

Business Owner's
ROAD MAP
TO SUCCESS



*Success Tips from
The Direct Selling Education Foundation*

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Introduction

Owning your own business can be an amazing experience. Being your own boss can provide you with flexibility, freedom and the opportunity to achieve financial independence.

That said, in order to be successful you must be willing to work hard and apply proven success principles if you want to reach your goals.

This e-book, created by the Direct Selling Education Foundation, is designed to help you learn the skills you need to be a successful small business owner. Whether you are new to entrepreneurship or a seasoned veteran, you will find techniques and ideas here to help you grow your business. This book is broken down into topics essential for success:

- Do What You Love
- Business Planning
- Targeting and Identifying Your Customers
- Finding Prospects and Customers
- Ethical Selling and Marketing Yourself
- Generating Leads
- Leading a Team
- Success Mindset

All the content in this book has been compiled from our daily blog posts. To continue to learn and develop the skills you need to succeed

in your business, we invite you to follow us on our Facebook Page at <http://facebook.com/TheDSEF>. There you'll find daily inspiration, links to our latest blog posts, and lots more designed to help you and your business.

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DO WHAT YOU LOVE

Turn What You Love Into Income

Have you ever thought to yourself, “If I could only get paid to do what I love?”

Maybe you can. In fact, that’s how many entrepreneurs get started. But you don’t have to be an entrepreneur to want to make some extra spending money. The bonus is doing something that you love!



Here are some steps to help you get started:

1. If you have more than one idea, start by imagining them and pick the idea that brings the biggest smile to your face.
2. Next, do some research:
 - Is there an obvious way to make income with what you love?
 - Talk to other people with the same interest and see if there’s a void that needs to be filled.
 - Take a look at what’s in the market now and ask yourself if you could that and/or do it better.
 - Talk to a diverse group of people about your income producing idea and ask if any of them would purchase something like that from you.

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- Ask yourself what is the least expensive way to start that will still provide greater value to potential customers.
- 3. Write down your goal or your mission statement. Include your specialty or uniqueness that only you can bring to this product/service. But keep it simple. For example – I will work part time and would like to generate \$300. My uniqueness is to provide personalized service and offer customers buying my scented candles a chance to join my weekly Yoga club at my house.
- 4. Consider your first 30 days a trial and error period, and be sure to fully commit yourself to doing whatever it takes to be successful. During this period assess how, where, why, who, what, when you can improve, and make sure you can earn a reasonable profit for your efforts.
- 5. You may also want to create a simple business plan (optional for now). Include your goals, operational expenses, who your customers are, marketing strategy, and an overview of competitors.
- 6. Nurture testimonials and word of mouth to attract new customers and grow.
- 7. Keep asking your customers for their feedback and continue to improve and learn.

The key is to keep it simple. You want to share your passion, avoid wasting money, and earn some extra spending money. In the end, you want to still love what you do while you gain some financial benefits. You may be surprised to find yourself a budding entrepreneur, or you may simply want to keep a good thing going.

BUSINESS PLANNING

The Power of a Plan and 30 Days

There are shelves and shelves of books written to help people succeed. Countless speakers from every persuasion that will show you the “secret to success” and coaches will make sure you get there!



Many of them are legitimate. But even with all the help, you will have to do the work yourself to make it happen.

So are you ready to get started? Here are some basic steps, without the bells and whistles, to reaching your goal, along with a plan to help you reach a goal in 30 days.

Step 1 – What do you want or don't want? Answering this question establishes your goal, either to achieve something or to avoid something. Write it down!

Step 2 – Identify and write down the joy you will feel when you achieve what you want, and identify the pain of not achieving it. This is your why and purpose. Make your why statement part of your business mission.

Step 3 – Take a break and watch this video clip about the possibilities in 30 days!

Matt Cutts: Try something new for 30 days – <http://ow.ly/6nRw1>

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Step 4 – Start today. Break down your goal into 30 days. Write down at least one step necessary to achieving your goal every day. If your plan requires more than 30 days to accomplish it, then start with the first 30 days, and then keep going until you achieve your goal. Give yourself from 5am until midnight (or whatever your schedule is) to accomplish your task(s) every day. This is your plan.

Step 5 – Include time to savor your journey and think about your experiences.

This simple process will create change and help you build momentum!
You can do it! Remind yourself why every day.

TARGETING AND IDENTIFYING YOUR CUSTOMERS

Knowing Your Market

Are you considering starting your own business? It's an exciting step! Before making the leap, however, it can be helpful to do some market research, to make sure that people will buy what you have to offer.



Here are some simple steps to briefly analyze how well your business might do, and to help you understand who you want to reach with your new business. In direct sales, your company may already have a lot of this legwork done for you.

1. Ask everyone you know in your local community if they would purchase your products/services.
2. Within your local community, identify the people who would purchase your products/services. They are your target market in the beginning.
3. Within this target market understand *why* they would purchase from you:
 - Is it because they trust you?
 - Is it because of your education and/or background?
 - Is it because of your friendship and/or relationship?

- Is it because of the uniqueness of your products/services?
 - Is it because of your personalized service?
 - Is it because of the great value of your products/services?
 - Is it because your products/services make your market more attractive?
 - Is it because your products/services make your market more healthy?
4. Identify and define your target market similarities:
- Are they families or individuals?
 - Are they professionals?
 - Do they own homes?
 - What's the age range?
 - What's their income level?
 - What are their hobbies and interests?
 - Are they a two family income?
 - Understanding why your target market will purchase from you will help you create an effective marketing plan. By identifying your target market's similarities, you will be better able to promote your message to the right consumers. But most importantly, you will know if you can quickly make an income with this business and who your potential customers will be before you open for business.

FINDING PROSPECTS AND CUSTOMERS

Tips for Maximizing your Warm Market List

Any kind of business requires relationship building. Those who have great social and communication skills are a step ahead. But for most of us it's trial and error before we develop those skills.



Here are a few tips to make it easier.

