

How To Start A Business From Scratch

Do you ever think of **starting a small business** of your own? You're a right thinking person. Now is the right time to start that business.

But I don't really know how to go about starting a business? Well, that's the reason why I'm here.

Now is the right time to start that business.

This eBook is a comprehensive guide that will help answer your question about **how to start a business in Kenya from scratch** (or anywhere in Africa)

I will not just tell you *how* because I know you need more than that. I will also tell you some deep truths (or you call them secrets) about starting a business, growing a business and making a business successful.

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Chapter 1

Starting A Business In Kenya



What is a business?

Dear friend, forgive me for asking you a silly question (as above).

My experience over the years has shown me that most people in Kenya and even Africa really don't know what business is all about.

Many people think that business is "buying and selling of goods or services".

No.... Business is not buying and selling.

Oxford Dictionary too is wrong when it defines business as "commercial activity". Business is not just a commercial activity.

Now that you're thinking about how to start a successful business, I will love to tell you what (truly) business is.

In my own experience, business is putting together of all the available resources (humans and materials) in order to win the battle in the market place.

Hey, don't struggle to remember the above definition. The most important phrase I want you to remember is, *win the battle in the market place*.

Why do I disagree with people who think that starting a business is as simple as buying and selling? Why do I disagree with the almighty Oxford Dictionary that defines business as commercial activity?

Because if business was a merely buying and selling, everybody would have become a millionaire. If business is a mere commercial activity, then, most people who started business would have succeeded.

Unfortunately, over 90% of the start-up businesses never succeeded.

Why?

Because business is not just a buying and selling of goods and services. Business is a battle, a struggle between many soldiers (competitors) and a war.



I have no intention to scare you my fellow Kenyan. In fact, I am here to help you... that's why I dare to tell you the truth.

But why do people find this simple truth very hard to believe? Because most people are product of school. School is dumb, and so do her products.

It is easier to believe what your Commerce teacher taught you 15 years ago than to search for reality, you know.

If you read my eBook entitled, *The Business World & What School Did Not Teach You About Business*, then you know how dumb school is.

Another question people ask is, How can I start a business in Kenya with little capital? Or in South Africa, in Ghana or anywhere in Africa.

I will answer your question.

First, I will love to tell you that how to start a business is (except in few cases) not very different from one geographical location or country to another.

Starting a business has an already tested and universal principles ... just as the law of gravity is a tested and proven law.

The only exception you may find is, for example an ice cream business that is very much lucrative at the coast, Mombasa may be less lucrative in Kisii. Why? There is hotter weather at the coast.

Another exception may be that starting a particular new business in Kenya may not require any official registration, while such same business requires a strict compliance and regulation in South Africa.

Do some people assume that how to start-up a business is different in Kenya than in England in terms of challenges?

Wherever you`re thinking about how to start a small or big business in Kenya, Togo or in Geriani (if there is any country with that name), you`re going to face similar odd situations, only at a different rate.

Do you think it`s easy to start a business in America? You can think again.

I am sure you`re getting my point here.

After you have understood that, let us proceed as I will give you some other tips.

How to start a business in Kenya that is profitable?

Since (I guess) profit and money is the reason why you desire to start a business, may I ask you, how do you think successful entrepreneurs make money in business?

They do so by

- By giving value to people.
- By improving people`s life.
- By making the world a better place.

Unfortunately, we are living in a continent (Africa) where the rich are seen as liars, thieves and fraudsters.

But the truth about making money is that, people who make a lot of money in business, first (I mean first) give values to people.

Now if your intention is to make money in business (which I am sure it is), then, we have to start by identifying a value you can render for people to give you their hard-earned cash.

Money is very hard to get and people don't just waste it on any product or service ... except such a product/service that adds value to their lives.

Think about any successful business owner today and you will discover that they become successful and wealthy ... simply because they render services (or create products) that are valuable to the humanity.

Let me give you an example.

Facebook started by giving people a chance to connect with their friends and family, to meet new friends and to share their thoughts and views with the world.

That is a value.

Because this service is so valuable, millions (and now over one billions) of people embrace facebook joyfully.

Since there are so many people active on facebook at any given time, the owners (Zuckerberg and others) could sell adverts to people and become billionaires.

Your phone gives you a chance to make calls, send SMS and surf the net.

That is a value.

You cannot possibly use the money you used to buy your computer to do the work your computer is doing for you.

I mean, you cannot (for example) put Ksh.40,000 on a table and start typing words through it as I am using my laptop.

That`s how my computer gives me value. Money is nothing but what we get after giving something out. What do we give out to get money?

Value.

Someone may ask me, Titus, but you`re telling me here about the giant businesses (facebook, computer and phone examples I made), but I am only thinking of how to start a small scale business from home?

Well, the rule remains the same.

Whether your goal is to start a small business or a large scale business, your primary goal is to answer, what value can I render to better humanity?

Business is just like rearing chicken.

When you rear chicken, you`ll feed her, shelter her and take care of her, first, before she will give you eggs.



Beginning your own business starts from identifying how you can add value to people`s life... feeding chickens. If you feed your chicken, she will give you the eggs (money) you need.

What are you bringing to the table?

Your chickens will give you eggs, don't worry. You will make a lot of money, worry not. But you have to first identify how you will feed your chickens.

Here I am asking you, what is your business idea? What do you want to sell and how do you want to go about selling it?

After all the above three is understood, the next step is...

5 ‘people’ you must understand before you start a lucrative business

There are five ‘people’ who determine whether you'll make money in your intending business or not.

You have to understand them.

1. Understand your product/service:

I have told you earlier that you're going into business to fight (that's just the truth). To win this ‘battle’, you must understand your weapon very well.

Your primary weapon is your product/service. In case you don't have a business idea (product/service) yet, don't worry, later on this book I will teach you how to find and identify a business idea.

You have work to do! You have to know, master and perfect the value you are bringing to the market.

What is your own business idea? What is that service or product you want to bring to the market?

You have to work hard on it.

Why do you need to work hard on your business idea? If you don't, you will be another "me too". You know what that means, I'm sure.

There are lot of "me too" people in Kenya, so there are lot of "me too" products and services.

People simply look at what everybody is selling and start selling it.

What is wrong about this? Nothing, except you are selling your products or services just **exact** way everybody is selling it. That is why you have to first, understand your product/service you're about to start selling... as if your life depends on it... because it does.

The reason why you will want to understand your product/service in and out is because you want to do it better than your competitors.

I am glad you understand this.

2. Understand your market.

Who do you want to sell to? How do they behave? How do they buy? When and why do they buy? All these questions have to be answered by you. Understanding your market may be the difference between winning and losing in the game of business.

Think about this.

Safaricom and Airtel are both telecom companies, fighting for the same market in Kenya. But at a time (maybe 2008) Safaricom, with their understanding of their market, that most phone users in Kenya are youths (and jobless, you know), Safaricom came up with what they call ‘Unlimited SMS packages’.

You can send 500 SMS at Ksh.20.

From there, everybody bought Safaricom lines. All of us started subscribing for the unlimited SMS, you remember?

We fell in love with Safaricom. If you’re a Kenyan and you don’t have a Safaricom line, then, (don’t let me talk).

You got my message here.

You have to know people you’re about to sell to, who they are, how they behave, what they believe, how they buy, what they know etc, or else, you won’t know how to make money from your business idea ...because you won’t know what hooks them.

3. Understand your enemies.

Enemies? You didn’t read me right. I mean, your intending competitors. I have spent time online today to search for what my competitors are doing and how they are doing it. I did the same yesterday ... and always. Why? It’s simple. You’re on the battle field. You need to know their strengths and weaknesses.

Why do you need this? So that you’ll know how to play your game. ‘Take them by their weaknesses’ is a military practice and tactic, so it is in business.

As you’re wondering ... how can I start a successful business? The answer is, take them by their weaknesses.

~~Attack~~ them from their weak points.

Do they have a poor product? Make yours good. Do they render good service? Yours has to be better. How do they attend to their customers? A poor customers` service is a weakness which, if you do yours better, can win the market for you.

I know you get my point here. Spend as much time as you can, to know those you`re about to compete with and ‘`take them by their weakness’`’

4. Understand yourself, especially your weaknesses and play your game accordingly.

If you`re a military general and know that many of your men are having problem with their sights (just for instance), you may not want to attack the enemy at night.

Understanding yourself also will help you to employ your weaknesses.

For instance you`re very poor in record keeping (just like me), since this weakness may kill your business, you may have to employ someone who is meticulous enough to deal with your business records (now or as soon as you can afford to)

5. Understand the law.

Hey, fear not. You won`t need to go to the law school. You just have to understand what your Kenya`s law says about your intending business. Will you need to register your business? Are there some names you must not use (i.e national) in your business` name? Are there some taxes and levies? This is not a big work. Just ask the right people near you and you shall be told.

After I have told you what business (truly) is... a battle for customers.

After I have told you that the way to make money (a lot of it) is to provide value for your clients and customers.

After I have told you the importance of bringing something to the market.... And promised to show you later in this book how to find and identify a business idea.

After I have told you about five people you must understand: your products/services, your market, your competitors, your strengths and weaknesses and the simple laws that guide your intending business,

Then, what is the next thing in the process of starting a small scale business or large scale?

Choose a suitable business name.

If human beings are rational, names will not actually matter (just as certificate would not have mattered), but because human beings, all of us, are weaker than we think, we judge the book by its cover.

Take time to choose your business name. It matters more than you may want to think.

Guess what? Sometimes when I want to measure the strengths and weaknesses of my competitors, their names is one of the first things I look at.

Do you know?

If you meet two ladies in a party who are equally beautiful, but one is bearing Queen and the other bearing Lindo, before you know it, your heart starts preferring Queen to Lindo.

Not because of anything rational, but for their names. Your business name is very important.

When I read on the internet that there are some “naming companies” who are charging above \$50,000 to help you name and design your business` name, I know why a name actually can be the difference between a business` success and failure.

People use your business` name to decide whether they will do business with you or not (just as a man could just decide to love Queen instead of Lindo).

Now, let me give you some tips about how to choose a good business name.

1. What are you selling?

What is your product or service all about? Let your name reveal it in such a way that anyone who is seeing your name for the first time will have an idea of what your business is all about.

Let your name reveal what your business is all about.

2. Make your business name easy to remember.

If you`re doing business in Kenya and you`re using a French name, you will spend too much on marketing or your business will die. If your name is not general pronounceable in your market, you`re in trouble. Why? Because people will need to remember your name if they will have to patronize you or recommend your products to their friends.

3. Don`t choose a business name that your market already know as evil.

Do you think common sense should tell everyone this? I`ll prove you wrong. You see, even if there is a popular hilarious movie character, his name (if chosen for your business name) could affect your business

That`s why you may need a little research before choosing your name.

If for instance you are having a medical business (hospital for example) and you name it, “Romeo & Juliet hospital”, how does that sound?

Somewhere about childish love, I guess. That name, I think, doesn’t connote seriousness expected from a hospital.

Do a little research to know if that name you’re planning to choose has not been known with some ugliness, even in the next county to yours (because one day you might grow your business to that county)

4. Don’t let your business name be too long.

Look at the biggest companies’ names, Microsoft, Apple, Facebook etc. why a very short name? For the reason I stated in point 2 above ... because you’ll need your customers to remember your business name ... easily.

Even if your own name cannot be very short, then, it must be easy to remember or you will publicize its abbreviation.

That’s what IBM did. That’s what MTN did. Because their names are long and forgettable, they adopted the abbreviation of it.

5. Don’t use your personal name.

Your market is likely to respect an organization than individual, even if it’s a small business. Even if you’re having a barbing saloon business, people are more likely to respect “Neat Cut Saloon” than “Mercy’s Saloon”.

Observe the way these two names sound and you will understand what I’m saying.

Another side to it is that your business will one day grow and get to a land where your name actually means *nonsense*.

If for instance you`re having a typical Kenyan name and name your business after yourself. One day your business may expand to South Africa, then you`ll start having problem with your market.

Someone will ask me here, what about Dangote who used his name for his business? And his business has become famous in Africa and all over the world.

Your name can work for your business, even if it sounds like nonsense, but you will need a whole lot of money to promote your business (which i think you can avoid).

More so, some name actually sound generic, like Dangote. It`s easier to call and remember.

6. Check your business name`s availability on the internet.

There is what we call domain availability (you can google that). We check through the internet to know maybe the name we have in mind has not been taken by another business.

Though this is only useful for an online business, any successful business is eventually going to be online. Even if you start small now, you are not planning to remain small, are you?

It may be good to check that name and buy its domain name (if you can). That doesn`t mean that you must have a website **now**, though it`s nice if you can.

7. Check the availability of your intending business name with the government body responsible for companies' regulation in Kenya.

In my experience, this is very easy and cheap. The last time I tried this in Kenya (with Corporate Affairs Commissions) I spent less than Ksh.500.

Now, your business is named.

What next?

