles/ Buyer Personas: Use the information from your market research to develop buyer personas. A "who, what, when where, why and how" approach will help you paint a very clear picture of who your customers are and give you the chance to really see where you are missing out. I wrote a post about buyer personas on beBee.com. [Here's the link.](#)

4. Conduct a SWOT Analysis: The best way to get a 360 degree view of your business is to start with a SWOT analysis. SWOT, is an acronym for strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. Provide as much information about your business as you can under each heading. Use the information you gather from your competitive analysis and market research to help you understand more about your business.

5. Understand Your Unique Selling Proposition (USP): All businesses sell something and many businesses offer the same products and services, so you need to figure out what makes you unique. Some companies will use price as their

USP, but that isn't always the draw for customers. Let's face it, sometimes you don't want to be the cheapest alternative in your industry, either. Your USP could be your return policy, your stellar customer service, quality product, or any number of things. You may already believe you know what your USP is, and you could be exactly right, but you could also be completely wrong. Use your market research to figure out what your customers like the most about you. If it turns out to be different from what you've been telling everyone, you may discover you have an even bigger opportunity in front of you.

Once you've assembled all this great information about your business you can identify a specific business objective. Clarity has a way of inspiring action and producing better results. Later on, I will be discussing the importance of planning.

Question #2: *Where should I spend my money?*

In business, the question of where you should put your money is a rather important one. For the purpose of this e-booklet, I feel I must state that both the question and the answer assume that the business in question is turning a healthy profit. The act of putting money into a failing business isn't usually seen as a wise move, so I prefer to leave that alone.



When deciding where to invest money in your business, you should ask yourself the following questions:

1. How will this increase productivity?
2. How will this increase efficiency?
3. How will this save me money?
4. How will this increase sales?
5. What will be the return on investment?
6. How long will it take to see a return on my investment?

If the product or service you wish to purchase provides you with a satisfactory answer to any one of these questions, then going ahead makes good sense. The truth is, most seasoned business owners have no difficulty figuring out where to spend their money. What they may be unaware of, however, are the many ways to fund their business that will not deplete their own cash reserves.

The fine art of using OPM (Other People's Money)

I first read about the concept of using other people's money to make money, several years ago through [Richard Kiosaki](#), author of Rich Dad, Poor Dad. I later discovered that rich people never use their own money to fund anything, even when they can well afford to. Warren Buffet, Oprah Winfrey and Peter Drucker all use other people's money. In fact, Peter Drucker's very definition of business is "other people's money". That says a lot. Use other people's money to create a business and sustain it. The following are some sources of other people's money you may not have thought to access.

Government grants and loans: This is one of my favourites. The Canadian government provides a multitude of grants and guaranteed loans to support businesses. For example, if you want to purchase a small business, the government will give you a guaranteed loan of \$375, 000 to make improvements, purchase equipment, etc. and up to \$1 million if you are

also purchasing the real estate. The beauty of this, is that if things go sideways, you are only on the hook for 25% of the debt. The government will give the remainder to the bank and you will owe nothing more. My brother did this 12 times while building a very lucrative fitness chain in British Columbia, so I know it works very well.

Business owners can also access \$10, 000 per employee to pay for training programs, so there is no excuse not to invest in that! You can also hire more employees and access subsidies for wages for employees under the age of 30, minorities, immigrants, people with disabilities, marginalized citizens, summer students, etc.

If you would like to expand your product line by developing something new, grants are available for research and development, and innovation. Likewise, you can also get free money for adopting green initiatives, developing green technologies, purchasing hybrid vehicles, retrofitting lights and much more. For Canadians, the availability of some of these grants may depend on which province you live in. Some are federal initiative's and others are provincial initiatives. Do your research and apply.

If you are interested in exporting your product to other countries, the Canadian government will also give you up to \$90,000 to help you build business relationships abroad.

The Canadian government even provides equity investment to Canadian businesses. In fact, there are so many funding opportunities provided by our government, you should really check this Government of Canada [website](#) before you look anywhere else for money.

Angel Investors and Silent Partners: If you are planning to take your business into a whole new realm but need a little help from someone who would gladly provide funding with little interference, then you should consider accessing angel investors or a silent partner. There are [not-for profit organizations](#) that help entrepreneurs find investors and there are venture capitalists who also provide the service of matching business owners to investors. You could also check with business lawyers, accountants and investment bankers to see who they have in their network to help you out.