- Once you've made your warm market list and written down everyone you know, create another list of people you think are using the type of products/services you will be selling. Then compile a final and most likely list. These are all the people you think will purchase from you immediately and support your new business.
- Invite the people on your "mostly likely" list to a small party or BBQ. At the gathering, announce your new business. Make it social...don't try to sell anything yet. Just ask to make appointments to meet with them individually to talk about the new business.
- Once you begin to follow up on your appointments from your mostly likely list, seek people who are most excited about your new business and are willing to support you. These people are those most likely to do business with you, and send you their referrals.
- Provide your most excited people with excellent customer service

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consistently and they will likely be your loyal customers and repeat customers.

- Start to connect with all the people on your warm market list on Facebook or other social networks to begin the process of building relationships.
- Meanwhile, also call the rest of your list and ask to meet with people for coffee or breakfast to discuss your new venture.
- Always keep your appointments social, friendly and pressure free. Ask about them first, and discover needs that your products/services may meet. Then share how your products/services help people solve their problems. So even if they aren't interested for themselves they will see the benefits and may still give you a referral or two. Ask them to put in a good word for you to their referrals.
- As you build your social network online, offer solutions with your products/services that solve the problems of your friends. Share tips/useable information related to your products/services without selling online. Think of social network as a subtle way to introduce your new products/services and NOT e-commerce.
- Start going to family, friend and other social gatherings. Be social and don't sell, but if they ask about your new business, offer to make an appointment to meet. Always have your appointment book with you, offer dates you are available and don't leave any request for information open-ended.
- Start getting involved with your warm market's organizations and causes, and genuinely participate. Being with them at these events can imply you can be trusted and may help you generate face to face referrals.

- Use the principle of quantity and many numbers. At this point you want to connect with as many people as you can through your warm market. These people are more likely to be converted because they trust you and/or your warm market referrals. Don't rely on your salesmanship skills, rely on the numbers. This way if you get a few no's you won't be discouraged, because there are still a lot of people to talk to.
- At some point you will encounter no's from your warm market and that's to be expected. But keep them updated with your progress. You never know why they said no in the first place: maybe wanted to see you do it first or maybe it was poor timing.

Take it a step at a time. Connect socially, develop relationships, ask for an appointment, and then ask for the sale. After the sale, follow up to make sure they're happy with their purchase.

The key to success is to go through the process, learn from your mistakes and stick with it for a while. In the end it will help you build your business skills and lead to more opportunities for success.

How to Find Customers

There are two major components to a thriving business: Happy and loyal customers that come back, as well as a steady stream of new customers.

The first is a matter of consistently providing excellent service that people appreciate and talk about.



The second one may seem a bit more challenging. So how do you find new customers?

Go to where the people are. You should not rely on your salesmanship, but instead focus on increasing the quantity of people that you engage with on a regular basis. People are around you all the time, and within that group are your customers. Your goal is to find them, talk to them, befriend them and nurture them so that they become the first group: happy and loyal customers.

First, let's begin with where to find new customers:

1. Join an association/club/organization
2. Take a community-sponsored class or course
3. Present a workshop or be a speaker
4. Get a hobby and join others with the same interests
5. Get involved with a charity or cause
6. Go to a networking event
7. Go onto social media networks, engage and find old/new friends
8. Go to family parties, reunions, and social events
9. Promote and sponsor a community activity/event of your own
10. Start a book, breakfast, coffee, coupon, or arts & crafts club
11. Network with other businesses and business people in your community

12. Become a connector/referrer for others, and become a go-to person
13. Start a referral rewards program with existing clients
14. Use local advertising and marketing

Second, once you find them here's what you need to do:

1. Be curious and learn to enjoy meeting people
2. Ask questions and improve your listening skills
3. Be positive and inviting
4. Be professional and authentic
5. Don't be a salesman, but be friendly and social
6. Become a "let's have coffee" person and meet face to face with people
7. Be a social and party person
8. Have all the possible ways to contact you on your business card
9. Start using and writing notes on your business card to hand to people you meet
10. Make yourself memorable, but not over the top. Make your first impression a lasting one
11. Convey passion in what you do

It's all about the numbers. Seek quantity. Quality customers will only come if meet enough people. Start with a new goal of meeting new people and engaging them every day.

ETHICAL SELLING AND MARKETING YOURSELF

Ethical Selling

When we think of selling, we often think of the shady used car salesman. The whole idea of selling anything is often uncomfortable for people. It requires a mind shift to move into your comfort zone when selling.



Imagine that selling is more like helping a friend. And it can be. In fact, that's the foundation of ethical selling.

Here are some ways to make the selling process more comfortable, natural and lower stress.

1. **Start in your own backyard, your community.** Talk to people you know, your friends, neighbors, and the people in your town. Gradually build and network outward with people with whom you have something in common.
2. **Build friendships (clients) based on common interests.** Share things that are happening in your town, church, local organization, in charities, in local sports, cultural events, schools and local businesses.
3. **Listen, have conversations, and develop friendships within your community.** Find out who has problems that your products/services can help. When you genuinely care about people (clients),

you'll find that providing your products/services doesn't feel so much like selling, but more like helping.

4. **Develop the skills to figure out who needs your help.** For this, you will need to learn networking skills, develop a positive attitude that attracts people, develop good listening and communication skills, and act comfortable in your own skin even when you don't feel entirely comfortable inside.
5. **Remember, make friends with everyone.** Even the people who don't require your help can be your ears and eyes for others who may need your help.
6. **Share testimonials.** During the transaction process, focus on how the product/service has helped you and/or share testimonials on how it has helped other people. Make it less about the selling process and more about how it will help them.
7. **Continue to nurture your friendships.** It will bring personal fulfillment, grow your network and create more loyal customers.
8. This way may take a little more work and time. But, it will make selling feel less like selling, while you focus on matching people with products and services they actually need, while also building fulfilling relationships. Ultimately, your financial success will also include the satisfaction of really caring about other people.