Write a simple business plan

Don't let the noise you've been hearing about business plans scare you.

Because most people are not educated about business, I call them 'dumb'. Because they are dumb, they make noise on some simple business stuffs. Here is one of them.

They think that a business plan has to be formal or 'well-written'. Some even say that it is a business plan that determine whether investors will invest in your business.

I disagree with all the above.

Business plan is nothing but a business goals and how to achieve them.

The last time i wrote a business plan, it is all in a sheet of A4 paper, so you see how simple it can be.

What next?

How to raise capital to start your business?

After you have done all the above, diligently, you`ll want to raise capital.

How hard is it to raise capital?

This depends on how you go about the above steps. Believe me, when people get worried and ask, how can I get finance to start my business, they`re simply revealing how little they know about the business world.

Capital is not scarce.

Sam Walton has said it (probably before I was born) that, “capital is not scarce, vision is”

Napoleon Hill said, capital is plenty in the world... for anyone who knows how to use it.

What are these men saying?

If you do your homework very well (as stated above), you`ll not find it hard to get finance for your business.

I know. I know. I think I know what I am talking about here.

From the first time I started my first business at my age 15 till now, I find myself getting capital again and again.

At a point I came to the conclusion that getting capital is as simple as getting a lady. While I am not saying that ladies are cheap to get, I mean, men have mastered the art (or science) of getting ladies.

Getting capital is an art.

You can master this art. I have gotten capital again and again, even from total strangers. But because people don't know anything outside what school (that prison) taught them, they usually have problem believing certain things are possible.

Getting capital is as easy as getting a lady, only if you have mastered the art.

Starting a business proper.

If you have followed this book till this point, you have finished 70% of the work you need to make your business a successful one.

Really?

Yes.

Most people don't know, but I need to tell you. Wars are won before the battle starts. Football games are won (or lost) before the game starts.

When does a student pass exam? After writing the paper? No. before the examination starts.

Running in athletics may take a runner 30 minutes to do, but believe me, he has spent 30 days (sometimes 30 months) to prepare for this running.

Preparation is the key to business success.

Listen to what Will Smith said, *'I've always considered myself to be just average talent and what I have is a ridiculous insane obsessiveness for practice and preparation'*

“Success depends upon previous preparation, and without such preparation there is sure failure”... CONFUCIUS

Also listen to this, *“football teaches you hard work. It takes a lot of unspectacular preparation to have spectacular results in business and football”* Roger Staubach

Around December, 2013, I told a friend of mine that I will love him to partner with me on a business project and he accepted.

But till March, 2014 I have not launched the said project, so my friend kept on asking, how far?

The far is in **preparation**.

You have to be diligent in the above steps.

Most at times, business success (or failure) is determined even before your product/service gets to the market.

I once found myself in position to consult for and make some changes for a certain business.

Looking at the market we were trying to win, I discovered there are simple (but courageous) business moves we should have made at the beginning that would have given us a nice share of the market.

Unfortunately, the begging was 7 years ago and to make those moves as at the time I got in would be expensive... very expensive, so the higher authority would be afraid of making such risky moves.

Sometimes when the foundation is faulty, the righteous cannot do anything to make it right. That is what Bible says in Psalm 11:3

Get your foundation right, friend.

Then, what is the next thing?

The remaining 30% include:

- ❖ **Set goals to grow.** Most people are concern about, how to start a small scale business. When there is no problem about that, you have to set goals to grow.
- ❖ **Be strategic in your approach.** To think that business is just about buying and selling is to think that football is just about running with ball. Read as much as you can about business and you will be more strategic.
- ❖ **Don't expect quick riches.** Chris Kirubi has already told you that, didn't you hear him? He advised Kenyans (and Africans) to forget "quick-rich" thinking. Your business, I repeat, is like a hen you buy in the market. It requires that you'll feed it, nurture it and take good care of it ... before it starts giving you eggs.
- ❖ **Have courage to launch.** Just launch ... even when everything is not perfect. Waiting will kill your vision.
- ❖ **Believe in who you are.** Most Africans don't believe in themselves. They are suffering from low self-esteem. They will rather remain an employee than to push themselves out and start their own businesses. Believe you can succeed in business and you will.

Chapter 2

Entrepreneurship Training



What is entrepreneurship? Who is an entrepreneur? What and what are the “jobs” of an entrepreneur?

These are the questions I will be answering through this chapter.

To start with, I will love to inform you that I will not go into academic definitions or formalized terminology here. I hate them. My duty is to speak in simple to understand language.

What I am going to do through this chapter is to define entrepreneurship in my own words and then, I will share with you what other expert said in relationship with this subject.

Let`s get in.

“Entrepreneurship is the process of discovering a business idea, evaluating its market potential and organizing both human and material resources to make it profitable.” - Titus Mirieri

Now, let me explain this my definition.

As a potential entrepreneur, your duty is to discover business ideas, evaluate them through your market research to find out how profitable those ideas are, who and who are your competitors and how can you position yourself to get a good percentage of the market share?

Your next duty is to organize the resources needed to achieve your entrepreneurial objective, which I guess is to make money and make the world a better place.

There are two kinds of resources, human and material. You as forerunner will be responsible for putting together these resources and channel them appropriately in order to achieve your purposes.

The above definition is mine. Now I wish to share with you some of the opinions of other experts as per what entrepreneurship is all about.

“There`s lots of bad reasons to start a company. But there`s only one good reason, it`s to change the world”. Phil Libin, CEO of Evernote.

What is Phil Libin saying here?

The primary purpose of your business is to make the world a better place. Yes, you need to make money, but that`s just a bad reason if it`s the primary reason.

I have explained this concept earlier on this book in chapter 1. You have to give before you get. You as an entrepreneur must see yourself as a man who wants to sell eggs for money. This man first need to buy chicks, feed them and shelter them, then these chicken start giving him eggs.

Look at the great businesses in the world.

What do you see them doing?

They are making the world a better place. Your phone is helping you to connect with your friends and family, your laptop is helping you to surf the net, the water you buy rescues you from thirst.

Virtually any and every successful business has made this world a better place.

Action: ask yourself, how can I make the world a better place? What service can I render, what product can I produce to make life easier for people in my town, city or country?

If for instance there is a service you can render better than competitors or a product you can produce better than the present competitors, then, you`re about to make money.

Is there a product you can produce cheaper or a service you can render faster? Then, you`ll make the world a better place and people will joyfully pay you for your services or product.

Ok, let`s see what another expert has to say about entrepreneurship.

“If you`re not a risk taker, you should get the hell out of business” Ray Kroc, founder of McDonald

I remember how my only brother called me to warn me, “If you eventually become poor, don`t run to me!”

To him, it is too risky to say you don`t need a job. I left school and decided never to collect my “good certificate” from school. I decided to *be an entrepreneur or die*.

To me, nothing else mattered than to be a business owner. To my brother (who is older than me by about 5 years), I was crazy.

You hate risk? Go get a job. Don`t try to be an entrepreneur.

From your very first day, till when you`ll become a millionaire, till when you will die, you will never have a period when you`re certain about the outcome in the business world.

Two months ago I was busy making plans about my new found marketing strategy. I worked like hell to put everything together and launched out, hoping to make it big. I was wrong. I failed. I have to get back in to see how I can come up with a better strategy to make my business a success.

That`s how I have being living my life since the last 8 to 9 years.

I am not saying this to discourage you. In fact, the reason why I am here is to encourage you as your fellow Kenyan. Listen to what Albert Einstein has to say, “A person who never made a mistake never tried anything new”.

Mistakes are not the evidence of your foolishness. They are the evidence of your courage. As you`re planning to be a business owner, be assured that the evidence that you`re growing is that you`re making mistakes.

I know below words will encourage you.

“I`m convinced that about half of what separates the successful entrepreneurs from the non-successful ones is pure perseverance.” Steve Jobs, co-founder and CEO of Apple.

Now you see, your ability to try again after a mistake is what will make you to succeed. One of the major reasons why we have very few successful business owners in Kenya is because our culture doesn`t encourage daring and risk taking.

Whenever people see someone who is daring, trying and failing in an attempt to build a company in Kenya or Africa, they stigmatize him. They advise him to “stop wasting his time and go get a job”.

It happened to me, so I understand.

I have this to tell you. Be courageous. Be strong. Be willing to fight hard. At the end of the day, the same family members and friends who talk ill of you will be the ones to envy you for your business success.

Let`s listen to what someone else has to say about business and entrepreneurship.

‘It does not matter how slowly you go as long as you do not stop’ Confucius.

Sometimes you are in a hurry. You want to make money fast. Usually you find yourself progressing too slow for your likeness. It happens to all of us. But you see, snail do travel miles.

Because some people don`t want to start small or grow slowly, they never start. They keep on complaining. They remain at the same spot.

The rat is waiting for someone to come and carry him to the mountain while the snail keeps moving, though slowly. When the snail will get to the top, the rat will still keep on complaining.

If truly you want to be an entrepreneur, you may have to start small and grow up. No matter how slow your speed is, as long as you keep moving, you`ll get to the top.

I love the next statement I am about to share with you.

“For all the most important things, the timing always sucks. Waiting for a good time to quit your job and start a business? The starts will never align and the traffic lights of life will never all be green at the same time” Timothy Ferriss, author of the 4-hours work week.

I love the above quote because it has been my watch word since I was a boy, “don`t wait for tomorrow!” I have never started anything perfectly. In fact, I usually get out when there is no certainty.

The first time I started a business was when I was 15.

I had nobody to tell me anything. I just followed my intuition. When I left school and went into the business world, it was very stupid to do so because I had nearly no money to start with.

Perfect time may never come for you to get started.

How to be an entrepreneur?

Start now, even if conditions are not perfect. You will learn, grow and become an established business owner.

“Timing, perseverance, and ten years of trying will eventually make you look like an overnight success”. Biz Stone. Co-founder of Twitter.

When people consider making money, they think about starting a business. When people think of starting a business, they think of making money very fast.

Unfortunately it's not working that way. Most of the rich people consider “overnight success” today only became successful after years of trying and errors.

When I left school and was going into the business world, I was so much determined that I told myself, “even if I will have to spend 10 years in the wilderness of the business world, I will be nothing but an entrepreneur!”

Do I sound like scaring you?

I must not.

I am only preparing your mind for the journey you`re about to embark on. I love you to succeed and I know you will not if I tell you half-truth.

“In the modern world of business, it is useless to be a creative, original thinker unless you can also sell what you create.” David Ogilvy, co-founder of Ogilvy & Mather

After you get your business started, your most important task will be to sell. No matter how great your product or services are, if you`re not a seller, you`re not going anywhere.

To be a good seller, you have to first of all have some great marketing strategies in place for your business.

You also have to master the art of good business relationships.

When you look at some of the thoughts shared above, you might be thinking that it is too hard to be a successful entrepreneur. Yes, you`re right. It`s very tough, but not “too hard”, as you might think.

The biggest problem we have in Africa is because we were never enlightened earlier in our life that we can become entrepreneurs. Most of us were brainwashed to love job, and we never taught of becoming business owners until many of us have searched tirelessly for job and there is no.

That`s why I hate that institution called school. I hate school because its deceives us to love job. We should have loved business and started in the entrepreneurial journey earlier in our life, but we were never trained to be.

It`s not too late to start. The earlier the better.

Let me also share this powerful quote with you...

“The critical ingredient is getting off your butt and doing something. It’s as simple as that. A lot of people have ideas, but there are few who decide to do something about them **now**. Not tomorrow. Not next week. But today. The true entrepreneur is a doer, not dreamer”... Nolan Bushnell

Entrepreneurs are **doers**. Dream doesn’t lead to success, action does. I mean act **now**.

And I want to share the thought of this great business genius with you...

“Watch, listen, and learn. You can’t know it all. Anyone who thinks they do is destined for mediocrity.”... Donald Trump

If truly you desire to be a successful business owner, you then must be a student of business.

Believe me, you cannot get anywhere as a business owner if you’re not a reader and a learner. If there is any weapon to use in the **war of business**, that weapon is knowledge.

If I show you my digital library now you will see about 265 books there. Most of these books are business books on the various business topics.

Please, be a business reader.

Chapter 3

Coming Up With Great Business Ideas



Over the years, i have met a lot of people that have interest in setting up a business. Most of these individuals have money but they don't know what to invest in or what business to start. Now to the average mind, there seem to be scarcity of ideas but i want you to know that opportunities are in abundance. All you need to do is to work on your perception and develop the ability to see these opportunities.

Business ideas are all within you and within your environment. Some of these business ideas emanate from analysis of market and consumer needs, while others emanate from a long research process.

But the truth still remains that business opportunities abound.

Ideas are the foundation on which businesses are built. Every business has one thing in common; *“an idea”* which was followed up and converted into a money spinner. Some business ideas are so technical that you would have to wonder how anyone was able to come up with such, while some are very spontaneous and would leave you wondering like *“Oh! I could have thought of that too.”*

Every business owner needs to know how to come up with great business ideas regardless of the stage which their business is in. If you are a new comer into the business scene, you would need smart business ideas to work with and if you have been in the business world for several years, you would also need excellent business ideas to grow and expand your business.