Crowd Funding: People use crowd funding sites for all sorts of things. We often think of crowdfunding as a way for ordinary people to get in early on a developing technology, but crowd funding can be a lot of different things to a lot of different people. The trick to successful crowd finding is in how you position your plea and how well you leverage your existing social network. Offering something to contributors is better than offering nothing, unless you are donating to a charity. You need to be very creative with crowd funding initiatives because the space has become quite crowded and the novelty of helping people out for nothing is wearing off. I get requests from LinkedIn contacts all the time to contribute to campaigns, but I rarely see any compelling reason as to why I should. Should the first interaction you have with someone through social media be about getting money from them? Not at all, and that is why you need to really strategize a complete approach to your crowd funding campaign. Asking won't necessarily lead to getting and if you and your associates have a very small social media network, then it may be pointless.

Bank Loans: Sometimes working out a bank loan for something that will help your business is still a pretty good idea. Shop around for the best rates and see who really takes an interest in supporting your business. I'm going to put another plug in for the Canadian government here. [BDC is a bank](#) that is a crown corporation set up to support Canadian businesses. Since they do not have the revenue targets that the other banks have, there is less pressure to sell you something you don't need and a greater inclination to actually help you find a better business solution. There was a time, when many business owners did not find BDC to be very helpful, but I have been hearing a lot of good things about them lately from different business owners who have used them. They are much easier to deal with than before, so don't discount the value of paying them a visit.

In summary, I guess the answer to the question, "Where should I spend my money?" is really to not spend any of your money at all. Use other people's money, instead!

Question #3: Do I need a plan for my business?



Many moons ago, I was selling business coaching services and met a guy who started a communal office space business. At the time, this type of business was still very novel and he probably could have made a real success of it, but he didn't. I wasn't surprised to find his business failed within a year or two because when he told me about his business, he also told me that he wrote his plan on the back of a napkin. Now, I understand how your enthusiasm can make you believe that is a good idea, but it really isn't. I'm quite certain that if he had actually taken the time to properly plan for his business, he would have created something worth replicating, or at least worth selling. Instead, he lost everything.

I know what you are thinking. There are plenty of small business people who never plan, never use advertising or social media and are still somehow successful. That is true. I call these people accidental business people. They are lucky enough to be profitable in spite of themselves. They have a good product and a market that seems to work for them, but they are still leaving a lot of money on the table. In fact, if you ask them a few questions about their business, you will be surprised to discover how unaware they are of the inner workings of their own business.

I once worked for a guy who paid me a good salary to run his sales and marketing and when I asked him how much I needed to sell in order to justify my pay, he had no idea. Holy cow! I actually negotiated a salary and he didn't even know for certain if he could afford to pay me. I soon discovered his receivables were a mess, he was paying to store old inventory in a dust free facility, the industry he worked in was facing serious decline, and the list goes on. I made him aware of a few of his problems so he was able to stay in business a little longer. Today, the side of the business I managed is closed and

he continues to work his other niche, in spite of himself. I am quite certain that if he ever really took the time to properly plan for his business, he would have found better markets, more appealing products, developed efficient systems and ultimately would have created a more stable and profitable business.

When it comes to business plans, I can tell you that there are good plans and bad plans, and the amount of paper used to print them up has no bearing on their value. A good plan is concise, strategic, has time specific objectives and above all, is realistic. Any loan manager at a bank will tell you how frequently people submit business plans that have ridiculous financial objectives. A plan to double your sales in one year may not be realistic, but a 10 to 20 per cent increase may be perfectly attainable, depending on your strategy. Having said that, a weak strategy and/or poor execution won't likely net you any growth. [Work the Plan: Secrets to Successful Business Execution](#) is a post I wrote about how to execute your plan. Since that is a huge part of the business battle, I suggest you take the time to read it. After all, a plan that gets stuffed in a drawer is as useless as a plan that is written on a paper napkin, or one that is not written at all.

So, what can a plan really do for you?

Done properly, a plan will make your business stronger by allowing you to do the following:

1. Get a complete understanding of your business and its industry.
2. Analyse your competition.
3. Discover opportunities.
4. Develop clear cut objectives.
5. Develop a strategic approach to growth.
6. Help you drive the right initiatives.
7. Save time by not wasting your effort on fruitless tasks.