To learn more about ethics in sales, and the DSA Code of Ethics in direct selling, [check out this series of videos we produced.](#)

How to Promote Your Business Through Word of Mouth

The best and most effective way to promote your business is through word of mouth. Isn't it good to know that the best way to promote your business is also the least expensive?



Here are some tips for promoting your business by word of mouth

1. Join a local event, get your business in the local media and get people talking positively about your business.
2. Use social networks to connect with your customers, engage in conversations, provide better customer service, and build relationships and buzz.
3. Make each interaction with your business a memorable one, and you'll make your business memorable. Follow up with a thank you call or card. Offer a free branded gift and other memorable services.
4. Offer your customers an opportunity to comment, or take a poll and act upon their suggestions to create buzz.
5. Ask loyal customers and local influencers to refer your business to others and give them a reward for it.
6. Treat your customers like VIPs and share their testimonials wherever you can.

7. Offer customized/personalized customer service to create a buzz.
8. Ask for reviews from loyal customers and local influencers.
9. Once in a while, surprise your customers with extras and tell them to share it with others. Give them a discount that they can share with another to help bring new customers.
10. Start a campaign to help others in your community and create an online forum to encourage conversation and positive word of mouth.
11. Become the town “know it all.” Post and host on your site interesting facts about your town and residents to encourage conversations.
12. Offer contests, start trends and other promotions to generate buzz and build brand recognition.

Be creative and have fun with this. Word of mouth news will spread if it's fun and helpful!

Tips for Improving Your Communication Skills

“How's the weather?”

“Hey, how are you doing?”

Is this how you start a conversation? But then it suddenly ends and it feels a bit uncomfortable. In a split second, your conversation start and ends without any



genuine communication.

Having great communication skills helps you network, expand your influence and create lasting relationships.

Here are some tips to help you improve your communication, so that each interaction becomes a meaningful exchange that may leave to a future business relationship.

1. Be relaxed and in a positive mindset. Someone who is relaxed and positive will draw people in.
2. Smile and say hello. A great smile and hello is warm and inviting.
3. “How are you doing?” Offer a simple and caring greeting.
4. Be an active listener. This will help you feed the conversation and keep your mind from wandering.
5. Keep eye contact. This will help you focus on the person and maintain active listening.
6. Speak naturally, simply and be yourself. People connect better with someone who comes across very comfortable and easy to understand.
7. Ask another question. (How, When, Where, What, Why)
8. Continue active listening.
9. If you find a topic that you're both interested in, continue the theme.
10. End the conversation. Consider making plans to get together

soon, or give them your business card with a quick note on the back (like it was nice catching up), and/or offer to connect on a social network.

11. Practicing your communication skills is the best way to get better. Think of a conversation like dancing with a partner. The more you do it the more fluid you become.
12. Put yourself in more social situations to practice your communication skills.
13. You can also record yourself and start with a basic communication script to improve quickly.

More Marketing Ideas for Small Businesses

When you're in business for yourself, marketing is incredibly important. You need to get the word out about your business, and there are specific strategies you can use to market yourself effectively.

Before you begin, have a plan, target audience and goal in mind. For instance, a discount or promotion to reward your loyal clients, or provide free delivery for clients who are new moms is a plan, aimed at a targeted audience and has specific goals. Include in your plan a way to measure your return on investment (ROI). This way you'll know if it worked and how well it worked.



Here are some tips to help you market your business:

1. Become a contributing expert for a blog or local news media.
2. Start a Facebook page for your town and be a positive voice for what's happening in your area.
3. Start a YouTube channel and provide tours of your town.
4. [Partner](#) with other businesses in your area to increase word of mouth.
5. Offer workshops, teleseminars or webinars.
6. Display signage on your cars, t-shirts and temporary signs on lawns (with permission).
7. Organize a charity collection or fund raiser.
8. Hand out tip cards to solve problems that relate to your business.
9. Sponsor free car washes.
10. Sponsor free sidewalk address number painting.
11. Sponsor a street performer/artist to promote your business.
12. Promote causes and charities in your area.
13. Sponsor free workshops to help people in your community, like a math or personal defense workshop.
14. Make yourself and your business memorable. Be known as the lollipop giver in your town (with permission, of course!).

15. Showcase testimonials in your marketing.
16. Hold special promotions like client of the month.

The best marketing is providing your customers with consistent excellence and memorable service that they'll tell their friends about.

A Sales Pitch that Doesn't Sound Like a Sales Pitch

In the past, sales pitches were intrusive and created to reach a wide population. Now, with the dominance of the internet, effective sales pitches cater to individual customers' needs.



They are not canned or contrived because the modern consumer can see right through it and has a wide variety of alternatives right at his or her fingertips.

Here are a few ways to frame your sales pitches in such a way that it allows you to promote your products/services without sounding like a pushy sales pitch, and even encourage others to market your products/services for you.

- **Scavenger Hunt** – This can be used to draw in new customers. Use promotional items (electronic or paper) to start a scavenger hunt for a special first-time customer gift. As an added convenience, you can create one totally online by taking your prospective clients on a guided tour of some relevant websites. Start by creating a theme that works with your business, like food, jewelry, or health & beauty

products. Make sure the questions are easy to answer and that each item only takes a short time to find. At the end of the hunt, your would-be customer is rewarded with a special gift! You've now drawn them in to try your product, made it fun for them to share it with their friends, and you've promoted your business without the traditional sales pitch.

- **Giveaways** – Many businesses offer free products or services for first-time customers, but usually some sort of purchase is necessary. Consider a giveaway that stands out from the rest: one that literally gives something away totally for free. Offer it for free for first-timers, and wow them with your quality and customer service. By doing so, you create a risk-free situation and promote your products/services through the giveaway without sounding like a sales pitch. You have now started a relationship and given them a reason to share it with their friends.
- **Referrals & Rewards** – Not only do you want to draw in new customers, but you want to reward your loyal ones as well. Create and use a reward system for referrals that promotes your products/services. Whenever a new customer makes a purchase, all they have to do is mention the name of the person who referred them. That referrer then gets a special discount or promotional item. Word of mouth is an effective method for bringing in new customers, so motivate your current ones by showing them how much you appreciate their patronage and recommendations.