Business ideas are mostly spontaneous in nature. They can come at any time or place. Sometimes, they can be like dreams in the sense that if you do not record them as soon as they occur to you, you may end up forgetting them totally.

So, if you are in the process of searching for a good business idea, the first thing I would recommend to you is to always be with a pocket notebook or a notepad on your mobile device which you would use to record business ideas as soon as they occur to you.

Let's discuss other great ways to come up with an excellent business idea-:

1. Improve on trends and technologies

You can leverage on other people's efforts when thinking of a strategic business idea. A lot of trends and technologies are coming out every day but no innovation is perfect.

Think about our computers. Someone came up with the idea of building a computer centuries ago, then later, another person thought, *"wow, these things are too big, people need something that they can carry around so that they can work from anywhere they choose, even when they travel"* and boom! Laptops were built.

Another person thought *"laptops are still too big to be carried around easily, let's build something smaller and easier to carry around"* and along came the tablets and I can assure you that we haven't seen the end; other devices that seek to improve the experience of computer users are still going to come up.

The first surefire way to come up with a good business idea is to think of how you can improve on existing trends and technologies.

2. Find solutions to problem

Another way is to look for solutions to existing problems. As a full-blooded Kenyan, the first problem that I would find a solution to is the inadequate power supply in the country. I know the damages which these epileptic power supplies have caused and I know several businesses out there that had to pack up because of the excessive costs of alternative power supply.

Now if I had the financial means, I would develop a product that would help supply alternative source of power at a very cheap cost. But since I do not have the financial means, I make it a point of duty to inform and educate people about the existence of these business opportunities so that hopefully, someday, someone or company which has the financial resources would read up and do something about it.

Think of things around you that you are unsatisfied with, think about ways which you can improve these things; boom! You have a business idea!

3. Look within yourself and examine your skills, talent, and passion

In fact, one of the first places to start when looking for business ideas or opportunities is to look within yourself. Most people miss this greatest source of business ideas because of ignorance, laziness and self-doubts.

If you are talented or having a proven track record in a specific field, then it is time to analyze such skill or talent. To discover what you are good at or what business to start, you can begin by asking yourself the following questions:

- ❖ *What skills or talents do you possess?*
- ❖ *What are your hobbies? What are you passionate about?*
- ❖ *Do you possess a skill that people are willing to pay for?*

4. Fill in missing gaps

It is normal to think “*oh, what can I possibly do that hasn't been done already*” but that line of thought is incorrect because there are thousands of new things that you can do that no one has done yet. You just have to learn to think outside the box.

5. Go after ‘quiet’ industries

I don't mean quiet like graveyard kind of quiet, in fact, I don't mean quiet literally; what I mean is that you should go after industries with less recent innovations. If you find out that the fashion industry has had less recent innovations, think of ways which you can improve on that.

6. Make things cheaper for people

Another good way to come up with smart business ideas is to come up with cheaper versions of existing products. I recently saw a project on a crowd funding website and I was impressed. The guy was trying to build cheap houses for homeless people using a very cheap kind of transparent plastic that looked like glass. There would always be ways to make things cheaper and make life better for people.

7. Keep up with current events and be ready to take advantage of business opportunities

Yes! Societal happenings, events and trends are also sources of business ideas. If you are exposed to reading and watching news regularly and having the conscious intent of discovering business ideas, you will be amazed at how many business opportunities that your brain will generate.

Keep up with current events because it will assist you to identify market trends, new fads, information about industries and sometimes new ideas that have business possibilities and potentials.

8. Invent a new product or service

Do you possess a creative mind? Then you can invent product or services that have never existed in the past? To develop a creative mind, you need a mindset or perception that see beyond problems. You have to look around and ask yourself:

What is the best solution for this situation or people's problem?

Then you can proceed to ask people about additional services that they would like to see. You need to think like great entrepreneurs such as Thomas Edison, Alexander Graham, Steve Jobs, etc.

To develop winning ideas, you need to concentrate on a specific target market and analyze and brainstorm business ideas for services that the group would be interested on. The key to arriving at business ideas for a new product or service is to identify a market need that has not been met.

For example, the clamor for improved security has led to an explosion of new security products and services; from iris-recognition machines through home security services.

9. Add value to an already existing product

The uniqueness between raw wood and finished timber is a nice instance of putting a product through an additional process which maximizes its value, but additional processes are not the only way that value can be added. You may as well add services or combine the product with other related products.

For example, Bottled water has been in existence in Kisumu but it was on the high side with respect to price Ksh.30. However, somebody sat down and thought up the “*sachet water*” which comes at an affordable rate Ksh.10.

Now how do you develop these business ideas? The answer is simple? Look beyond the lines. Ask yourself the following questions: *What are those products you use that could be improved upon? Which industry are things poorly done?* If you can answers such questions, you can create a profitable business.

10. Talk to consumers

By conversing with consumers, you would be able to learn about some of their needs and come up with a business idea from it.

11. Engage your mind

If you are serious about developing smart business ideas, you have to learn how to keep your mind active and get your creative juices flowing. You would be surprised with the tons of business ideas that run through my head daily in the course of my 30 minutes meditation at bed before sleeping and before getting out of bed in the morning.

You have to learn to keep your mind busy through reading, writing, engaging in smart conversations and meditating.

12. Surround yourself with people who will inspire you

The quality of people you surround yourself with is also very important. You would come up with smart business ideas faster when you surround yourself with people who are strategic and forward thinkers.

13. Franchising

A franchise is just an arrangement whereby the manufacturer or the sole distributor of a trademark, product or service grants exclusive rights for local distribution to independent retailers in return for their payment of conformity and royalties in order to standardize operating procedures.

Franchising may take several forms, but the most interesting one is the type that offers a name, method of running business, image and operating principles.

Now how can franchising become a source of business opportunities? Well, you can look at good companies or products that exist in other countries but are not operating in Kenya. Then you can purchase a franchise to that product and become a pioneer in Kenya.

14. Mass media

The mass media is a wonderful source of information, ideas and often opportunities. Magazines, TV stations, Cable networks, radio, newspapers and internet resource sites are all instances of mass media. Just take a careful look at the commercial advertisements in newspaper or magazine and you will discover businesses that are for sale.

Also, articles in the printed press or on the net or documentaries on television may report changes in consumer needs or fashions. For instance, you may read or hear that people are now highly interested in healthy eating or physical fitness. You may as well discover advertisements calling for the provision of certain services depending on skills. Or you might find out a new concept for which investors are needed, such as a franchise.

15. Exhibitions, Expos and Trade shows

Another means to discover business ideas and opportunities is to attend exhibitions and trade fairs. These are usually advertised on the radio or in newspapers. By visiting such events regularly, you will not only find out new products and services, but you will as well meet sales representatives, wholesalers, distributors, manufacturers and franchisers. These are always excellent sources of ideas in business.

16. Listen to customers complaints

Complaints and frustrations on the part of customers have led to many new products or services. Whenever consumers complain badly or bitterly concerning a product or service, or

when you hear someone saying ‘*I wish there was ...*’ “or “*If only there were a product/service that could ...*”, then, you have the potential for a business idea.

The idea can be to set up a rival company offering a better product or service, or it may be a new product or service which can be sold to the company in question or to others.

17. Brainstorming

Brainstorming is a creative problem-solving technique, and also a source for generating ideas. The object is to arrive with as many ideas as possible. It usually begins with a question or problem statement. For instance, you may ask “*What are the products and services required in the home today which are unavailable?*” Each idea can lead to one or more additional ideas, resulting in a good number.

17. Have a mentor

Also, you need a mentor to assist you. A mentor would not only help you come up with good business ideas; he would also help you to sieve the wheat from the chaff and show you the right steps to take way after you have found that smart business idea.

18. Always do something about the ideas you come up with

Your mind may start to become weak if you keep on coming up with business ideas which you never do anything about. Don’t just keep getting ideas and shoving them under your pillow. When you are lucky enough to come up with exceptional business ideas, be very sure to do something fruitful with it.

Starting a New Business – It Takes More than Just an Idea

I have got a brilliant idea that is going to make me a lot of money! That’s the pitch I usually get from budding enthusiastic entrepreneurs. My questions now are:

- ❖ *Is a brilliant idea all it takes to start a business?*
- ❖ *Does a smart business idea guarantee success when starting a business from scratch?*
- ❖ *Is a business idea the minimum, most important requisite for starting a business?*
- ❖ *Will a million shillings idea; see you through the entrepreneurial process of starting a business from scratch?*

Well, continue reading and you will find out...

Sometime ago, I went into a fast food outlet to honor an appointment and I met some youths in the lobby. From my observation, they were waiting to be interviewed for a job at the fast food.

Just immediately, an idea cropped in my mind and I joined these young lads waiting to be employed. While in the waiting line, I started a conversation with a young man who should be in his mid 20s.

The young man, who turned out to be a graduate told me he had a passion for cooking. He told me he had a plan to set up a restaurant and based on the detailed plan he gave me; I knew this guy has something innovative up his sleeves and I loved it.

He even had a name for his dream restaurant. I asked him what's holding back the dream of starting a business from being made real and he said he has been trying to raise capital from his wealthy relations.

"There are fast ideas and slow ideas, just as there are fast trains and slow trains. When it comes to money, most people are on the slow train looking out the window watching the fast train pass them by. If you want to become rich quickly, your plan must include fast ideas." – Robert Kiyosaki

In as much as I loved the young man's idea; I nodded my head, shook his hand and bid him good luck. On my way to honor the appointment, I kept thinking about this young man. He was cool, smart, enthusiastic and had a brilliant idea backed by a university degree. I really loved

the guy and his idea but it's a pity; the world is filled with brilliant business ideas and I just wish I had told him that. But how would he take it?

I am not writing this to discourage budding entrepreneurs from coming up with creative ideas. In fact, I am writing this to encourage you to think and come up with good business ideas. But most importantly, I want you to think beyond the idea because a business idea is just the starting point to starting a business.

“Dream more than others. Think practical.” – Howard Schultz

The world is filled with budding entrepreneurs carrying business plans and seeking investment capital. The sad news is that 85% of these entrepreneurs are never going to go beyond the initial planning stage and that's the hard truth.

Now what does it takes to start a new business?

That may be the question on your mind. While I believe there is no conventional answer to this question; I will try to provide street smart answer but before I do, I suggest you ponder on the following questions:

- ❖ *Did the successful entrepreneurs and richest school dropout billionaires become ultimately rich because of their ideas?*
- ❖ *Did Rachael Ray start a restaurant business before harnessing her cooking potential?*
- ❖ *Did Chris Kirubi wait to raise millions of shillings in capital before starting his businesses?*

Of the entire social networking platforms available; why did Facebook emerge the most popular thus, making its founder Mark Zuckerberg, the youngest billionaire in the world?

“A business idea is just another idea. But an idea backed by a strong feasibility report, a thorough business plan and a smart team is no longer an idea. It's now a solid business opportunity worth pursuing.” – Ajaero Tony Martins

In answer to the illustrations and questions asked above, I want you to know that Rachael Ray didn't start a restaurant business before she began making millions from her cooking recipe.

She simply took her business idea, struck a deal with a local television network and became a self made millionaire. No restaurant, no external funding and no million dollar infrastructure. All she had was just her cooking recipe and a television network joint venture; that was all.

Debbi Field's did not wait for some investors or Venture Capitalists to invest in her passion for baking cookies. She simply looked for a good business location, baked some cookies with her own money and walked around her vicinity giving away free cookies.

Facebook was not the only social networking platform available online; in fact, MySpace has already been in business long before Facebook came on board. Was it Mark Zuckerberg's idea that led to Facebook's success? I don't think so.

These three selected entrepreneurs all possessed average business ideas but they had something which other entrepreneurs lacked.

I am going to reveal to you five things you need to start a business and become successful other just than an idea. This write up will help reduce your over concentration on the business idea and shift it to developing the most necessary requirements to starting a business.

Building a business around an idea requires everything you've got. You are the ultimate key to the realization and utilization of that business idea. To start a business and build the business of your dreams, you need a little of the following:

1. You need guts to start a business

"The critical ingredient is getting off your butt and doing something. It's as simple as that. A lot of people have ideas, but there are few who decide to do something about them now.

Not tomorrow. Not next week, but today. The true entrepreneur is a doer, not a dreamer.” – Nolan Bushnell

Launching a business out of the planning board require guts; quitting your job to start your own business requires guts, believing in your business idea even when everyone says you are nuts. Facing business challenges also require guts.

That’s why I listed guts as number one. Guts, chutzpa, boldness, brevity, courage; they all mean the same thing. Without entrepreneurial guts, just forget about starting a business.