8. Integrate efforts to achieve common goals across your company.

9. Save you money.

10. Make you money.

11. Unite your workforce.

In my opinion, every business plan has to be based on research. Taking the time to assess your market and competition will prove invaluable. I know that can be a pain in the neck, but you need to do it. You also need to include a SWOT analysis (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats) and set goals based on what you have uncovered as opportunities. Sorry for going crazy on the acronyms, but goal setting basics include a SMART requirement (specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and timed). Once you have those two elements in place, the rest flows more naturally.

Business Development Canada (BDC) offers a [free business plan template and sample kit](#) that you can download. I like this kit because it is quite comprehensive. I don't need to reinvent the wheel for you. It's been done, so if you want an excellent template to follow, just download it. If you need some help with your plan, let me know. I've got people for that!

Question #4 Should I hire a salesperson

I often come across small business people who hate being their own sales person. That always seems ludicrous to me, but on another level, I do understand it. Sales can seem tedious when all you really want to do is deliver your product or service, but you can't have one without the other. Selling needs a product and a product needs to be sold.

There's no lotion or potion that will make sales faster and easier for you - unless your potion is hard work. - Jeffrey Gitomer

So how do you gauge when it is time to hire someone to help you out?

- * You have more leads than your current sales team (or you, personally) can manage.
- * There is a large segment of the market you are not able to reach due to the lack of manpower.
- * You are currently generating enough revenue to pay a reasonable base salary to a qualified sales person.

Now the last point is really important. Some may disagree with me about this, but in my opinion, [100 % commission jobs are not realistic](#) for most sales people, because most people have an immediate need to eat and pay the bills. **This type of compensation system becomes especially ridiculous if you can't even provide qualified leads to the salesperson.** If your business model is such that you expect people to work this way, then you will have a problem keeping sales people. Also, bear in mind that a company that does not respect the time and basic survival needs of their employees puts itself in jeopardy. Nothing is worse for your business than desperate, resentful employees. Consider the value of investing in the well-being of your staff by actually paying them fairly and setting them up for success. That's an investment that pays dividends.

Speaking of setting your sales people up for success, make sure you don't put the cart before the horse and just hire people without giving them the resources they need to be successful. You will need to have both a marketing plan and a system in place to generate leads and help you manage the pipeline. Your systems are important. Having said that, leads are only part of the equation. Sales people need tools like sales decks, and samples to help them guide conversations and close



deals. They may also need some training. You don't want your leads to walk over to your competitor's business because your team didn't have the wherewithal to service their needs.

These days, it seems everyone in business wants more for less. Your business is nothing without an effective marketing strategy and strong sales people to maximize your results. A lot of small business people think it is okay to hire their 18-year-old niece to manage their social media because "kids are all on social media these days". Here's a news flash for you. Knowing how to use a social media platform and knowing how to maximize your content for business purposes are two very different things. **Getting a kid to do your social media marketing because he knows how to use Instagram is as logical as getting a kid to write your financial plan because he took math in high school.** Give your head a shake. Do you want to make money or waste money?

So, let's go back to the original question of whether or not you should hire a salesperson. The answer is simple. Don't hire anyone unless and until you are in a position to effectively support their efforts and help them ride out the natural length of your sales cycle. Don't be naïve enough to believe that good sales people don't need tools or support. Professional selling is about uncovering a specific need and meeting it with a viable and valuable solution. It is not about convincing all kinds of people to buy things they don't need.

Question #5: How I can maximize the value of my employees?

I think the value of your employees is most easily maximized and measured through productivity and the things that feed into it. The key is to do your level best to create an engaged culture because productivity, or the lack thereof, is actually a leadership issue and not an employee issue. Sorry to tell you this, but you really didn't hire a bunch of losers. Your troubles



are all about your leadership and the leadership of every single team leader in your company. Gallup conducts annual studies of employee engagement in companies all across the USA (and the world). Unfailingly, the overall results are that American companies suffer billions of dollars in losses every year because more than 2/3 of their [workforce is disengaged](#). The results are even worse globally. The facts show that because of the way many employers treat their employees, the majority of the workforce is just putting in time at a job that is “just a job” to them. Companies that boast higher levels of engagement are the ones who treat employees like the valuable

resource they are. Your products or services are never more important than the people who support them. Your business will never be all it can be, [if you don't nurture your relationship with your employees](#).