When creating a non-sales pitch sales pitch, remember to frame it in such a way that the promotion includes marketing your products/services. If done correctly, people should feel like you are talking about the promotion and not delivering a sales pitch. Make them simple and

direct, but most importantly, be genuine in your interactions with prospective clients. They will appreciate your sincerity and your creative approach.

Why are great communication skills so important? For businesses having great communication skills helps build relationships. For the average person it's about feeling accepted, bonding with others and creating joyful experiences. Successful businesses use communication to weave both concepts in order to maximize growth and loyalty.

How Much Time Should I Spend on Social Media?

As an entrepreneur, you have a million things to do. From sales to finance to marketing, many entrepreneurs find themselves responsible for every aspect of their businesses.

When you hear about social media, it's often pitched as a critical component to the success of a small business. As a result, you take time away from other important tasks in order to optimize and maintain a Facebook Page, Twitter account, blog, or any one of a number of social tools pitched as the "next big thing." And then you're disappointed when it doesn't bring the results you're looking for.

So how do you balance it all? How much time should you put into social media so that it brings results without sacrificing other income-producing time for your business?



Here's a process to follow to help you decide:

- 1. Decide what your goal is for social media.** What specific, measurable result are you looking for as a result of your social media efforts? Are you trying to increase sales? Find more recruits for your direct selling business? Increase reorders? Whatever it is, choose one goal to focus on in the beginning, and make a plan to measure your progress towards that goal.
- 2. Decide who you want to reach.** Who is the best target market for the goal you are trying to achieve? For example, if your goal is to increase sales, what is the demographic that you can reach who will buy the most? This is who you want to focus on. What is important to them? What need do they have that your product or service solves for them? Where do they spend time online? By answering these questions, you're better prepared to reach out to them online.
- 3. Decide when you can realistically use social media for your business.** Try to choose a consistent amount of time each day, even if it's only 20 minutes, and schedule it as part of your day's routine. Obviously the more time you invest, the more results you'll see faster, but plenty of entrepreneurs invest 20 minutes a day on Facebook and see results.
- 4. Choose your social media tools based on your available time.** If you've only got 20 minutes per day, choose just one (probably Facebook.) If you've got more time, you might want to add a blog to the mix. But don't take on more than you can realistically manage. This is very important if you want to use social media tools to build the relationships that lead to business.

- 5. Plan your tasks ahead of time.** One of the best ways to keep yourself focused when you're using social media for your business is to write down your tasks ahead of time. What can you do online to reach the goal you defined in step 1? Will you reach out to former customers? Search online for great content to share? Write blog posts? Respond to comments in online forums? By deciding ahead of time, and then sticking to your list, you can make sure that social media time is productive for your business, and you avoid wasting time that would be better spent on offline activities.

A little pre-planning is essential for effective business social media use. By making a plan, you can enjoy the benefits of social media for your business, without taking too much time away from the other important things you have to do.

How to Build Your Brand

It seems like everyone is talking about branding these days. People are branding everything. For example, what's the difference between tap water and bottled water? Are there real differences or is it all in the branding?

Branding is an important topic for your small business because it helps you stand out from your competition. Your brand identifies and defines your business for your target market.

Here are some simple steps to help you build your brand.



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- **Identify your target market by connecting your uniqueness to the appropriate consumer.** Your brand promotes your strengths and how you service your target market, and it establishes a clear difference from your competitors.
- **Be positive and a resource to others.** These two elements will help attract people and build your brand.
- **Create and establish an online presence/brand that genuinely engages others on social media networks.** Provide responsive customer service that builds loyal relationships within your target market.
- **Share, impress and promote your expertise.** First identify problems in your target market that you can help solve. Then, starting locally, find outlets where you can share your uniqueness and business. Also create your own promotions like a radio show, online video show, become a community speaker, and present workshops.
- **Connect with influencers.** Help and support others who have large followings and/or great reputations to add value to your brand. This is a quick way to develop positive buzz about you and/or your brand.
- **Be memorable.** You must make an impression on your target market. Stand out by being friendlier, more helpful, having better products or services, more responsive customer service, personalized care and authentic communication to create long lasting relationships.
- **Be active in your community.** Use community activities/events/causes to continually remind people about you and/or your brand.
- **Initiate projects.** Start locally, sponsor, lead, or organize

solution-oriented (that you can help solve) projects that generate positive conversations about your brand.

Your brand should quickly convey who you are and how you help your target market. As your business grows, ask your customers for their feedback to ensure brand recognition and that you're meeting customer expectations.

Ethical Testimonials Help Build Your Brand and Your Business

Testimonials are one of the greatest marketing tools you have.

Research tells us that people are a lot more likely to believe what others say about you than what you say about yourself. This is the reason that online shopping sites often have a place for customers to leave reviews about individual products (and why so many shoppers turn to them when making a decision about what to buy.)



As a small business owner, you should be asking your loyal and enthusiastic customers for testimonials on a regular basis. Yet it's also important to be sure that your testimonials are accurate and ethical. This enables you to comply with [Federal Trade Commission \(FTC\) rules regarding testimonials and endorsements](#), and also helps customers to trust you. After all, testimonials that go beyond the facts can damage your credibility, and lead to disappointed customers. And testimonials used in your marketing material that made health, income, or product

claims beyond what you're allowed to say legally can get you and your business into hot water.

So how do you get started using testimonials to promote your business? Here are some tips:

1. When asking for testimonials, provide testimonial starters such as:
 - What I like best about (Your name/business) because _____.
 - The product/service was great because (it was easy, fast) _____.
 - Working with (Your name/business) was great because it was able to help me _____.
 - I would recommend (Your name/business) because _____.
2. Use the complete testimonials whenever possible. This way you ensure that the customer's intended message cannot be misunderstood.
3. If you've got a parent company, get approval to use testimonials that address product, income, or health claims. Usually your company has a legal department that can determine whether or not you can legally market your business using the claims in the testimonial. When in doubt, don't use it!
4. Use testimonials to overcome inherent objections in your business. If there are certain objections that you hear a lot, use a testimonial provided by a customer to address that concern.