“You are nuts and you should be proud of it. Stick with what you believe in.” – Trip Hawkins

2. You need business skills to start a business

The next thing you need to make your business idea a reality is skills. What are you bringing to the table? This is the question you must answer when seeking joint ventures and business partnerships.

Your possessed entrepreneurial skills are very important to the realization of your ideas because your skills can be a strength or competitive advantage for your business. Skills are a necessity when searching for a business team.

“The ability to sell is the number one skill in business. If you cannot sell, don’t bother thinking about becoming a business owner.” – Rich Dad

Have you heard the phrase that *“entrepreneurs are generalists.”* I think there is an atom of truth in that statement. Entrepreneurs are generalist, they need to know a little of everything that pertains to business. That’s where your business skills come in.

As an entrepreneur, you need to know a little of *accounting, investing, sales, marketing, operations and business management in general.*

Before ever starting a business; be sure to hone your *sales skills, marketing skills, communication skills, negotiation skills, accounting skills, leadership skills, people skills and every other entrepreneurial skills* that's required to succeed in business.

“Skills make you rich, not theories.” – Rich Dad

3. You need the right mindset to start a business

You probably must have heard this over and over again but I think it's worth repeating. You can't build a business if you lack the right mindset. Entrepreneurship is not really about starting or building a business.

“Starting a business is like building a ship and embarking on a voyage, armed with a plan, a map and a team. You will have to sail against storms, unpredictable weather and uncertainty. If your ship sinks, it's either you quit or you swim back to shore, build a new ship and sail again.” – Ajaero Tony Martins

Entrepreneurship is simply a change in perception or core value. It's the process of developing your mindset from being job dependent to being financially independent. It's a shift from being handicapped in the face of challenges to being a problem solver. In all, entrepreneurship is simply a change of mindset.

4. You need capital to start a business

I believe you know that no business idea is worth a pinch of salt without capital. I don't want to stress much on this because I believe you know the significance of capital to any business.

But in retrospect, I always advice my protégés not to be deterred by lack of capital. I encourage them to get creative when it comes to financing their small business startups; where there is a will, there will surely be a way.

“There are three components to starting a business. One is the right plan; two is the right team and three is the money. Rarely do these three components come together when starting a business. It’s the duty of an entrepreneur to grab one piece and start the business, the remaining two pieces will be found along the way. Finding the remaining two components may take a year or more than 10 years; the point is, start with what you have.” – Robert Kiyosaki

5. You need the right business management team

“Individuals don’t win in business, teams do.” – Sam Walton

Finally, you need the right business management team in place to build a business around your idea. For your business idea to leave the planning phase, it’s going to require the right business team. If you can assemble the right team to deliver on your plans, I bet you will find the venture capital because a strong business team is an essential ingredient to the process of raising capital from Venture capitalists.

Now how do you find the right team? I don’t know. How do you know you’ve found the right business team? Once again, I don’t know but what I do know is that the right team is a team that complements your weakness and adds value to your business.

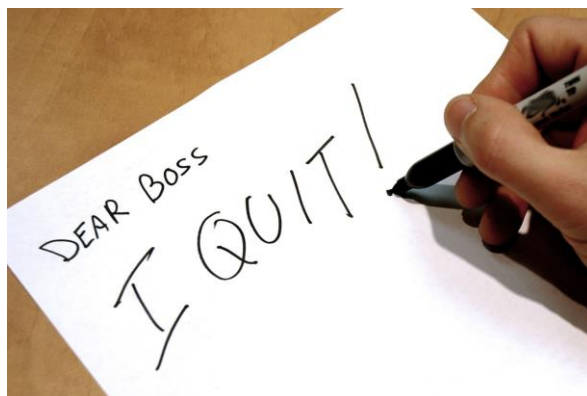
A good way to know you have the right team in place is that your business will take off like wild fire and gain grounds seamlessly with little or no effort on your part.

As a final note, these are the five things I believe are fundamental to either starting a business from scratch or building a successful business. So don’t get too excited because you feel you’ve got a creative idea up your sleeves; instead, start strategizing on ways to assemble the five elements listed above for your business.

Remember, the world is filled with brilliant million shillings ideas waiting to be funded but the world lacks seasoned entrepreneurs. Take this lesson to heart and I will see you at the top.

Chapter 4

Before You Quit Your Job To Start A Business



Everyday, I come across employees who are sick and tired of their job. Everyday, I meet aspiring entrepreneurs and employees with great ideas but they don't seem to have the guts to quit their job because of fear of the unknown. If any of the above situations applies to you, then you are the reason I wrote this chapter.

About two years ago I read a sadden survey about the numbers of people who hate their jobs.

Can you guess? 10%? 40%?

You're wrong. In that survey, more than 92% of people said they hated their jobs. I was once among this number. I don't know maybe you to have experienced a situation where you hate going to a particular job, yet, you just must go every morning (Monday - Friday).

It's horrible. There are only few things in the world as horrible as spending 8 hours every day doing tasks you hate doing.

But why do people continue doing the very jobs they hate? We can say because they have to earn a living. Yes, people have to earn a living and sustain their family.

We can say because there is no other alternative. Maybe that's true, at least for most people in our world today.

The real reason why people cannot leave the work they hate is because we're living in a world (especially Africa continent) where most people were never trained how to create their own lives.

Right from when an African child is in secondary school, till when he finish schooling, he is likely following his parents' wish, societal opinion or whatever is available in the way he decides which course to study, how to live and what to achieve with his life.

In general, most of us were never trained to create a kind of life we desire. Instead, we were brought up to accept norms, status-quo and whatever is available.

Don't let me sound as if it's easy to do what I am advocating. It's not. But as a person, my philosophy about life is that, it's better to die in the war front than to be a civilian.

It's better to die trying to create the kind of life you love than to keep on living the kind of life you hate.

I want to say this because I have experienced it firsthand. A beggar is better than someone who is doing the job he hates (or maybe they are both the same)

The reason is this. We spend major part of our life working or thinking about our job.

Some people spend 10-12 hours every day, preparing for, doing and thinking about their jobs. How do people who hate their jobs feel? Sad. Horrible. Frustrated... all this for many hours every Monday-Friday.

You deserve more from life than to remain unhappy for 30 years.

But what can you do?

WARNING; none of these things I am about to recommend is easy. That`s the reason why most people cannot do them.

Can you do them? Yes, if you`re willing to.

First, decide how you want to live your life to enjoy it best.

The first thing every man/woman should do in the journey toward fulfillment is to sit down and decide the kind of life he/she wants to live. How do you want your life to look like? What job or profession do you think will make you the happy person you want to be?

How do you want your ideal working week to look like?

You have to first decide this or else you wouldn`t have a direction at which you`re heading to.

Some years back I concluded that I cannot be a happy man if I have to spend 30 years working for someone else (even if I`m receiving #1 million every month). The kind of life I want to live will not just work with being an employee.

I`m not lazy, but I hate to receive instructions and to be mandated to do things I don`t want to do.

I dreamed of a profession that will allow me to wake up anytime I want (if at all I will have to work till 10pm). I wanted a career path that will allow me to abandon work on Tuesday if I have headache or malaria.

I want to work hard, but I hate doing what I don`t have passion for.

I have not arrived. I have not gotten to that dream land as at the time of writing this, but I am halfway. Sit down and decide what your ideal life is.

Second, come up with the price you have to pay to get to that level you desire.

Crossing from where you are to where you want to be will not be as easy as ABC (that's the truth). There is a price to be paid to get to your promised land. You may be poorer than you are now, for sometimes. You may work harder. You may have the need to form a new habit (such as reading habit). In fact, you may have to lose some friends.

Get your mind running. What and what are the possible challenges you have to overcome.

At this point, you're not leaving your job. Instead, you're planning for a better (and much desired) life.

Learn, read and improve your mind.

What you know is what determines where you are. That's the truth most people don't know. We are all the product of our knowledge. If you know more valuable things than what you know now, you will automatically move to the next level that matches your level of knowledge.

Last week I was talking with an elder friend about certain business I had earlier worked with and when I was leaving we had to look for someone who is capable of holding my position. It happened that we chose a new person when there are workers who have spent much years there.

When my elder friend asked me why, my answer was, "She (that particular lady who has spent longer years) doesn't have the skills require".

That's it.

You cannot go beyond what you know. If truly you desire to move from where you are today to a new level you desire tomorrow, you have to start your journey by increasing your knowledge.

What is your ideal work life like? Is it a promotion in your present company, job in a better company or business of your own?

What are those things, skills, knowledge or certificate people who are where you dream to be have?

If you have such skills and knowledge as they have, you`re on your way to where they are.

Let`s talk about business. Let`s assume you want to cross from being an employee to being a successful business owner. Where should you start?

A man asked question in a facebook group I belong to saying, “I wish to become a successful entrepreneur. What can I do now?”

My reply to him was, “become a business student”.

That`s where to start. If you want to be a medical doctor, the first thing you`ll do is to be trained. You won`t just go to the law court and say you want to practice as a lawyer. You have to be trained.

Even bankers, accountants and every other professionals must be trained. Only people who want to be entrepreneurs don`t think of being trained. That`s a great error.

Entrepreneurship is tougher than medicine. Quote my words!

You have to start today by acquiring the skills needed to become the kind of person you really want to become. It's easy to do (if you're not lazy). Search google. Go to library. Visit bookstores.

Believe me, you cannot remain in level 3 if truly you have the knowledge and skills to operate at level 9.

Third, be a slave today so as to be a king tomorrow.

For Israelite to cross from Egypt (the land of slavery) to Canaan (the land of freedom), they had to pass through much pains than they had in the land of slavery.

Freedom is not free.

For Kenya to gain independence, there was struggles, war of word and protests. For South Africa to be liberated from racism, someone had to fight, Mandela had to spend 27 years in prison.

For America to have a racism free country, someone had to be a fighter, some lives had to be lost, and Martin Luther had to lose his life at the prime age of 35.

Freedom is never free. You have to fight to be free. If you truly want to be free tomorrow, you have to be willing to be a slave today.

You have to be willing to do whatever (legal and moral) it requires to leave where you are to where you want to be.

Don't mind gossipers. You're better than them.

If you acquire the needed skills and are willing to pay the price to migrate to where you desire, nobody will tell you when the time comes to take the needed action.

Knowledge is like weapon. If you have it with you, you'll dare things. For instance if a man has a gun with him, he could go to places unsafe to most people.

But as you're going, you will meet some gossips and critics. They will think you're crazy. Don't mind them. You're better than them.

Ayo Arowolo is one of the rich Nigerians who struggled many years ago to travel to the United Kingdom for green pastures. While there in the UK he was reading a book written by Anthony Robbins. He furiously dropped that book and announced to his host that he was going back to Nigeria.

Everybody thought he was crazy but he had just discovered that what he needed in UK was actually at home.

You cannot do such thing and not be criticized by people around you.

I was criticized because I refused to collect my good certificate from school. I was attacked because I refused to get a job, even when I was poor.

Every great mind do things that arouse criticism.

As you're planning to move to your dream land, you will be criticized by people who truly love you (yes, they love you so much that they don't want you to pass through the pains that will lead you to the palace)

Decide where you belong. Learn the new skills that will get you to where you belong. Be willing to pay the price to get to where you belong.

Before I proceed into the detailed approach to quitting your job and starting a business, I want to personally acknowledge my mentor "Robert Kiyosaki" for his inspiration.

His book “*Rich Dad’s Before You Quit Your Job: 10 Real-Life Lessons Every Entrepreneur Should Know About Building a Multimillion-Dollar Business*” provided the core guideline to writing this chapter and I personally recommend you read that book if you are really serious about quitting your job. Now how do you quit your job and start a business?

1. Why do you want to quit your job?

Yes, this is the foremost and most important question you must answer. Why do you want to quit your job? Why do you want to start a business? I hear many people lamenting that they are quitting their jobs because they are tired of it.

Being tired of your job is not enough reason to quit because it doesn’t provide enough motivation to see you through the business process. To successfully quit your job and start a business, you need a stronger reason; a reason that will see you through the dark times.

If you are tired of your job; maybe because it’s stressful, or your boss is lousy, or your job is something you hate doing. Then I will advice you get another job rather than start a business. Why?

The reason is because building a business is more stressful and demanding than a regular job. In a regular job, you are assigned to one task; while a business will require you handle multiple tasks almost at once. And as an entrepreneur, you might also need to do exactly that same task you hate.

Let me give you some instances: most people hate their job because it entails either selling, handling paperwork, dealing with endless customer complaints, balancing the books or focusing too much on a single task, etc.

My dear, if any of the above applies to you; then please forget about starting your own business because your business might just be dead on arrival. I have seen entrepreneurs burn themselves out; simply because they weren’t prepared for the stress involved with building a business.

So please, don't make the mistake of starting a business simply because you are tired of your job. It's not enough motivation to survive in the business world.