Are your employees sufficiently challenged, appreciated, developed and respected? Below is a list of seven things you can do to maximize the value of your employees and boost your bottom line.

Provide Training: Investing in training your employees to do their jobs better, or to do jobs they are more suited for is a very worthwhile endeavor. Employees who receive training are more productive than those who don't. I like this famous Zig Ziglar quote about the value of training employees. He is bang on!

The only thing worse than training employees and losing them is not training employees and keeping them. - Zig Ziglar

Invite feedback for process improvement: Toyota is famous for its A-3 form, named after the size of paper used to print it up. The form provides a way for employees to contribute to process improvement. Toyota management pays employees if their contributions are adopted. Toyota doesn't make a habit of just collecting feedback in a box and ignoring it. They actually meet and review the contributions and implement whatever makes the most sense. Leveraging the genius of your employees allows your business to become more efficient. Since efficiency saves time and money, it is worth focussing on. Beware of the pitfall of just asking for input and never using any ideas. Employees will stop caring and allow you to lose tons of money if they don't feel like their opinions matter. You can download a [template of the A-3 form here](#).

Respect time off: Some employers are just terrible when it comes to respecting the private time of employees. Calling them for information when they are off sick, expecting them to sacrifice family for their job, bothering them while on vacation, not giving adequate time off and expecting people to work through lunch shows a complete lack of respect. No good ever comes of that. Stress leave, quitting, resentment and fatigue all cost your business money. Let people rest and tend to their personal lives.

Trust the law of reciprocity: The law of reciprocity dictates that you get what you give. Don't be afraid to be generous with your time, money and resources. The majority of your employees will be more than happy to give you all they've got if you willingly do the same. We help people who help us. We give to people who give to us, and we respect people who show respect for us. It may seem counter intuitive to run your business that way if you never have before. Try it for a year and watch magical things happen.

Keep everyone in the loop: Meetings, memos, newsletters, goal setting and regular performance reviews are the best way to keep the lines of communication flowing. Nobody can know how they are doing or what you need from them if you don't have communication systems in place. Keep your communications positive by focussing on what people are doing right. You'll get more of the good stuff if you do that.

Encourage team work: Collaborative work environments are more productive than any other. Our technology driven culture makes it even easier to get people together to contribute information and be proactive in the work we do. You can still go old school and choose to do your team work in a board room but if you really want to be efficient, consider the technology that exists to help you. You can access social media or even purchase a customized program to facilitate the flow of information across all departments of your organization.

Cultivate an environment of mutual respect: I am an advocate of zero tolerance for bullying and harassment in the workplace. Absolutely no one in any organization should be permitted to behave with disrespect for any person's beliefs, life choices, intelligence, gender, heritage, physical capabilities or professional capabilities. Business leaders need to understand that transgressors are a liability to the business. This means you have to be prepared to fire your star sales rep or your VP of whatever if they fall into bullying or harassing another employee. Trust me when I tell you that you will do just fine without them.

I view my role more as trying to set up an environment where the personalities, creativity and individuality of all the different employees come out and can shine. - Tony Hsieh

Ultimately it is your leadership skills that will allow you to maximize the value of your employees. I am a big fan of continuous learning and suggest that no matter how refined your leadership skills are, that you never stop striving to be the best you can be. That example will serve to inspire many.

Question #6: Why can't employees just do what I tell them?



Generally speaking, there are two main reasons why your employees don't take direction from you. They either don't understand exactly what you want, or they don't have any respect for you (or both). You need to realize, however, that both of these reasons are directly connected to your leadership skills. Leadership is about a lot more than being able to give direction and delegate tasks. Who you are as a person, the way you interact with others, the values you hold, your attention to detail and your dependability all affect the way your

employees interact with you. Read on to discover what you can do to get your employees to fall in line and do what you want them to do.

Present clear-cut objectives: If people know exactly what you want, then there will be no mistaking the expected outcomes. No one can read your mind. Whatever you can do to make it simple for people to understand exactly what you are looking for is always good. Provide a timeline and be willing to discuss various approaches. Less experienced employees need more attention than seasoned employees. Don't stifle creativity by being a micromanager, but be prepared to have discussions that cover the "who, what, when, where, why and how" of any task, if necessary.

