7 Tips from successful female founders

It's widely documented that entrepreneurship is fraught with challenges. Even the most seasoned of entrepreneurs have tackled many obstacles over their career. It is the lessons that these challenges provide which set you up for future success. These learning opportunities can be even further enriched by consulting entrepreneurs who have overcome similar hurdles.

Reflecting on their experiences across a breadth of sectors; seven influential female founders have drawn on their successful careers and shared their key tips for those keen to start their own business.

1. Work ethic beats talent

Although talent is key in any field, to achieve success in business takes determination and perseverance. Success will not come instantly, and you must be prepared to work to the limits of your ability. Many talented individuals may be tempted to coast on their natural abilities, however in business, this will only get you so far.

Jemima Myers, founder of digital marketing agency *Social Chameleon* shares her comments on the importance of work ethic, stating:

"I strongly believe that raw talent is not enough, and a strong work ethic is the key to success. If you are naturally capable, but you're not willing to work hard, you will not achieve the best results."

She expands, "being a business owner, and seeing the journeys of many entrepreneurs throughout the years, I can confidently say that it is rarely those with the most talent who get the furthest. Those who work incredibly hard to achieve what they want, and are committed to overcoming any obstacle, they go the furthest. Staunch work ethic is a necessity in an increasingly competitive business landscape."

   2. Passion is the foundation for success

There are lots of reasons behind starting a business; perhaps we have the right skillset, connections, or perhaps we have the right academic qualifications. Being good at something, or being qualified, is not always enough to build a successful enterprise. Loving what you do, or having strong beliefs about whatever you are working towards, is at the heart of most successful business ventures.

Josephine Liang, sustainability expert and CEO of _Caulibox_, shares her beliefs on the importance of passion being at the heart of success,

"You have to truly love and believe in what you're doing, otherwise you're going to get tired and frustrated with the slow grind very quickly I think we idolise the glamour of entrepreneurs on magazines, working in WeWorks sipping free beers, but the reality is filled with is a lot of disappointment, rejections, and hard work." She continues:

"A lot of the work, especially at the beginning, is the most unglamorous work because you have to do whatever it takes to inch towards success; you're the janitor, and also the accountant, you're the office manager, and also a strategist. You have to

keep on fuelling that passion, remembering why you're doing this and why you have to do this."

3. Problem... which problem are you solving?

Entrepreneurs are, of course, usually trying to fill a gap that they have found in the market, and invest time and money into building a product or business that can do this. However, the success of a business is also hinged on the potential clients tendency to spend money on this particular gap. Through assessing this carefully, entrepreneurs can save time and money.

Anna Stella, CEO of global outsourced agency *BBSA*, shares her expertise on this topic, advising that "having a great idea is not enough – you need your business to solve an existing problem that enough clients experience and are willing to pay for you to solve."

"the centrepiece of your market research should revolve around understanding the width and breadth of your client's problem before you start investing in solution development."

4. Learn from your team

Starting a business requires you to really examine yourself and your actions in a way that is not always necessary in our personal lives. It is important to be open to admitting when you are wrong, learning from those around you, and developing and adapting over time.

"A high level of self awareness is required to lead a successful business" asserts Janthana Kaenprakhamroy, CEO of *Tapoly*, "there's no room for your ego, instead you need to learn from the people around you, and have the ability to self-reflect."

Improving and succeeding often requires us to abandon our egos and admit where our limitations lie, and find a team whose' skills complement our own.

5. Be kind to yourself

Starting a business venture can be incredibly stressful, and so it is important to protect your emotional wellbeing, and the wellbeing of others in your organisation. It can be easy to neglect our mental health when working towards a goal. Although we are aware that we should look after ourselves, it can be challenging to put this into practice. Lesley Cooper, wellbeing consultant and CEO of _WorkingWell_, advises entrepreneurs that:

"When under pressure, it is important to be gentle with yourself. It is normal to feel overwhelmed sometimes, or doubt our professional abilities, but it is important not to be overly critical of ourselves."

She suggests that when you find your internal dialogue speaking in a critical voice, you should "try to take a step back and think, would I talk to a friend or colleague like this? This will help you show yourself the kindness and understanding that you would show others."

6. Do not neglect physical health and nutrition

Entrepreneurial life requires resilience, energy, immunity, and health outcomes so that we can thrive in adverse conditions. So, ensuring you are looking after yourself physically and mentally is essential. However, what works for one person does not work for another and requires a personalised precision approach. Diet choices will be personal to each individual and will be affected by lifestyle, health, culture and priorities including around work.

Founder of UniSkin _Tania Malan_ says "the key to resilience is knowing what you need specifically for you in the form of nutrition, supplements, exercise and lifestyle. Because one size does not fit all. Keeping your body fit and healthy is important to maintain productivity and efficiency when starting a business."

Tania argues we need to make sure our bodies have the correct optimal balance to work at our best abilities. "When there is a lack of any of the nutritional elements the body cannot complete the process, resulting in delayed repair, reduced energy production or the accumulation of free radicals, leading to DNA damage and potentially other diseases," she says.

Measuring our daily performance and adapting our behaviours are key to longevity, extending health span and mental resilience in such a competitive environment such as an entrepreneur. We work so hard we owe it to ourselves and our families.

7. Keeping morale high

When we are feeling under pressure, it is not surprising we can lose some of our positivity. However, trying to keep morale high, not just for yourself but for others within your business, is key to creating a productive and supportive culture. It breeds enthusiasm and uplifts employees.

Jeanette Sklivanou, author of "Nailed It!" and founder of _Safe N' Beautiful_ emphasises the importance of working together to keep morale high in yourself and in others:

> _"Not every day will be a good day. But one big factor that helps boost my own morale is being surrounded by a team of positive people."_

Speaking from her experience as a business founder and president, she comments "my staff can sense when I am having an off day, and they gather around to make me smile or make a cup of tea to buoy my mood."

You can implement this by giving employees regular recognition for their efforts and successes. Celebrating mini wins regularly boosts confidence and creates a positive mood in the workplace.

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