2. Plan your exit strategy

After finding a good reason to quit your job, you need to plan your quitting strategy. *Are you going to quit on your savings? Do you have an investment portfolio? After quitting your job, what next?* Are you going to sit at home, get another job or start a business? These are questions you must provide an answer to and plan towards.

Now if you are going to look for another job, then this book can't be of help to you. But if you intend to start a business or run a business of your own after quitting your job, then you have to plan towards it and this chapter will be of help to you. *Now* how do you start a business after quitting your job? I will suggest you read on.

3. Prepare your mindset

The transition from being an employee to becoming an entrepreneur is not just about a change of job or career; it's a change of core value, a change of orientation. It is a transition from being a subordinate to being fully responsible for everything. It is a change that comes with a little bit of risk and uncertainty.

This is why I emphasize you that prepare your mindset. Quitting your job and becoming an entrepreneur means giving up your security to embrace a life of uncertainty. To successfully become an entrepreneur, you must be prepared to give your business the best shot; while still preparing yourself to handle failure.

4. Analyze your strengths and weaknesses

What are you good at? What do your co-employees compliment you for? What trait in you impresses your boss? What skills do you possess? Do you have a hobby, passion or talent? If

you have a positive answer to any of the questions above, then you are on your way to starting your own business.

The reason I say this is because I have seen employees quit their jobs to build a business around their passion and they hit tremendous success. If they can, then you too can.

5. Set a targeted time to quit your job

When do you intend to quit your job? This is a question you must have a definite answer to. If you don't have a set time to quit your job, then you are never going to quit. Setting a targeted time to quit is very important because it gives you a goal; it narrows your focus and sets you on a mission.

6. Start a business part time

Most people who desire to quit their job simply walk up to their boss and tender a resignation letter. Well, such approach is a brave and audacious one but it could be suicidal if you don't have something to fall back on.

Before quitting your job, it's advisable you test the waters first. Don't quit your job blindly on false hope. Quit on a solid foundation; quit your job on a tested and proven pathway.

7. Stick to the process

Sticking to the process is what makes the big difference between entrepreneurs that succeed and entrepreneurs that go back to their employee position cap in hand. You must have been an employee for years; so don't think you will jump into the business world and hit instant success.

Things don't work that way. To successfully quit your job and start a business, you have to go through the entrepreneurial process and it takes consistency to complete this process. Let

me put it straight to you that the process is not an easy one, but it doesn't have to be difficult either.

8. Quit your job

If things go according to plan and you successfully handle the challenges that may arise; then you may end up quitting your job at your set time with smiles on your face. But if not, then you might not make it at your set time.

Either ways, I encourage you to stay true to the course. Nothing good comes easy, so if you are going to become a successful entrepreneur tomorrow; then you have to take the pain today.

Wrong Reasons to Quit your Job and Start a Business

I am an advocate of the need to take control of your life and starting a business is one of such ways you can gain control over your life. It thrills me to see people; both young and old take the leap to start their own businesses. But it also saddens me because most of these budding entrepreneurs start out with the wrong perception.

I love meeting entrepreneurs, I love listening to their plans, success or failure stories and their ideas because I know I can get my spirit ignited simply by listening to others.

Most inspiring are the stories of employees; who are giving up the perceived security of their jobs to start a business. However, I will like to point out certain perception I have noticed in individuals who are making a transition from being employees to becoming entrepreneurs.

If you are an employee wanting to quit to start your own business; I will advice you put your resignation letter on hold until you've read what am about to tell you below and absorb it.

As an employee wanting to start your own business; have you at one time or the other made any of the statements below:

1. *I want to be my own boss*
2. *I want to get rich quick*
3. *I have a brilliant idea*
4. *I want to be free*
5. *I am the best in my workplace*
6. *I have gained a lot of experience from this job, it's time I quit.*

If any of the statements above is a reason why you want to quit your job to start a business; I will advise you think again because your motive for going into business will determine whether you succeed or fail. Without wasting your time, below is a detailed explanation that will help you avoid quitting your job for the wrong reason.

1. I want to be my own boss

My answer: before I go further, let me first ask you this question. Do you really understand what it means to be in charge? Do you have what it takes to be a boss?

If you want to quit your job simply because you want to be your own boss; I will advise you have a rethink. Most people think being a boss/leader is all about being in control, barking out orders, hiring and firing employees. From personal experience, I can tell you it is more than that.

Being a boss in your own business comes with responsibility; meaning you are responsible for the success or failure of your business. As an entrepreneur, you have to make sure that your business system is running at full capacity every day; even if it means having to make some personal sacrifices.

As the boss of your own company, you will have to make sure everything is provided for; you will have to deal with all problems arising from your business and most importantly, you will get paid only after your business and employees have taken their share.

As a boss, you won't have the opportunity to say "*it wasn't my fault.*" And even if you end up firing an employee; you will still have to solve the problem the sacked employee created.

Do you really understand what it means to be the chief decision maker? Well if you don't, then I will recommend you watch the movie "**24**"; then you will get a feel of what it takes to be a boss.

2. I want to get rich quick

"The Rich Dad Company is an overnight success; but it took us ten years to get there." – Robert Kiyosaki

My answer: If you want to start a business because you want to get rich quick; then I say congratulations, you are on the right track. But let me ask you a question: are you prepared to work for three straight years without pay? I bet you will scream "**NO.**"

Well, this is where the problem lies. Most people wanting to start a business are looking for instant gratification; they want to be overnight successes. But let it be known to you that building a business is a high risk venture with a high failure rate. 90% percent of all new start-ups fail in their first ten years; so think again.

3. I have a brilliant idea

My answer: this is the most common statement made by potential entrepreneurs but unfortunately, a brilliant idea is not enough. The world is filled with brilliant ideas but the world lacks determined entrepreneurs that understand the intricacies of building a multi-million shillings business.

If a brilliant idea is all it takes to build a successful business, then everyone will be a millionaire overnight. But unfortunately, it takes more than that. Growing a business requires capital, thorough understanding of the business, competence, cash flow management, a good business team, diligence, leadership skill and most importantly; the ability to sell.

So now you see why it takes more than an idea to build a business.

4. I want to be free

My answer: it will be foolish of you to want to quit your job and start a business because you want a lot of free time. Well if you must know, business offers no freedom especially in the start-up phase. Do you realize that entrepreneurs work longer hours than most employees? There's never going to be a free time in business; it's up to you to create the time you want.

As an entrepreneur, I sometimes never let go of my business. Even while on vacation, or I am driving or travelling; I am always on the phone, laptop or mobile device just to stay in touch.

I sometimes wake up in the dead of the night to do some brainstorming, or reflect over a business problem, or do some tasks or write for my protégés. In fact, this chapter you are reading now was written in the wee hours of the morning; while most of you are still enjoying your sleep.

What am I trying to buttress? The point I am trying to stress is this: *there will never be enough free time to do everything what you want*; whether you are an employee or entrepreneur. *But there will always be enough time to do a single task, which you consider most important*; only if you are willing to make out such time.

5. I am the best in my workplace

My answer: it takes a lot of knowledge and dedication to be the best in your workplace. So if you are one of the best employees in your firm, then I give you a thumb up.

But I want to make a point clear: business is not about an individual, no matter how skilled that individual may be; it's all about the team. Business is a team sports, so also is investing. In business, team work is more important and valuable than individual skill.

For instance, Lionel Messi may be the best player in the world but he is nothing without his team mates. No successful entrepreneur ever rose to the top by individual effort; they rose by the collective effort of their team.

So even if you forget all the lessons, don't forget that: *"being on the best team is much better than being the best player."* If you are the smartest person on your team; you are heading for trouble but if you are part of the smartest team in your industry, then it is massive profit all the way.

6. I have gained a lot of experience from my current job

My answer: if you have adequate experience from your job and you want to quit, then my best advice is this: Get another job.

The fact that you are an experienced chemical engineer does not make you competent enough to run a chemical manufacturing business. Your experience as a real estate agent does not qualify to be a real estate investor. Why? The reason is because their role demands are different and your experience is one-sided.

Business is not a one skill affair; it is a synergy of different skills and experience. That's why entrepreneurs are generalists; they need to know a little of everything. While your job might forge you into a specialized technocrat such as an accountant, attorney or medical doctor; an entrepreneur must know a little of business laws, production management, customer relationships, marketing and sales, people management, accounting, product development, etc.

An entrepreneur must have a thorough understanding of the business basics; or else, failure will be unavoidable.

As a final note, it is never my intention to discourage you from becoming an entrepreneur. In fact, it's my greatest wish to see you running your own business; because entrepreneurship is the major driver of innovation and economic growth.

That is why I took the pain to write this chapter; I wrote this to equip you with the right mindset. To make you understand that the mindset with which you start a business determines the outcome of your venture.

So if you are going to quit your job or start a business, do it for the right reason. Do it because you have a strong mission in your heart; just like Henry Ford and Steve Jobs.

Do it because you want to be part of the solution rather than the problem. Do it because you want to satisfy a need or solve a problem. Above all, do it because you want to etch your name in the sands of time by improving the welfare of humanity; taking a pointer from entrepreneurs like Andrew Carnegie and Bill Gates.

While **starting out in the business** world, I came across some “business teachers” who I respect so much.

These people inspired me in a lot of ways and one thing I remember one of these my models wrote in his books is, “everybody can be business owner”.

Is that true? Can everybody become entrepreneur?

I believed everyone could become an entrepreneur until after I have spent about four years in the business world.

After facing the heat and fire of the business world, I decided to question what my mentor had earlier made me to believe. The truth is, not everybody can become business owner.

Isn't this pessimistic, especially when you're reading this from me, someone with the mission to train one million Kenyans to be business owners?

Well, my goal is not to train **everybody** to be a business owner. My mission is to train every man/woman who can, to be entrepreneur.

Not everybody can be doctors. Many people don't have what it takes to be lawyers. Many of us hate to be soldiers. So, why should anybody think that everybody should be a business owner?

You see, we don't have to get every adult to have business before we will have a better continent. We only need to get a very good percentage to be business owners.

If we can successfully get 25-30% of our youths to be business owners, I mean educated business owners, business owners who understand the business world, we can be sure we are never going to know anything called unemployment.

Why? Because some of these trained business owners will become great business success who could employ hundreds and thousands of people, some others will become average success who could employ tens of people and some would employ between 1-5 people.

This way, those who cannot become business owners will be gainfully employed.

I hope you get my point?

Thank you.

We must all have this understanding that school doesn't do anything wrong by teaching children how to become employees (of course, some people have to become employees). School gets it all wrong by teaching ALL children to be employees.

We all cannot become entrepreneurs, but should we all become employees? Then, who will provide jobs for us?

Now you see where the problem lies. So how do you know whether you can become a business owner or not?

Believe me, many of us can be business owners... if we are trained to be.

What is the difference between a lorry driver and a pilot? What is the difference between a journalist and a lawyer?

Training. Training. Training.

Children, though come to the world with some inborn traits, can be trained to think in one direction or the other. If you train them to think in a particular direction, they are likely to believe that that is the only direction that exists, or at least that's the best.

That exactly is what school does.

By teaching all the children that good job is the best way to make money, most of us never dreamed of becoming a business owner... even though we could be.

The story of the world would not have been what it is today if there has been an institution training children and youths how to be business owners. I'm sure you will agree with me.

Can everybody become a business owner? No.

Can you become a business owner? If you think you can.

Chapter 5

Business Traits You need To Build A Successful Business From Scratch



Last weekend I was with my in-laws and as I was talking with my father in-law, he talked about the course I studied in school (accounting) and was jokingly (or really) saying, “Accountants are usually stingy”

Is that true? Maybe.

You see, as an accountant, we were trained to be accountable for even the penny spent. If any expenses could not pass the “audit examination”, we usually take caution.

At school when people asked us for money, me and my accounting friends would ask them, “which account do you want us to record this expense?”

That`s a way to avoid such expenses.

A special trait is nowhere peculiar to the accounting profession. In fact, every profession has certain traits that make the professionals in those field successful.

Lawyers are known for their argumentative nature. Doctors are usually cool, patience, meticulous people.

Just any vocation you could mention has certain attributes and characteristics that are common to the players in that field.

There are **characteristics of successful entrepreneurs** and I will explain 31 of them in this chapter.

Cool down! That doesn't mean that you must have all of these characteristics or skills before you can never become successful in the business world.

Many of these attributes of the successful entrepreneurs can be learned and mastered.

So can we check them?

1. Vision to see what most people cannot see

One major characteristic of the successful entrepreneurs is the ability to see opportunity before it becomes too obvious. I got to a new area in one of the Kenyan counties some days ago and I asked them how much the cost of land in that area is.

I looked at few other real estate “influencers” factors and saw what most people in that area may not see... soon, the land and housing in that area will be on high prices.

Business people look around for “market indicators” which could hint them on what people will be willing to buy soonest.

Entrepreneurs are visionaries. They could use their imagination to see what a small beginning could lead to in the next few years.