Explain why your objectives are important: Employees tend to be more eager to help when they understand why they must do something. In the world of work, things that are understood to be important tend to get done correctly. Retailers are great at never explaining why their employees must follow certain procedures. If you've ever gone into a store and watched the cashier ring in one item under the SKU of another, then you have witnessed what happens when leaders don't explain why things are important. This seemingly insignificant act, done frequently enough will screw up your inventory and sales numbers, but how is a cashier to know that if you don't explain it? The other downside of not explaining the rationale behind your requests is that you limit your employees' ability to help customers or other employees.

Be tolerant of mistakes: Throwing a hissy fit every time somebody screws up only inhibits creativity and proactivity. Mistakes are learning opportunities. If you demand perfection, you will cultivate a culture of fear, insecurity and disengagement.

Follow up: Any new initiative should be put into a project planner and followed up with regular meetings to discuss progress, problems, solutions, etc. Nobody will do anything consistently if it appears you don't have a timeline, or a reporting system for progress. My beBee post, [Work the Plan: Secrets to Successful Business Execution](#) shows a sample of a simple project planner done in Excel and can also give you some additional advice around how to get things done.

Provide feedback: Employees who receive no feedback from their boss perform as poorly as those who only receive negative feedback. In my leadership training days, I used to play a training game where I formed three groups who each had to toss an object onto a line. Each team had a leader with a different direction for feedback. One team was to only receive praise from the leader, no matter what. The second team received only negative feedback from the leader, no matter what, and the third team got no feedback at all; only silence from their leader. Invariably, the team with the best results was the one that received only positive feedback. The team with the leader that said nothing performed as poorly as the team with the abusive leader. Such is the power of words to motivate. Remember that.

Don't play favourites: In grade school, the teacher's pet got beaten up by the other kids and the kids all hated their teacher because she played favourites. In the work place, there is nothing more divisive than playing favourites and nothing will

bring on passive aggressive behaviour (such as not following direction) the way playing favourites does. If you are playing favourites, then you need to have an ego check. Treat your employees equally. Give bonuses to top performers, not your company ass kissers.

Keep your promises: Nothing causes your employees to really get angry like being lied to or misled. Angry employees don't do what you want them to do. They won't respect you, they will resent you and they will undermine your business. They may even start quitting, and who needs that grief?

Be a strong leader: Don't keep changing your mind about things. Be consistently available to your employees, care about them as people and be clear in your communication. If you set and achieve goals for yourself, so will your team. Your people will naturally respond to the example you set. If you are strong and stable, they will get things done. If you are an emotional mess, unreliable and unpredictable, then they will be very unsettled and disorganized. Consider the value of having a professional coach work with you and your team. I have some great techniques for producing results and raising morale.

Be respectful: It's a simple human relations principle that everyone should follow. Don't tolerate disrespectful behaviour and don't model it. John C. Maxwell is one of my all-time favourite authors of leadership books.

Check out [Leadership Gold](#) and his other books on leadership.

Become known for your exemplary character: Leaders who show up for work stinking of last night's booze don't get respect. Neither do leaders who cheat on their spouse, make inappropriate remarks about others, engage in unscrupulous business practices, and so on, and so on... You get the drill. Your employees will talk about all the crap you did long after they have left your company. I have witnessed this behaviour many times. People love to talk, and they will.

Get employees to contribute ideas to help solve problems: Treat your employees as colleagues rather than underlings. They are your greatest resource and it is your strong leadership that will bring the best out in them.

All of this seems so elementary to me, but I know that many people in leadership positions don't have a clue how to get employees to respond positively to their requests. I've said it before and I will say it again. The results you are getting are directly related to the quality of your leadership. It may hurt to hear it, but it is all about you!

Question #7: How do I build a team?

It is interesting that question seven is about team building. I consider that there are seven essential rules for creating an effective team. Check them out below and let me know what you think.

Rule number one for assembling a team is to hire good people and exclude all others.

Teams are all about the people who are on them, so if I had to advise anyone regarding their initial approach to building a team, then I would advise them to get rid of people who don't have the right attitude. Anyone who is self-serving, negative, unreliable or untrustworthy should be eliminated from the start. These people are toxic and will interfere with your success.



"You're only as good as the people you hire." - Ray Kroc

Rule number two is to make sure your team is composed of people with diverse skills and backgrounds.