Print it in your marketing materials (with the customer's and your company's permission, of course.)

5. Use testimonials to make a point or promote your message. Rather than just lumping all your testimonials together, use them strategically throughout your marketing materials. For example, if you are talking about how quickly you deliver your products, use a testimonial of a customer raving about the speed of delivery. It's like the exclamation point on your message.
6. Asking for testimonials should be part of your sales process. Whenever you complete a transaction, make asking for a testimonial a part of your follow-up process. Once you've determined that the customer is satisfied, it's a good time to say, "Would you be willing to provide me with a testimonial?"

Using testimonials that are accurate and stick to the facts can be a great marketing tool to help you build your business even bigger.

GENERATING LEADS

5 Lead Generating Ideas for Small Business

Businesses are always looking for new clientele. The key to lead generation is providing consistent excellence and getting people to promote your business to others.



Here are some ways you can generate new leads for your business.

- 1. Make the most of social media.** It all starts with nurturing and engaging your network of people online regularly. The idea is to provide content that will encourage people to share with their network of friends online. Create interest to draw new friends/fans and leads.
 - Post usable content that encourages sharing, like recipes, quick household tips, and reviews.
 - Post photos/videos that are amusing, informative and positive.
 - Create a contest and/or offer free stuff.
 - Post and invite people to events.
 - Post a survey/poll.
- 2. Seek referrals from current clients.** By providing consistently excellent customer service as well as high quality products/services, you will generate a constant flow of referrals. Implement

a process to automatically ask for referrals at the end of every order. If you don't have this process in place, just ask your customers for referrals. You'll be surprised by how many business owners just don't ask.

Another way is to create a fun contest to get your customers talking about your products/services with others. This way, customers are promoting your business without the sales pitch and creating leads. Click [here](#) for more ideas on getting referrals.

- 3. Team up.** Find a local business that caters to a similar market as yours, and build a relationship based on mutual interests and benefits. You could hold a joint open house, offer incentives for customers that use both of your services, and even split the costs of local advertising. Once you have built a solid relationship, begin referring each other to your customers both by word of mouth and also by distributing mailers and business cards to your patrons. For example, one local ice cream shop hosts a blood drive periodically, and offers a free ice cream cone to those that donate. They teamed up with the pub down the street so now both businesses advertise ice cream and beer (“a pint for a pint”) for donating which generates traffic to both businesses, and also creates good will towards both businesses in the community.
- 4. Network with influencers.** This will require you to seek out influencers in your community. Also don't forget the influencers that you already know off and online. Support influencers in their passions and causes and establish a relationship with them. Then you can create a mutually beneficial relationship where you refer to one another. This will help you tap into their network of

people and find new leads for your business.

5. **Weekly face to face.** Schedule time to have coffee, lunch and/or a social get-together with customers, online friends/fans, other local business people and influencers weekly. Keep it social. This will help deepen your relationships, and naturally get you leads as they talk about their time with you.

How to Get More Referrals

It's no secret that referrals are an excellent way to boost sales; potential customers are much more comfortable doing business with people they meet via personal recommendations. Wouldn't you be?

Why is it then that referrals seem so difficult to come by?



Pursuing referrals is a lot like any other skill; it takes commitment and practice. The first step is making the search for referrals a regular and necessary part of your business. Implement the following suggestions to start doing so.

- **Ask!** This seems obvious, but many people shy away from asking for referrals directly from their customers. There are, of course, certain ways to ask that are more effective than others, such as **being specific**. For example, instead of asking, "Who do you know that would want my services?" a better question is, "Who do you know that

loves to cook?” A specific question will draw more names from your customer and will also bring you relevant leads rather than a whole list of people who may not be interested in what you offer.

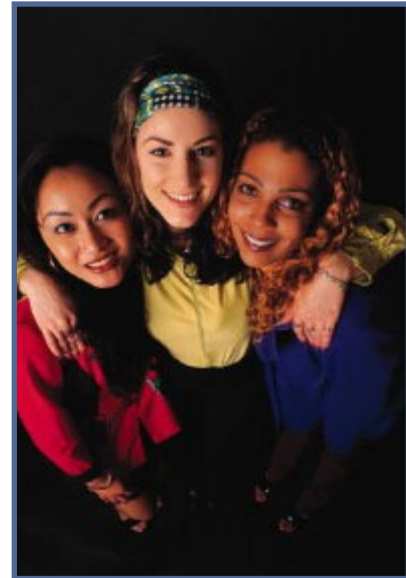
- **Help others.** You may be missing an opportunity to put yourself in a mutually beneficial situation. Attending a charity event in which a friend or family member is involved can be useful in obtaining referrals. You will be helping someone out, contributing to a cause, and meeting new prospects all at the same time.
- **Build strong relationships.** Of course you want your clients to trust you, but you also want them to be enthusiastic about doing business with you. Find out what your customers are passionate about and cater to that when interacting with them. You will be able to add a personal touch to your business dealings, which will in turn impress your customer, who will want to tell his or her friends about you. Always be professional, courteous, and caring.
- **Set a precise goal for yourself.** Make it part of your daily work day to ask for referrals. Keep track of how many you ask for every day, and as you feel more comfortable pursuing referrals, challenge yourself by increasing that number and setting a new goal.
- **Send out holiday cards.** Holiday cards, if done well, can really stand out and lead to referrals. Remember that most people put their cards on display, where party guests and family members will see them. So take some time to create a unique card that is noticeable, and send it early so it will be one of the first to make it to your customer's display.
- **Offer rewards.** When a customer does give you a referral, let them know how much you appreciate it. A handwritten note sent

through snail mail is very thoughtful in this age of emails, texts, and video chats. Furthermore, don't hesitate to get creative. For example, whenever a customer gives you a referral, send the customer a scratch-off lottery ticket along with a quick thank you card. Because you're showing that you are genuinely grateful, they won't think twice about referring you to others again and again.