If you want to be a successful business owner, you have to be able to see business opportunities around you, even before they are visible to the public eye

2. Courage to start

One other characteristic of entrepreneurs is the courage to start. Some other people call this risk taking.

By this I do not mean to say that a business person must be fearless. In fact, no human being is fearless, not even soldiers. Courage is the ability to act despite the fear of failure.

When I took the decision of not looking for a job, I was afraid. I never could tell what was ahead of me. I never knew how I will live, yet, I felt like I hate employment.

That`s courage.

You will never get to a point in your life where you`re fearless. All you can do is to take action despite the fear in your heart.

3. War spirit

I have told you before now that business is a war. Yes, it is.

One of the attribute of successful entrepreneurs is that they handle business with all of their hearts. They are not passive. They are aggressive. They are strategists. They are warriors.

4. Game spirit

Though successful business people see business as a battle, at the same time, they approach it as a game.

Okay, what do you think football is? A game?

Yes, in the 15th century. Today, football is not just a game. It has become a business. Because it has become a business, you can see the battle on the field.

Though a footballer knows he`s in for battle, he still has to play with the sport man spirit. So it is with business.

Though you know you have to defeat your competitors, that doesn`t make them your enemies.

5. Selling skills.

Business is all about selling. No, not just your products/services. You have to sell your ideas to investors in order to raise capital. You have to sell your vision to your employees in order to get their devotion to your business.

You will have to sell your vision to your partners, your suppliers and even your wife.

Successful business owners are all having this characteristic

6. Negotiation skills

Just as selling skills, you will find yourself always amidst people who want to do business with you but are willing to get one reward or another. You will need to get the best from them without being dubious. That`s why you have to master the art of negotiation.

I recommend you should read a great book called, You Can Negotiate Anything by Herb Cohen.

7. Leadership skills

Successful entrepreneurs are like military generals. They have a team of people they have to lead. That's why it's very important that you as a business person develop your leadership skills.

8. Tick skin to criticism

When people decide to be business owners in a society where job is the noise of everyone, what do you expect?

Worse still when you start your entrepreneurial journey and things are not working for you as expected, your family members may be the first to criticize you, then your friends.

This Tick skin attribute is very important to anyone willing to be successful as a business owner because many times you'll find yourself at the opposite side of the general opinion.

Develop a tick skin. Don't let the criticism and opinion of others pull you down.

9. Healthy self-esteem

Successful business men and women are people who believe in themselves and their business vision.

Most people in the world are "self-doubters"... even when they have business ideas they don't believe in themselves to be able to pursue them and succeed.

10. Tenacity to continue after failure

If you see anyone who claims to have succeeded in business without ever failing (I mean terribly), please run away from him because he probably got his money from some frauds.

You will make mistakes. You will fail. The courage to continue is what differentiates successful business owners from the failures.

This characteristic of entrepreneurs is likely the most wanting in our society today because most people have been wrongly trained by school that failure is a bad thing and should be avoided.

School is a liar.

Failure is a ladder you must climb to the city of success.

Have you failed before?

I encourage you. Stand up and start all over again.

11. Flexibility to change the plan, not the goal

Sometimes when you fail, you will have to sit down and reassess the whole thing about your business. There may be need to change your plans, in fact, there may be need to change your line of business, but never the goal.

Your goal is to become a successful business owner. Even when circumstances could lead you to change the plans you earlier had, your goal must not be changed.

12. Let your business be your wife

A distinguishing attribute of successful entrepreneurs is that, they love their business. They are passionate about that business. They love what they are doing. That's the reason why they could work extremely hard and still love what they are doing.

If you don't love your business, there is no way you can become rich through it.

13. Don't take your business into your bedroom

I once read about a man who happened to be the richest man in the world but who has divorced about four times. What will you say about such a man?

A (truly) successful man?

When I advocate that you should go into business in the area you are really passionate about, I am not suggesting that you should neglect your wife and family.

14. Take care of the king

Sam Walton has said it probably before I was born. Customer is the one who employed all of us and he can sack us simply by going to our competitor.

Successful entrepreneurs are people who, from the beginning of their business have taken customers to be the kings.

15. Brand yourself

Many people in Kenya just start selling stuffs and call that business. Business has to be packaged and branded. This is because the customers are emotional people who are attracted to packaging and brand.

This characteristic of entrepreneurs can be visibly seen all around you by looking at the successful businesses.

16. Investigate your competitor

You must know your competitors just as a general always seek to know his enemy. Investigate your competitors. What are their strengths and weaknesses? How can you outsmart them?

Successful entrepreneurs are investigators.

17. Take time to know your customers

Business people know that if they don't know their customer's needs, wants and behaviours, they won't be able to serve them very well.

It is typical of entrepreneurs to investigate the lives and thoughts of their customers.

18. See business as a ministry

Really, if money is the number one motivation for your business, you are not going to be successful.

Richard Branson once said a statement that goes like, *business is charity*. This attribute of entrepreneurs is what makes them to serve their market with better products and service.

The goal is to make the world a better place, before making money.

19. Great products/services alone

So many people (especially in Africa) are into business with substandard products and fake services. No entrepreneur ever became rich that way.

Soon people will notice you, avoid you (or even you will be jailed) and you will be out of business.

20. Don't be afraid to promote yourself.

Be proud of whatever you're selling.

21. Don't ever go alone

A typical entrepreneur always works with people.

One is a too small number to achieve greatness. You lack many skills and strengths which other people have. That's why you need them.

22. Specialize

If I mention Safaricom, Facebook, Coca-Cola, what did you see in your mind? The picture of specialized businesses.

Even if you're going to diversify in the future, starting out you must be a specialist. This characteristic of successful entrepreneurs is very obvious, isn't it?

23. Create a unique selling promise

Every successful business differentiates itself from the competitors. This differentiation is what is known as USP (Unique Selling Promise)

24. Make it easy for your customer to buy your product

People are lazy. That's the reason why successful business owners try every time to make their products/services easy for their customers to get.

25. Don't forget to pray

Many times it is when you're praying you get inspirations and business ideas

26. Delegate authority

There are too many things to be done. Delegate whatever anyone can do for you

27. Have business-minded friends

This characteristic of successful entrepreneurs is one of the reasons why poor people hate them, but you see, you can't fly with eagle if you spend your time with birds.

28. Manage money frugally.

Delay gratification. This is not time to show off and spend on big clothes and shoes, not to talk of cars.

29. Give back to those you owe

One distinguishing nature of most successful entrepreneurs is that they give back to those they owe. When I said those you owe here, I am not talking about those you borrowed money from.

You see, all of us are debtors to our friends, family and society. We have to give back to them after we have become successful

30. Manage the problem of too much money

Yes, there is a problem in having too much money. You'll start having too much (fake) friends, too much hatred from the poor people, too much criticism from the media etc.

You must manage all these.

31. Never stop learning

If I had my way, this would have been the first point to talk about because even before you start on the journey of entrepreneurship, when you start, as you grow and till you die, learning is the number one thing in the life of successful business owners.

How much anger I have when I see Africans who never read business books or who are not reading enough, yet wish to be successful in the business world!

Chapter 6

Setting Goals & How To Achieve Them



Goal setting is very important to success, just as map is important to a destination. A life without goals is like a football match without goal posts. How interesting will that be?

No matter what you want to achieve in your life or business, you will need to master the art of goal setting in order to get to the top quicker and easier.

Unfortunately, so many Kenyans and Africans do not know about goal setting.

“If you don’t know where you are going, you’ll end up someplace else” Yogi Berra

Titus, do you mean that I cannot become rich and successful without goals? I am not saying that with all of my mouth. I just want you to think about two people who are traveling to Nairobi from New York. One man has a map of Nairobi and the other doesn’t, who is likely to get to Nairobi faster and easier?

You know the answer.

There is nothing magical about goals (just as there is nothing magical about map). Goal doesn’t drop money in your bank account or bring achievements to your door step. Goal simply gives you a direction.

If you can have a specific direction, you will walk faster than most people. You will **manage your time** more effectively and you will get most distractions out of your life.

There is also certain things that are spiritual about setting goals which I may not know how to explain here. In my experience, sometimes (not always) when I set goals to achieve certain things, opportunity to achieve those things usually present themselves to me earlier than I project.

Some people have tried to explain this and there answer is that, when you set goals to achieve certain things, your subconscious mind get busy trying to locate people and materials needed to get the work done.

Take for instance if you set a goal to buy a black Toyota Camry certain months or years to come, your mind begins work immediately. This is what you will notice. As you go out today, you will notice that there are “more” black cars on the road, especially “more” black Toyota Camry.

Why is this so? Is it true that there is suddenly increase in the numbers of black Toyota Camry on the road? No. it’s your subconscious mind “deceiving” you... to help you to start doing what you have to do to get your goal achieved.

Goal setting puts your mind together, gives you a solid focus and then help you to achieve more with your life. In fact, Brian Tracy said, “Success is the achievement of goals”, meaning, no goal, no success.

Let me share with you five goal setting tips. I first learned about these tips some years ago from Brian Tracy’s book, Maximum Achievement.

Here, I will be explaining the formula popularly known as **SMART...** Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, Timely.

1. Make your goal Simple and Specific.

The truth about human nature is that we love complex things and want everything to be complex, but in the real sense of life, complex things get us bored and tired, then we forsake them.

When I first started writing goals, I would write 20-30 goals, covering 10 or more years.

You may be excited when you're writing a goal of this nature but I give you three weeks. You will be bored by those goals and do nothing again about pursuing them. To have a smart goal, you have to make it very simple. How? Write goals for only 3 or 4 months and make it only about major 7-10 things you want to achieve.

In fact, I am having only three (major) goals I am running after for the next three months. The advantage of this is that you will always have your goals in mind.

Also make it specific. Just as I used in my example. You will not set goal that you want to buy a car that is too vague. Instead, you will set a goal of buying a black Toyota Camry.

Don't set a goal that you want to *be rich*. Instead, set a goal of a specific amount you want to be earning per month. This will help you when you get to the planning stage of your goal pursuit.

2. Let your goal be Measurable.

If you cannot measure it, you cannot know how to do better. Rich Schefren said, "What cannot be measured cannot be improved".

If you cannot measure your progress, you won't be able to improve it.

Let me assume that you are planning to become a successful business owner and you have set goals of the amount you will love to be making in the next 5 years (this is your long time goal and it really doesn't matter much),

Now you'll think about what actually matter, which is, what you will start doing today. You may have a simple plan of reading 10 business books in the next three months.

This is obviously measurable. If after one month you have just read one book, you'll know you are getting behind and have to stay more focus.

3. Let your goal be Attainable.

If you're starting a business today and you're planning to make 10 million shillings next year, I want to guess you're setting an unattainable goal.

The problem with such a goal is that it demotivates you.

This stand against your primary reason of wanting to write down anything in the first place. When your plan is too big, it will bore you and you won't be able to pursue it with passion, because you will not believe in it.

What is attainable is relative. What is attainable for me may not be attainable for another man, so you're the right person to determine what is attainable for you.

4. Let your goal be Realistic.

While attainability of your goal depends on who you are, this part of goal setting is more about what is possible and what is not.

Take for instance if you have not been running before now and just after you finishing reading this book you decide to set a goal of running marathon next six month. That's is not realistic and may break your bones.

5. Let your goal has Time frame.

If you plan for instance, to start your own business, that's just a wish. Your mind will not take you serious and it will refuse to work on such a wish. But let's think about this goal, "I will start my own business by January next year".

Because this goal is with a specific time frame, your mind get serious and busy thinking about what and what has to be done, who and who you'll need to help you, how and how can you go about achieving it.

Goal setting without time will not give you a sense of urgency... which is much needed in order to achieve anything worthwhile in life.

That is the **SMART** formula for you. Your goals must be;

S.... imple and specific

M... easurable

A... ttainable

R... ealistic

T... ime framed

As you will use the above formula to set some goals today, remember that goal is like a map. Map doesn't take you to your destination. It only helps you to get there easier and faster.

Life is tough, hard and hectic for all of us. We have no choice than to be rugged. Your goals will need a sacrifice. You may have to give up certain things in order to achieve your goals.

Making a plan and setting some goals is really not a big thing to do. The really big thing to do is to decide what to give up in order to achieve your goal.

“It is not hard to decide what you want your life to be about. What’s hard, is figuring out what you’re willing to give up in order to do the things you really care about”... Shauna Niequist

You will need to act and act hard.

Another thing you need to know is, you will rather achieve your goals earlier or later than the set date. We are humans. We are not planning so as to have a perfect future. We are only planning so as to have a better future.

The purpose of setting goal, if I may tell you, is not to get you a perfect outcome.

Sometimes you will achieve your plans before the set time, and some other times, you will achieve it later. That’s just life. Don’t be discouraged for any delay.

How to Achieve Your Big Goals

As at the time of writing this, I was thinking of some of my big goals and (just like you) I became overwhelmed.

“How can I possibly go through all these, to move from here, to there?”