The best teams are made of people with diverse backgrounds, talents and skills. Consider, age, race, gender, ethnicity, professional expertise, disability, and personality type when assembling your team. There are many assessment tools that allow you to determine a person's suitability to various tasks and their compatibility with other team members. [Truity](#) offers free online Meyers Briggs tests and has good descriptions of each type and how they interact with others. It is important to have just the right amount of push and pull between people.

Rule number three is to ensure each team member has respect for each member's level of expertise.

Nothing will ever go smoothly in a group where there is no respect between all members. You don't need 100 per cent agreement all the time, but you do need to respect the opinions of other group members and their level of expertise. Respect and trust go together. You cannot have one without the other and no team will function optimally without both.

Rule number four is to establish trust between members.

Every team member needs to be able to establish a trusting relationship with each member. Building trust between people is something that takes time, but if you have already assembled a group of good people who share similar values, then you will have fewer hurdles to overcome. Team members need to be able to trust the work quality of their team mates, trust their ability to stick to deadlines, trust their opinions and trust that they will not do anything to undermine the team's success.

Rule number five is to establish a set of values to guide decisions and all other work.

I feel that it is important to establish a set of values that each group member adhere to as they work on projects and make decisions. It is enormously helpful if the values that are established are values that each individual genuinely appreciates and adheres to in everyday life. I say this because my feeling about values is that you either have them or you don't. They can't be shut off or turned on at any given moment. For example, it is easier to embrace the value of integrity and doing the "right thing" if your natural inclination is to be that way. If your moral compass wavers in your private life, however, then you will have no problem doing the wrong thing whenever it suits you.

Rule number six is to establish and work toward a shared vision.

Teams need vision as much as they need values. Knowing what the big picture is allows the team to move beyond being a group of people who complete tasks. People who share a common vision are able to think more creatively and be flexible with their ideas.

Rule number seven is to establish strong leadership.

In a group, the person who really wants to lead and take over, should not be the leader. These people stifle creativity and create resentment. Every workplace seems to have a martyr who takes on all the work of the others, controls all the processes, works tirelessly without breaks and gives no opportunity to others to shine or contribute in any meaningful way. These people are terrible leaders but will volunteer for everything. A strong leader recognizes the strengths of others, sees that work is evenly distributed and that people are working in harmony. The best leaders delegate fairly, elicit input from others, make decisions, have everyone's back and have no personal agenda.

There is a lot more to making a team work smoothly than what I mention in this post, but you will be off to the races if you are able to gather the right group of people from the start. I have always been an advocate of not keeping negative influencers in your company. It may not be practical for you to fire all the negative people from your organization. Ultimately, your ability or inability to attract and retain good people is a reflection of your own leadership. You may have to start with fixing yourself, first.

“Teamwork makes the dream work, but a vision becomes a nightmare when the leader has a big dream and a bad team.” - John C. Maxwell

Question #8: How can I manage my business and still have a life?



Business owners often find themselves at a loss to balance their personal lives and the demands of their work. I may not have all the answers, here, but I do know that people always make time for things that are really important to them.

So, I guess the first thing on the list of things to do in order to create balance is to **get your priorities straight**. Guard your time to nurture relationships with your family and friends, before they all disappear from your life. Set boundaries around activities that are not related to business. For example, make a point of eating dinner with your family every day. I often shut my cell phone off at 8:00 PM. There is

rarely anything that happens after that time that can't be tackled in the morning.

I was once speaking with a business owner about his business and he admitted to being unwilling to grow his business because he already had too much work to do. I often think about how people like [Sir Richard Branson](#), who own large corporations with multiple interests, manage their time. I can assure you, they do not try to do everything themselves. They delegate and trust in the ability of others to make decisions and do good work. That brings me to the second point on the list, I guess. **Hire good people, empower them and delegate!**

Once you hire good people you can delegate responsibilities to, you will be able to do the third thing on the list. **Free up time to look after your own health and well-being.** Eat good quality food. Set aside time for regular exercise, meditation,

reading, or doing things that allow you to recharge your battery. If you don't make time for those things, you will find yourself on an operating table and incapacitated for an extended period of time. What good will you be then?

The fourth thing, although, not necessarily less important than any of the others mentioned in this post, is to **love what you do**. Doing work that excites or inspires you keeps your energy level up. Focus on things you are really good at, because they will actually take you less time to complete, and you will do them well. Let others deal with tasks you don't like as much (see the tip about delegating).