LEADING A TEAM

Tips for Building and Leading a Team

Have you ever listened to a vocal ensemble sing a piece of music? Usually, there are several different parts being sung such as bass, tenor, alto, and soprano. Each of these parts don't sound quite right when isolated, but put together, they contribute something that is greater than any one part.



The same can be said about teamwork in direct sales and small business. No one is ever a success or failure without the help of others; so building an effective team is important to the growth of your business.

Here are some things to keep in mind for both building a team and leading it well.

BUILDING

- **Identify your ideal team.** Decide what characteristics are important for your potential team members to possess. With this as your focus, you will be better able to find like-minded people who will be compatible with you and each other.
- **Find quality people.** You don't want to hire just anyone to join your business, so put in place some measure to recruit smart and talented people. For example, create an entrance interview where potential employees write down how they work best, what they consider a

good reward, and how they are effectively motivated. This creates an understanding among team members and you of how to best work together toward a common goal.

- **Provide training.** Was Babe Ruth a record-setting hitter the first time he picked up a baseball bat? Even the most talented person doesn't walk in on the first day knowing how to do everything right. Provide some initial training when someone is hired, and continue to offer professional development and mentor opportunities throughout your team's time with you.
- **Implement a recruiting system.** Recruiting can be done through traditional advertisements, the use of social media, word of mouth, etc. Find a system that works best for your business, and be open to recruits about what your business goals are.

LEADING

- **Delegate.** It may be difficult to give up some control, but empowering your employees by delegating important responsibilities demonstrates your trust in their decisions and creates a positive culture of teamwork.
- **Have an open-door policy.** Your team should not hesitate to come to you for guidance, questions, and feedback. Making yourself as accessible as possible will prevent many employees from making mistakes.
- **Challenge your team.** Encourage them to think outside the box, even if it's a bit more than you think they can handle. Part of being a good leader is helping people recognize and utilize their own talent.

- **Acknowledge their talents.** Although you want to create a culture of teamwork, it is also important to give credit to individuals when warranted. Doing so will keep them motivated to continue doing good work.

Remember the famous saying, “The whole is greater than the sum of its parts.” Building and leading a great team requires careful planning and continuous learning. Surround yourself with intelligent people who are willing to work hard, and the sky’s the limit.

SUCCESS MINDSET

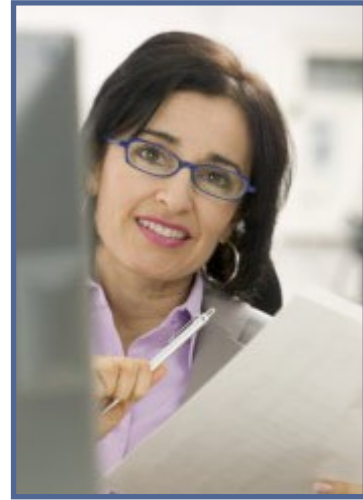
Top 10 Reasons You're an Entrepreneur

Have you ever thought about why you became an entrepreneur? One day you thought it was a great idea and then it happened. Now perhaps you're in the thick of it and can't recall how it all happened so quickly!

These reasons might help you understand and/or remember why you became an entrepreneur.

Top 10 reasons you're an entrepreneur:

1. A passion for adventure
2. Need for a challenge
3. Seek self-improvement
4. To be unique
5. To find meaning
6. Independent minded
7. To inspire others
8. To make a difference
9. To find happiness
10. To be wealthy



This list is a light hearted way to understand the characteristics of an entrepreneur, but it's the work and unending pursuit that make true entrepreneurs.

Consider sharing this list with people considering your opportunity. They may just find the reason that resonates with them, and decide to join your team!

7 Steps to Create a Winning Mindset

In life and in business there are many unforeseen obstacles. Some of these obstacles can trip us up and cause us to fall flat on our faces.



How do you get back up? How do you make the pain of falling on your face go away? How do you keep going?

If you have a winning mindset you can overcome these obstacles and use them to motivate yourself to push forward and succeed. Here's an outline to create your winning mindset.

- 1. Define your WHY.** List three top reasons that you want to succeed. The first reason should be personal and for yourself, the second reason can be based on loved ones and the third reason could be for anything important to you.
- 2. Make a plan.** The plan should include short, medium and long term goals. Then include the how, when, where, who and what.

3. **Accountability.** Share your plan with a friend or family member that is willing to cheer you on and be honest with you. Even better, get a small group of supportive, positive people who will hold you responsible and keep you on your plan.
4. **Make a daily routine and schedule.** A winning mindset is built on momentum. Checking off each thing on your to-do list daily will help you see progress and give you motivation to continue.
5. **Use visualizations.** See yourself and your goals as a campfire. Like a fire you need to keep adjusting it, adding wood to keep the fire going and make it big. Every step makes the fire bigger and sometimes a misstep or problem may diminish your flames. That means you need to adjust quickly and keep the fire going.
6. **Make a plan for when you fall.** Like with any injury you will need time to heal, to evaluate what happened and maybe some physical therapy to get back to full strength. Have a system in place that you're comfortable with to help you evaluate and learn from your mistakes. You could keep a journal, take a walk or draw a map. See mistakes as detours that help get you where you want to go more quickly.
7. **Perspective.** Goals are destinations and mistakes/missteps are detours. You will get lost from time to time and sometimes you'll speed ahead. That's the nature of a journey. It doesn't matter how you get there, as long as you get there. Having patience will give you the long-burning fuel you need to reach your destination.

Creating a winning mindset is like being a great baker: it's part science, part self-confidence and part ingenuity. The science is in the

plans you make, the confidence is in the belief in yourself, visualizations and your perspective, and the ingenuity is in finding ways to get things done.