Just a few minutes after thinking, something came to my mind; Why worrying about years to come? Why worrying about several months to come? Why even worrying about next month?

Decide on what you have to do now, today and tomorrow and be disciplined to do just that. Do what you should do, daily, just daily, to move closer to your goals, and years to come would take care of itself.

This is an example.

Let's assume you're earning Ksh.50,000/month from your business now and set a goal to be earning Ksh.1,000,000/months few years from now.

If you look at the distance between where you are and where you want to be, it would be overwhelming and seem impossible, then, you'll be discouraged and give up.

Don't!

Instead, ask yourself, what can I do today, tomorrow, next-week?

What are those little, but disciplined baby-steps I can take, daily, that could lead me to making a million shillings per month in the next 7 years?

Your answers could be;

Read 1 business/finance book every month (meaning reading just about 10 pages every day).

Make friends with business minded people (or owners) and meet to talk every Saturday (it could be on phone too)

Discuss business with your spouse (yes, it helps)

Reading a weekly business column in your favourite magazine

Saving 10% of your present income (even if it's small, you're building a good habit)

Etc.

You got my point! Doing something daily that would lead you to the big goals you set. This is how to achieve big goals, easily, just by being disciplined, every day.

Something I have to tell you is, no matter what your goal may be, let learning be significant there.

My passion for Kenyans is to get Kenyans reading. My experience has made me convinced that no matter what you want to achieve in life, if you cannot read, learn and ask questions, you are not going to achieve them.

Kenyans have to wake up and cultivate reading culture.

If for instance you want to become a successful business man/woman, you will have to read so many (but interesting) books about Marketing, Leadership, Negotiation, Management, Sales, even Psychology and some other business topics.

You cannot achieve much in life if you're not a reader.

Chapter 7

How To Grow Your Business



Starting a business is hard, but growing a business is even harder. Any foolish person can start a business, but only smart entrepreneur can make a business successful.

Coca Cola that's today the most valuable and the most famous product in the world was started by a smart Chemist but a poor business man, John Pemberton. Left with him Coca Cola would have become just another failed product.

Thank God a smart business man (Asa Candler) bought the Coca Cola and turned it to a huge success with his marketing and business skills.

In this chapter, I will be taking you through 5 tips by which you can grow your business.

Let's get inside....

1. **Don't sell bread to dogs.**

Even before you start a business or selling any product, the first thing to consider is your market audience.

For there to be a success in the market place, product/service must meet customers' needs. Not just customers, but customers who value what you're selling and who are willing to pay for it.

Sometimes a small business owner will have a very good product or service, but because the market he is trying to sell to doesn't value what he's offering he will not make much money.

Last month I spent about three days with a good friend of mine who is a poet (the best poet I have ever met). He writes so many poems and I love reading many of his works.

As we conversed together, I asked him, "Who are your audience?" In other word, "who are those who actually value what you have to offer?" His answer was not encouraging because we're living in a world where most youths and adult don't appreciate poetry. What most people do in our day is to spend hours on T.V, movie, football etc. Especially in Africa, only few people read good books.

Writing a poem in Kenya with the aim of making much money on it may be successful, but it's like giving bread to dogs. It may not eat much of it.

To grow your business, you must be selling the right product/service to the right people (people who really value what you're selling and who are willing to pay for it).

What is it that you want to sell? Who and who actually need that product/service. Who is willing to pay for it?

If you're selling a good product or service to people who don't know its value (or people who cannot pay for what you are offering), there is no marketing strategy in the world that can help you to sell such product/service to make much money.

2. Customer is still the king

I have heard it said many times (even before I became an adult) that customer is the king. However, even till this very hour, most small business owners still treat their customers as beggars.

You have been treated unkindly by a seller before. I have been treated unprofessionally by a business owner before. We both understand how it feels. But if care is not taken, we too can make the same mistake of treating our customers like beggars.

Myself and my mother went to Ngara market in Nairobi about a week ago and were buying something from a woman. To me she didn't do anything bad (maybe because I wasn't expecting much from her), but to my mum she was such a bad seller.

She complained to me about how the woman used left hand to collect money from her and to give her what we bought (you know in the Kisii culture you don't use left hand to give things to elder people). That was big enough an offense for a small business owner to lose her potential customers.

Customer is still the king and always demand to be treated as one.

Sam Walton (one of the richest men ever in the world) has said it. Customer is the real boss in every company. He's the one who can pay salary (by buying what you're selling) or sack everybody (by buying from the competitors).

Welcome him cheerfully. Smile at her. Let him see you as a friend. Show her (and tell her) you're into business because of her, to serve her.

When your customer complains, don't be angry. When he prices what you're selling and turns his back without buying, appreciate his coming.

Treat him as a king and he will come back, even with his friends.

3. Let your product/service speak for you.

So many people these days are in a hurry to make money that they are going to the market with fake, substandard or pirated products. They could make some money this way, but never enough to make them rich.

For a small business to grow and become successful, the owner has to be selling a great or unique product. The two are different. A product can be great or can be unique.

Let me explain.

In a new market (when a new product or line of product just come into a new territory) a product needs not be great. Since there are no competitors, an average (but unique) product or service can become a great success.

When newspapers like Taifa leo started, they might be writing about how two goats fight. People would still buy their newspapers then. Why? There were probably less than five national newspapers then in Kenya.

They needed not to be great. They are already unique.

If you're offering something different, new or unique in your territory (market), you can grow your little business just by being good.

If you want to go into newspaper business in Kenya today, you will rather be great or be a failure.

In a highly competitive market, for a small business to grow, the owner has to bring something great to the market place.

When I mention great here, I never intend it to mean that you must produce something that is never in existence, but I mean that you have to be very creative.

You can grow your small business even if your product/service is like that of other people around you. You can improve your marketing skills. You can offer a great customer service. You can be known how to be great with the way you do business (not necessarily the business you do)

When customers come to your office and have a great experience, even if you're selling what hundreds other people are selling, they'll see your business as a different, a great or a unique business, so they'll come back and tell their friends to come to you.

4. Don't depend on your good product/service, but depend on marketing

No matter how good what you're selling is, you will have to use marketing to drive your business, if truly you wish to grow and make a lot of money through it.

Have you ever seen any small business owner who starts a business (either in kiosk or in a shop) and just hope that such business will grow? There are thousands of them in every city or town.

They are wrong.

For any small business to grow, there must be elements of marketing in that business.

Some people who are reading this will think, "How can I get money to run advert, since I'm a small business owner". No. not every marketing costs you money. In fact, the most effective marketing for your small business may not cost you a dime.

But it will cost you knowledge. Business knowledge. Marketing knowledge.

5. Increase your business skills.

Most small business owners are illiterate. By this I don't mean to say that they didn't attend formal school. Some of them do, but you know I don't care about the "education" school gives.

Yes, I don't care about the "education" school gives. I don't believe it's education at all.

When I talk about education here, I mean, business education.

Asa Candler who bought Coca Cola and turned it to a huge success didn't attend school yet, he did what a Chemist (the original inventor of Coca Cola) could not do. He did that because he was having good business skills.

If you truly desire to grow your little business, you're like a graduate of medical science. For a graduate of medical science to become a renowned doctor, he/she has to be a continuous student of medicine.

I called you "graduate" because you have taken a huge step by starting a business of your own. But now, you have to continually seek business knowledge. Read business books, read about marketing, leadership, human relationship, negotiation, human persuasion and few other topics that will help you to know far more than your competitors.

The more you know about business, the better you will be in the way you play the games in the business world.

6. Keep a customers' list and numbers.

One smart thing you can do as a small scale business owner is to keep a book and record few details about people who patronize your business. You can take their first names and phone numbers. You can get their email address (depending on your kind of business).

If the service you`re rendering involves much relationship with your clients (hairdressing, fashion designing, etc.) you may know whenever a regular customer doesn`t come to you for a long time. You can give such a person call or text him/her.

If you`re selling products or rendering service that doesn`t allow you to be much intimate with your customers or clients, you can have a system in place where you send appreciating texts to people the very day they buy from you and on other special days like Christmas, new year, etc.

You can use a customize bulk sms (which is very cheap) or your personal mobile phone.

Make sure your approach is friendly when you ask for your customers` personal data because some people may be suspecting such action to be anything other than your motive.

7. Spread the virus.

Is there any way you can give a free sample of your products out to people without biting your fingers? Do you have a budget that can take care of that? Go for it. Make a sample and give it out.

That`s like a virus. It spread your business because human beings love free things. They will tell their friends, their friends will tell other friends, they will get more people to come and taste your free offer.

If truly your product or service is unique or great, those who come for free sample will become paying customers

In conclusion, no business grows by itself. People behind business work smart and hard to make them grow.

Apply all the above tips, work smart at it and see your business growing.

Chapter 8

Why 90% of Businesses Die While Young



If you pay attention, you might have noticed that most businesses (like more than 70%) fail all over the world.

It's a right guess if you think Kenyan figure is a lot higher. But why? Why do most business fail?

Like many other things, there are many reasons why businesses fail. Why every entrepreneur has experienced failures in his career, it's the real failure when the business owner never gets a breakthrough.

That's not just a business failure, but an entrepreneur's failure.

So we might as well consider changing the title of this chapter to "Why Most Kenyan Entrepreneurs Fail".

This is one major reason;

Most people never love business in the first place.

Most people who start business in Kenya never for a time “fall in love” with business. They only find themselves in the business world as a result of frustration.

It’s the truth. Think about it.

If everyone could get a good job, no condition attached, how many people do you think would consider starting a business?

Or let me make this question personal.

If you have the opportunity of getting a job that pays Ksh.250,000/month, would you think of ever starting your own business?

For most people, the answer is NO.

Now you get what I’m saying. Most people find themselves doing business simply because they cannot get the kind of “good job” they want.

This is probably number one reason why most businesses fail. You can’t succeed doing what you can’t **marry**. If you don’t love business, how can you succeed doing it?

How do you explain to me that you love the lady you were FORCED to marry? How can you love business, when in the real sense, you were forced to “marry” business?

Some of us like me are in the business world because we love business. Someone will ask me, “But Titus, how can you prove that?”

You asked that question because you don’t know my story.

I started my first business before I was 15 years old. That was a poultry business. I ran that business for one year plus and sold it.

I started another business immediately. At 19, I had invested in few joint businesses at my home town in Kisii.

When I graduated at 23 and six months (because I hate school), I left my result and certificate there, because I never wanted to be an employee.

At the same time, a friend of mine wanted to give me an “opportunity” to get a job in the Barclays Bank, but I turned it down.

I told my brother that Central Bank or KRA can NOT employ me (and I met my every word!)

If (at 23) you came to me and offered to employ me for Ksh.250,000, you may be disappointed when I tell you, “Sorry, I’m never going to be an employee”.

Even though my parents were from the lower middle class and I had no enough money to start a business, business was the only thing I loved in the entire universe.

So today I can tell you that I am an entrepreneur, not because I wanted to be, but because I loved to be.

The major reason why most entrepreneurs fail (to repeat myself) is because they never fall in love with business.

I don’t need further explanation! But Titus, what is the way out? Simple; fall in love with business.

Love business and hate job. You cannot do the two together. You cannot love job and still love business.

How can you love business? Start thinking, reading and learning about business. Develop great interest in the business world and you'll soon fall in love with business.

I love you and honestly want you to be a successful entrepreneur, therefore i need to tell you the truth.

Overloaded Businesses fail



What is your business goal, what are the objectives of your business, what is the purpose of your business? You can't be doing jack and harry as business and expect to thrive. People don't patronize confusion.

Do you really understand what your business is all about or the niche you are serving ? A jack of all trade is a servant of none. You are in business to serve a specific need of the people not all their needs.

Overloaded people are not men/women of this one thing I do. They are so filled up with many ideas that they simply want to try out everything at the same time. They now wonder why everything they did turn out to be imperfect. All they come out with is half cooked egg. Overloaded people launches or operates overloaded businesses.

In business, it is important you focus on one major value that sets your business apart. If you are dealing in furniture, let whatever else or another product you would want to add be in line with the furniture sector. You are good in design and making furniture, don't go and add shoe making to it as your product line they don't match.

Another part of an overloaded business is a business having too many useless department in its operations. In some companies, you can't really figure out what some department are contributing as value.

Such situation leads to wasting of company's resources and productivity of such company is undermined. If a part of our body system is not functioning properly, the whole body feels the pain.

Same with companies too. Why departments are created should always be remembered. Every part of a business must have the values they deliver to make the whole business produce. A cleaner may not bring in money, but he/she works to clean the business place. This in turn makes customers want to come again.

Creating a department or section that has nothing to do with your establishment will only create loopholes in your company's finance and it will create disorder.

Three reasons why overloaded businesses fail

1. Unnecessary features

Starting out to create a business, people think that all their goodies will be useful to their customers at once. Customers would like to understand what they really need to buy so that they don't get carried away by the noise of many features.