The fifth thing I would suggest would be to **evaluate the importance of each task**. How much time do you spend on time wasting activities which ultimately rob you of the balance you crave? Be sure to evaluate who you meet with, how you meet (phone or face to face) and when you meet with people. Save your most productive hours for the most important tasks. Let other people handle things that are not the greatest use of your time and commit to not doing anything that really doesn't add value to your life.

The last piece of advice I can give to those seeking balance is to **examine what drives you and how it relates to your self-perception**. What is your definition of success? What are your emotions around money? How does your value for hard work relate to your self-worth? Are you only as good as the work you do? Does everything have to be perfect in order to be good enough? Is it wrong to take a break when there is so much that needs to be done? We have a lot of stories that we tell ourselves that may not always be grounded in truth or logic. Just because someone once called you lazy, doesn't mean you are. Just because you grew up poor, doesn't mean you always will be at risk for poverty. You are not a failure if you make a mistake or disappoint someone. If you want balance in your life, then you really need to claim it, and know that that is something you don't have to justify to anyone. Life is supposed to be a rich and joyful experience, but you must choose to make it that way.

Question #9: Do I need to be using social media and how much do I really need to do?

This is an interesting question because during my days of working in marketing communications, I often found myself in the position of having to manage expectations around social media and digital marketing. Many business people who are not specialists in this area are under the naïve assumption that social media marketing is all you really need to do and that your Twitter or Facebook account will supply you with a gazillion hot leads almost immediately.



I'm here to tell you that social media marketing requires time and effort to become effective and it should be only one of several tools you use to capture leads and build brand awareness.

So, the short answer to the above question is yes, you do need to use social media for your business if you want to grow and remain in touch with the real world. Bear in mind that you should only do as much as you can consistently manage. I am anticipating you will want a little more direction, so please keep reading. Here are some things to consider as you set out to build your social presence:

Consider which social media sites your audience will frequent: You don't need to be on every site. Just maintain a regular presence on a few key sites that your audience is most likely to frequent. For example, if your target market is over 65, you may want to consider keeping your direct mail campaign while also advertising on Facebook. The young folk find Facebook rather passé but seniors and the elderly are a fast-growing demographic on Facebook. My 90-year-old mother has been on Facebook for years. Seniors tend to not engage on social media, so don't expect a ton of follows on your Facebook page, but your advertising on Facebook could be very effective.

Use sites like LinkedIn and Twitter for business to business content and keep an eye on beBee.com. This is an international blogging platform which focusses on personal and business branding. The site is rich with interesting content and has a very engaged community which is growing quite rapidly. There is a lot of great opportunity for beBee members to really connect in meaningful ways to conduct business and build friendships. I have had great success there.

Have your content professionally managed: People who think that today's youth are automatically qualified to run social media campaigns drive me crazy. There is actually an art and science to social media that your average kid just doesn't have knowledge of. You also need a certain level of business acumen in order to do a good job. Think about it. Age is not the best qualifier for any job. Knowledge and expertise, however, have a lot of value.

Beware of the pretenders: It makes me very sad when I hear of people who have used social media services which do not actually serve the client. I once spoke to a guy who was signed up on a "Rockstar" plan for \$1000 a month. For that, he got 2 tweets a week of content that the client had to produce himself! Sadly, this self-proclaimed expert had only a few hundred followers on Twitter. This is wrong on a lot of levels. You really need to tweet out quality content several times a day. The content should be comprised of both original and curated content and should consist of links to articles, blogs, memes, etc. You also need to have a large following in order to have any reach at all, or at least be able to garner shares from those who have a significant number of followers from your target market. It takes a few minutes at most, to compose a tweet. If it's not done with links to quality original content and access to a broad audience, it isn't worth much on any level.

The internet is fraught with people who call themselves growth hackers, and SEO wizards. They rarely deliver anything of value, but by the time you realize that, they've taken your money and moved on. They are the charlatans of the 21st century. Anyone who tells you that you can get a million visitors on your site in three months is full of crap. If you looked up the number of prospects you would do business with, would it be ten times more? Would it even be a million? Think about it in terms of the 80/20 rule. If 20 per cent of your prospects landed on your site, how many would that be? If all of your prospects and potential prospects landed on your site, how many would that be? Duh! Unless your product has enormous mass appeal, you haven't got a hope in hell of getting that kind of traffic. Yes, I know there are companies that produce content

that promise that kind of success. They rely on your complete gullibility for success. They hope that your ignorance, along with the fact that you will not be able to do the work yourself, will compel you to call them to create an internet marketing miracle for you (which will not happen). Just because it says so on the internet doesn't mean it's true!