Business Tips for Staying Motivated for Success

A thriving business demands consistency. You have to stay motivated and give it 110% in order to keep the momentum going.

But sometimes it can be hard to maintain the energy needed to thrive. We kick back a little. And unfortunately, when that happens, our business can suffer. But it doesn't have to be that way!

Here are some tips that can help you stay motivated throughout the year!



1. Create a success chart. Write down and highlight every success no matter how small or large and hang it next to your calendar.
2. Frame your WHY. Just like you frame your diploma or degree, in large bold type frame WHY you do your business and why you want to succeed.
3. As you chart your successes, visualize, journal and enjoy every intimate sense of your accomplishment. Really take time to focus on these to motivate yourself to keep going.

4. Acknowledge and be realistic about the challenges your business faces, but also consider all the benefits of every business decision you make.
5. Do not waste your time worrying. The more positive you are, the more opportunities you will discover.
6. Embrace every mistake or misstep as a learning experience. Focus on how you can learn from the experience, what you've learned and how you can overcome it.
7. Create a community of supporters, mentors, business associates and share your experiences with them. When you chart your successes share it with them! Also share your learning experiences and celebrate with them.

As a business owner, you will of course face challenges along the way. That's why it's important to be mindful about keeping yourself motivated. By taking some time to keep yourself on track, you'll enjoy greater success!

Stepping Out of Your Comfort Zone

The proverbial comfort zone: it is what prevents us from pursuing our dreams and achieving our goals. The good news is that your zone isn't a jail cell, but instead a place that you've created over time. Because of this, you are free to leave anytime, but you have to be ready.

Here is a step-by-step guide to breaking out of your comfort zone and growing your business.



Business Owner's Road Map to Success

- 1. Understand the return on investment (ROI) in stepping out of your comfort zone.** Some of these benefits include standing out in a crowd, overcoming your fear, trying new things, and learning more. Imagine what these benefits can do for your business.
- 2. Identify someone in your field that you look up to and admire.** List that person's qualities and accomplishments. Cross out the ones that you have in common. From the items that remain, rank them in order of importance to you. You now have a set of objectives to start on, so take them one step at a time. What can you do right now to begin to achieve the first one on your list?
- 3. Put all your cards on the table.** Fear is the most powerful emotion, so assess what you are afraid of that has prevented your business growth. Pledge to yourself to jump in head first. For example, if the idea of public speaking makes you want to run for the hills, call your local library and set up a workshop. The venue is small, but will force you to face your fear and make it easier to do again.
- 4. Expect and embrace change.** The nature of our comfort zones is that they are predictable. Even if what you are doing on a regular basis is making you money, you may be leaving a lot of money on the table if you don't try something new. Adjust your mindset to one that willingly accepts change because stepping out of your comfort zone will bring about a great deal of it.
- 5. Visualize yourself doing it.** Whatever it may be that you are afraid of doing, close your eyes for a few minutes and picture yourself doing it successfully. The mind is a very powerful thing, and by continually focusing yourself toward the positive, you will be more likely to achieve your goals.

- 6. Work backwards.** When developing a plan of action, pinpoint your endgame first. When you have an outcome in mind, your actions will be more specific and effective. Furthermore, you will be better able to stay motivated while working toward that end.

How to Get Organized In a Week

As you may have learned during your time as a small business owner or direct seller, getting organized and staying that way are two completely different things. Both can be daunting, but the long-term maintenance of your organization system is essential to the success of your business, and your own sanity as well.



Follow each daily suggestion below to gradually put your life and business back in order.

- **Day 1 – Get a handle on the daily flow of paperwork.** You most likely have an inbox for mail and other documents that appear on a regular basis. Instead of letting it accumulate to the point of overwhelming capacity, deal with each piece right away. For example, when you open a piece of mail, only give yourself two options: file it or toss it. You'll be amazed by how much open space you'll have on your desk!
- **Day 2 – Label everything.** If you get a good labeling machine, this will be an easy and even fun task. Label anything you need to maximize your organization systems, like file folders and storage containers.

Because where everything goes will be clearly visible, putting everything in its place when you're finished with it will take no time at all.

- **Day 3 – Sort your emails.** Using the same principle as the first two suggestions above, treat your emails the same way you would treat any piece of paper: file or toss. In this case, filing means sorting your emails into a folder or label system that works best for the needs of your business. Categories could include Priority, Accounting, Customer Service, Vendors, Inventory, etc. This can be especially helpful when searching for an old email as well. Certain email programs, like Gmail, even allow you to sort emails into more than one category if needed. As soon as you have finished reading and/or responding to an email, either move it to one of your folders or delete. Now, just like your desk, your inbox will be sparkling clean!
- **Day 4 – Create a correspondence window.** Set aside a certain amount of time each day devoted solely to email and phone correspondence. This way you're not taking calls and answering emails all day long, which can inhibit productivity. Furthermore, you will be able to return communications to customers and vendors in a consistently timely manner, something that everyone with which you do business will certainly appreciate.
- **Day 5 – Keep your eye on the prize.** Either at the start or end of each day, create a to-do list of 3 tasks that **MUST** be completed that day. You can always add more if you finish all 3. As you work throughout your day, always refer back to that list. Check off what you have completed and move onto another task. This doesn't always mean that a to-do list can't be adjusted, but giving yourself a general outline of your day will help you stay on track. Most people also take a little bit of pleasure in crossing off a task, so make it a regular part of your work day!

Organization requires patience and self-discipline, two qualities you most likely already possess as an entrepreneur. Incorporate a new method of organization everyday into your business so that by the end of the week you'll be completely organized, and then make it a habit.

Tips to Stay Up on Your Accounting

Whether it's tax time or not, it's time to assess the way you handle accounting for your business.

Are you a master of bookkeeping? A filler of hastily labeled shoeboxes? There are several resources available to you and lots of different ways to make accounting a manageable task that will keep your money in your pocket where it belongs.