Produce relevant content: Having a mix of content types is a good thing but you must be careful about quantity and quality. Affinity based content, which is entertaining, inspiring and not vulgar in nature is typically good. Some people use controversial content to get people talking and create brand awareness. Candice Galek of [Bikini Luxe](#) did this beautifully on LinkedIn with her bikini clad beauties on a business site. Who doesn't need a swim suit? Her campaign was nothing short of brilliant and now the name of her company is widely recognized. She did get [a lot of flak](#), however, and plenty of trouble from LinkedIn, I hear.

So how should you mix your content? In my opinion, when it comes to content mix, the 80/20 rule is a good one to follow with 80% being directly related to your business and 20% affinity based. Also, 80% of your content should be original content and 20% curated.

Produce well written original content: The content you produce needs to be well written. Poor grammar, typos and spelling errors will obscure the message and frustrate your reader. I like to keep my content in a skimmable format knowing that most people will only skim a blog post, anyway. You will notice that most of my blog posts have bold faced points next to a brief explanation. I like to do that because it helps the reader learn something without necessarily having to take the time to devour every word. Let me know what you think.

A Few Rules of Thumb:

1. It is better to have one social platform that you manage fully than several that you neglect.
2. Generally speaking, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday are the best days to post your most important content. Regardless of the site, studies show that posting between noon and 1:00 PM also tends to yield high engagement. Having

said that, consider who your audience is and what their daily schedule might be like. This is where the buyer personas that I wrote about earlier come in handy.

3. Use backlinks to other posts and relevant websites to help you gain more traction.
4. Be a good social media citizen. Share content generously, comment freely and play nice. Never engage in a battle with trolls or anyone you don't agree with.
5. Leverage the reach and influence of people with a large following in your industry. Ask for shares from them, freely share their content and mention them in your posts, if appropriate.

As a follow up to this post, I would like to direct you to a beBee post I wrote called, [Is Social Media Marketing Enough?](#) It talks about how to create an integrated approach to your marketing. The reality of marketing is that an integrated approach which combines traditional media and advertising with social media will be most effective.

Question #10: How will I know if I am successful?



A part of me thinks this may be a bit of a lame question, but I see a lot of people who never feel like they have arrived, so I'm going to provide you with my best answer. People define success in many ways, and it is different for everybody. For some, you are successful if you have a lot of money. For others success is the result of having completed any goal. Are you successful if you don't have a spouse and 2.4 children? Can you say you are successful if you are not happy? Are you successful if you never own a house or a car? [Ask the Dalai Lama.](#)

Years ago, I was listening to a Brian Tracey tape (yes, it was a while ago) about success. He gave a definition that always stuck with me, which was something along the line of achieving any goal with integrity. He went on to say that money is not a measure of success per se. Drug dealers have enormous amounts of money, but you can't really call a criminal a successful person. They lie, cheat, steal, kill and corrupt to reach their goals. A runner who shoves a competitor out of the way in order to win, is not a successful runner, even if he is first over the finish line. The journey to success is as important as the end result.

So how will you know if you are successful? Look around you. What are you grateful for? Have you set goals in your life? Have you achieved any of them? Have you achieved your goals with integrity? Have you ever failed?

I think truly successful people, never really arrive. Not that they cannot be satisfied, but rather, they find it difficult to stop challenging themselves. Success breeds success. I also think that failure breeds success. You cannot know what you want

until you experience what you don't want. Most successful business people have had their share of failures too. Being able to recognize what is not working and why is a good thing. Have you made mistakes? Did you learn from them? Are you still moving toward your next goal? Do you feel good about the things you have done? Are you a happy person? I daresay, if you can answer yes to these questions, you are likely quite successful.



Thank you for downloading this e-booklet. I hope you found the content helpful and I encourage you to contact me to coach you either individually or in a group.

[Click here to book a free 30-minute consultation!](#)

Questions? Email: renee@reneecormier.com



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