- 1. Create a system to make your own.** Categorizing and organizing receipts, bills, and other accounting documents can be overwhelming to say the least. Some keep alphabetical files, some keep files by month and year, and others keep files by kind (mileage, supplies, travel, etc.). There is no one right answer except that you need to choose or create one that will be most efficient for your business.

For example, a direct seller of jewelry whose business consists mostly of home parties would be best suited by organizing her files by kind as the bills get paid and receipts come in. This way,

all she has to do come tax season is to add up what is in the files to complete the IRS tax form. Bottom line: design a system of organization tailored to your business' needs.

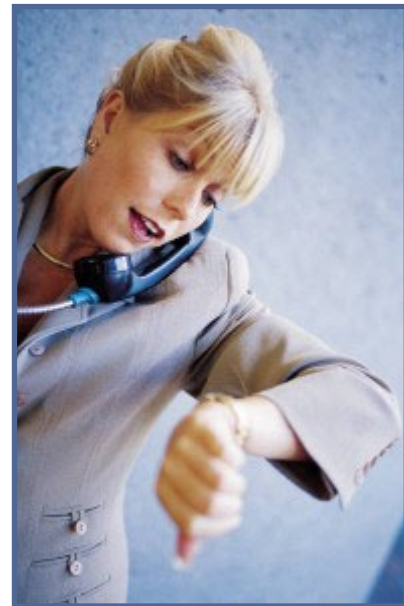
- 2. Track EVERYTHING.** Every expense and every penny of income must be logged in some way. Even though chances are slim that you would be audited, make sure that everything is documented in case you are. **Tip:** Back up your data. Many banks keep online statements for 18 months, but the IRS can audit you going back three years (up to six if a major error is found). Consider scanning any documents of which you don't have electronic copies.
- 3. Go digital.** For those who want to de-clutter and are looking to deal with less paper, there are many websites that can help you do just that. [Shoebboxed](#), for example, allows you to scan, upload, or mail in documents. Scanning can be done from a printer or from a mobile phone. From here, they will extract the data and categorize it into your own online account. Similarly, [The Neat Company](#) allows you to transform documents into a sort of digital filing cabinet. Services like these can be especially valuable for those who do business on the go.
- 4. Be a regular.** You should have a regular frequency with which you handle your accounting. Twice a month works for most small businesses, but this would be another thing to assess based on your own needs. Choose and stick to a time when you are going to sit down and pay your bills; integrate that time into your regular schedule. The more regularly you address this area of your business, the more manageable and less time-consuming it will become. As an added bonus, you can catch any errors before they accumulate and cause major damage.

Keeping track of your accounting as you go is the most efficient way to stay on top of all the paperwork. Not having any system in place will result in inaccuracies that will cost you hard earned cash.

How to Start Your Week Right

Do you ever go to bed on Sunday night unable to sleep? Are the stresses of the week ahead keeping you awake?

If you're like many people, the thought of starting the week can cause some degree of anxiety. However, there are some simple steps you can take to ease the worry and get your week off to a positive, productive start.



- 1. Make your list.** Most of us have a running to-do list of both long and short term tasks. Before you start your week, highlight or create a separate list of items that need to be completed in the next few days. These will give your week focus, and by narrowing down the list, it will seem more manageable.

Tip: Don't wait until Sunday evening to create your list; this can get in the way of a restful night's sleep. Ideally, work on your list before you wrap things up on Friday. Plus, your mind is still fresh with exactly what needs to be done.

- 2. Plan a menu.** Eating healthy increases productivity and energizes your body. The key to doing so is by planning a menu. To maximize your savings at the grocery store, check your circular for what's on sale and plan your menu around those items. This way,

when you arrive at the supermarket, you are armed with a list that will provide all your cooking needs for the week ahead.

Tip: Prepare your food ahead of time. If you're always running around in the morning, pack your lunches the night before. Also, consider cooking a few meals over the weekend, store in appropriate-sized containers, and freeze. Now you'll always have a meal on hand when there is just no time to cook. Take it out of the freezer in the morning, and heat it up when you come home from work.

- 3. Firm up your schedule.** Perhaps you have some tentative meeting dates, conference calls, or product demonstrations. Before the week begins, finalize those obligations so you will have a good idea of what you can realistically accomplish throughout the week.

Tip: Don't over-schedule. By trying to fit too much into one day or week, you may be setting yourself up for a mid-week burnout. Of course you always want to challenge yourself and work to build your business, but know your limits and set yourself up for success.

- 4. Set aside your work clothes.** If you work outside the home, dressing professionally plays an important role in your day. Since Mondays usually set the tone for the rest of the week, take a few minutes on Sunday night to set aside what you will be wearing on Monday. Don't forget to choose not only your basic outfit, but any accessories like shoes, a tie, or jewelry.

Tip: Set aside 3-4 outfits so you are ready for the week. Some people choose to do this each night, but usually as the week rolls on, evenings get busier and busier. Give your closet a quick scan to be sure you have a few outfits ready to go. Doing this will also give you a heads up on any laundry that may need to be done.

- 5. Go to bed early; get up on time.** Nothing facilitates disorganization like a rushed morning caused by hitting the snooze button a few too many times. Avoid this rut by going to bed nice and early on Sunday night, so you will wake up refreshed and ready to take on the challenges that Monday mornings can bring. For the same reasons, get yourself up 15 minutes earlier than usual on Mondays so you have plenty of time to deal with any unforeseen consequences like an empty gas tank or a coffee stain on your shirt.

Tip: If you work outside the home, plan on leaving 15 minutes before you actually have to be out the door.

CONCLUSION

The contents of this e-book are designed to give you the tools to create your own foundation for success. As you begin to reap the results of your hard work, you will need to continue your professional development. For the most current ideas, topics and education to build your business, we invite you to [visit the DSEF Facebook page daily](#).

One last tip: Set a goal for yourself every day, post it somewhere obvious, work hard to accomplish it, and then celebrate achieving it! Don't give up and one day you'll be where you dreamed.

And remember, the DSEF is always here to help you.

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