Too much of everything isn't good. When you give people a thing they need wrapped up in a bundle of what they have no need of, they will leave the whole thing to go to where they find what they need without confusion.

Too much of features in a business confuse the whole purpose of what that business stands for. I like Google search. The home page is clean. It does not have multitude of other features. You go straight and type whatever you want to search with no side attraction. They give you focus. You go into that page with what you want to search still in your mind.

Some website you just dabble into, it's obvious by how much time you spend there due to confusion on the site. You go into some website or search engine forgetting why you came there because they messed it up with many unnecessary features.

The current Yahoo CEO who first worked for Google made their search page what it is today cleaned and tidied up. She cleaned it up and allow people to maintain focus.

One thing that gave Google acceptance and recognition is still their search engine. They don't have a worthy rival in the search engine business and yes am aware they have multitude of other products.

They didn't try to fix all other products into that search page which is already successful. What can you learn from this? Keep your business simple that even a dummy will understand the value you are rendering.

2. Doing what you love and thinking people love it too

In business, you don't do what you love to do alone but what your customers would love to buy except you are your own customer. Love to meet demands of people in the midst of doing what you love.

3. Too many people on the team

No matter how much you love football, you must not choose a team that is more than eleven players or you mess the whole event up. Business should not be stuffed up with too many people who has same set of skills working on a product.

You can't allow that in a football pitch. You try to make all your team strikers with no keeper, no defender and attackers then you may not be allowed to play the second half of the match.

You should be very selective, choosing the best of different talents and skills to work on the many side of your products and services. Don't for the love of employing people stuff your company up with set of same skills.

They will mess your product up because they all want to show what they have on that product. They'll end up messing it for your customers. If it's to produce in mass it is understandable but be careful not too choose overloaded team.

Below are more reasons why businesses fail:

Lack of Managerial Skill

When a business owner lacks the managerial skill required to drive the business to greater heights, that business is bound to fail. Building a business without the necessary managerial skill in place is a futile adventure.

An entrepreneur that wants to succeed must be able to effectively handle the employees, cash flow, production line and so on; or better still; the business owner must be able to hire a good manager to run the business.

Wrong Business Decisions

This is common to every human being irrespective of your field. Sometime ago a friend of mine, after carrying out critical analysis on a particular situation came up with a decision he considered favorable.

But on implementing that decision, it back fired and at the end of the day, my friend had several lawsuits dangling on his neck. So whenever you have decided on an action to be

implemented on your business, consider asking friends, business partners and professionals for advice. It is going to save you the stress of cleaning up the mess resulting from wrong business decision taken.

“Before making an important decision, get as much as you can of the best information available and review it carefully, analyze it and draw up worst case scenarios. Add up the plus or minus factors, discuss it with your team and do what your guts tell you to do.” – The Mafia Manager

Inability to Move Swiftly With Trend and Changing Technology

It is obvious that some people hate change, some resist change while others embrace change. Change is constant, so it is either you align your business with the trend and ride to the top or you remain stagnant and eventually fold up. You also need to constantly upgrade your technological strengths as swiftly as possible.

“Your greatest and most powerful business survival strategy is going to be the speed at which you handle the speed of change. That speed of change is trend.” – Ajaero Tony Martins

As an entrepreneur, you must be on your toes sniffing the air for available trends and new technologies you can take advantage of. Examples of great industrial trends and technologies are computers, e-shops on the internet, automated accounting, e-payment and so on. Remember, trend is your friend, not your enemy.

Weak Management

This is the fundamental reason why small businesses fail to survive. A standing rule in the business world is this:

“The success or failure rate of any business is directly proportional to the strength and level of professionalism of the management.”

From the first day of business, a very strong management is needed to ensure the survival of your business. You might say employing professionals such as attorneys and accountant is very expensive but they will do your business good in the long run.

Better still, you can consider bringing in these professionals as partners. By applying this method, you will not pay them salaries while employing their services but they will share in the profit of the business. It is a win-win situation. No matter what tactic you wish to apply, ensure you have a strong management strategy.

My most important word in business is ‘Strategy’ and the reason is this: The speed at which your business grows is directly proportional to the overall strategy deployed on that business and the team behind the creation of that strategy.

Fierce Competition

Most small business owners are afraid of competition because many profitable ventures have been forced to shut down due to fierce competition. I want to let you know that even if you are the inventor of an idea that will not stop competitors from coming in.

“In business, the competition will bite you if you keep running. If you stand still, they will swallow you.” – Victor Kiam

So your best bet is to keep an eye on your competitors, utilize every available innovative idea and make your customers happy. You can also implement some of the best protective firewalls to keeping your competitors at bay. These firewalls are: *Trademarks, Patents and Copyrights*.

Wrong Business Location

The location of a business is such an important factor that can never be over emphasized. If your business is located in an interior area than your competitor’s, you are bound to fail.

Factors to consider when choosing a business location are road network, nearness to high traffic zone, accessibility and patronage level of customers, population, demographics and so on.

Lack of Knowledge and Experience in the Chosen Field

I don't need to write much on this, it is self-explanatory. You can't succeed in a field where you have no knowledge and experience about. No more, no less.

“Risk comes from not knowing what you are doing.” – Warren Buffett

Bad Debt

This is another reason why small businesses fail. When a business is owed much as a result of free credit line to customers. That business is bound to fail. One key role of an entrepreneur is to keep an eagle eye on the cash flow. Since a business must never be short of cash and customers too must be kept loyal, the business owner must establish a certain credit limit and a fixed time from date of purchase to pay up.

“There is one paradoxical characteristic every entrepreneur must possess to succeed. An entrepreneur must be able to persuade his debtors to pay their debts promptly and at the same, must tactically delay payments to his creditors.” – Ajaero Tony Martins

Insufficient Capital

Raising capital is the primary duty of an entrepreneur because cash flow is the life blood of business. Insufficient capital can kill even the most profitable business. In a case where there is insufficient capital and the business is finding it difficult to access funds from bank and investors; the entrepreneur must resolve to bootstrap financing, which is working with the limited cash, eliminating unnecessary expenses, establishing a credit line from suppliers and producing only on demand to avoid tying up resources.

“Business. It's quite simple; it's other people's money.” – Alexander Dumas the Younger

Internal Fraudulent Activities

Bad employees can be a chief cause of failure of any business. When you have illegal business transactions and cash siphoning being carried out by employees at the expense of the business, that business is bound to face liquidation. So an entrepreneur must keep a keen eye on the activities of employees with respect to the business.

“There will be times when you will have to be abrasive, even brutal to members of your staff. Don’t worry that your people will say bad things about you because of this. They already have. But in general, try to be pleasant and accommodating. Try to please the greatest number who work for you that you can; antagonize the fewest. Blow smoke.” – The Mafia Manager

Lack of Entrepreneurial Skill

I will prefer to call this the ultimate reason why small businesses fail. When an entrepreneur lacks the necessary skills such as leadership skill, cash flow management, sales, persistence and self-belief and so on; such an entrepreneur is bound to fail. An entrepreneur is the head and pilot of the business. *Consider an airplane being flown by an inexperienced young pilot?* The outcome can be better imagined.

Learn From Your Mistakes in Business

How do you learn from your mistakes in business? How do you make sure that your mistake in business does not result to the failure of the entire business? How do you take a mistake and turn it into a success? Well, i advice you read on to find out.

Mistakes in business is one of the most feared factors that discourage individuals from starting a business. I prefer to call it the “*what if*” factor. Many refuse to build a business because of this ‘*what if*’ factor. *What if i lose my capital? What if i fail?*

“Underneath every mistake in business is a valuable lesson. Unfortunately, many entrepreneurs miss these lessons because they lament and blame others over the mistakes.” – Ajaero Tony Martins

I will be using this medium to change your perception with respect to making mistakes in business. By the time you are through with reading this section, your eyes will be opened to see the good sides of mistakes.

Please i am not encouraging you to make stupid mistakes that could have been avoided initially. I am only encouraging you to reach beyond your limit without being held back by the fear of making mistakes.

“One of the great things about being willing to try new things and make mistakes is that making mistakes keeps you humble. People who are humble learn more than people who are arrogant.” Rich Dad

If you are afraid of making mistakes in business, below are five points that’s going to change your perception towards mistakes:

Why Mistakes are Good for Entrepreneurs

1. In the course of building a business, always bear in mind that challenges and eventually some mistakes will pop up. Many people shy away from the game of entrepreneurship because they are afraid of failing. Failure and mistakes are part of life, the earlier you accept it, the better.

2. Human beings are designed to learn more by making mistakes. We learn more from our failures than our successes. For instance, as babies, we learn to walk by falling and trying again. We learn to ride a bike by falling, sustaining some injuries and trying again. Without making mistakes and falling, we will never learn how to walk. So also it is in business, without little mistakes, there is no growth.

3. When it comes to building a business, you can never claim absolute knowledge of the business terrain of your industry. Sometimes, you just have to take risk and do something new, even if it means making a couple of mistakes. This reminds me of a quote from my mentor, Robert Kiyosaki:

“When you come to the boundary of what you know, it’s time to make some mistakes and learn something new.” – Rich Dad

This quote keeps me going when i come to the edge of what i know. Using myself as an instance, i have made mistakes in business that cost me a lot. I have made mistakes that made me cry. I have also made mistakes that had me regret ever starting a business; *but did all these mistakes make me quit entrepreneurship?*

The answer is no. I have come to realize that mistakes are part of a learning process; it’s what makes the game of entrepreneurship challenging and exciting. Mistakes are part of the process of building a business. They are great learning tools.

4. Mistakes make you stronger and smarter. Please note that mistakes will never make you stronger and smarter if you refuse to learn from it. Using myself as a case study, i have observed that whenever i make a mistake in business, i become sober and ask myself; *what have i done wrong or what did i not do right?* If i can’t figure it out, i ask my team where i have erred.

Once the point of mistake is figured out, i begin implementing corrective measures. The sweetest part is this; i always learn something valuable from every mistake i make; which i wouldn’t have learned if i hadn’t made such mistakes.

Making mistakes, correcting them and quickly learning from them make me a smarter entrepreneur. According to Neils Bohr, mistakes qualify me to be a business mentor. I leave you with his quote:

“An expert is someone who has made and learned from every possible mistake in a narrow field.” – Neils Bohr

5. Successful entrepreneurs made a couple of big mistakes before hitting greatness. This means that if you are aiming for greatness, then you should be prepared to make big mistakes; mistakes that might earn you criticism. But always bear in mind that mistakes and failures are stepping stones of great men.

For instance, Robert Kiyosaki made a mistake by not legally protecting (*patent and trademark*) his nylon and Velcro wallet idea and this costed him his business. Did he quit? No. He learned from his mistakes and built a stronger business; the Rich Dad Company.

Thomas Edison made over a thousand mistakes before finally inventing the light bulb. Henry Ford made a mistake twice with respect to choosing a business partner and this lead to two business failures. *Did he quit?* No. He went on to become one of the richest men in the world.

Bill Gates team made a couple of mistakes with respect to product development but those mistakes didn't stop them from dominating the software market. These instances should impact in you the fact that mistakes are regular occurrences in business. It's up to you to make something positive out of them. It's all about making lemonade when you are surrounded with lemons.

In conclusion, below are five action steps to take whenever you make mistakes in business:

1. Accept responsibility and don't blame anyone. When you blame, you give power to someone else but when you accept responsibility, you will be forced to look into yourself and seek answers.

2. Analyze the situation and figure out where you or your team went wrong.

3. Look for corrective measures and implement them.

4. Take note of the lesson learned from the mistake. Like i said earlier, mistakes are learning tools. They are opportunities to acquire new knowledge so be sure to pick one or two lessons from every mistake made.

5. Promise yourself that you will never repeat the mistake again. If in the long run you repeat the mistake, it simply means you didn't learn from the previous experience. Just like a popular saying that goes:

“Those who don't study and learn from history are bound to repeat it.”

These are my five action steps to learning from your mistakes in business. I hope i have been able to pass a message across. No matter what you do, always bear in mind that mistakes are the stepping stones of great men.

Chapter 9

You Were Born To Be A Successful Entrepreneur



In my opinion, there are too many people who were born to be business owners (successful entrepreneurs) but who are today employees.

I will (again) blame the school for it. They were wrongly educated. If you're among those people, you'll know after reading this chapter.

There are many negative traits our society seriously frown at.

If you have any of these traits, you're seen as a stupid person. As children, we were punished for displaying some of these attributes and as adults we are criticized or neglected.

Unfortunately, society is not always correct in its judgment of what is good or bad.

There are some very good traits that are being misinterpreted as bad. There are some other very good traits that show themselves in another color, so our environment sees them as bad.

Below, I will be sharing with you some of the traits and attributes which could actually be an indication that you can become a successful business owner.

Just check through these traits below and if you have 5 or more of them, you may have all it takes to be successful business owner.

1. You're stubborn.

Well, you've listened to so many motivational speakers talking about persistence. What is persistence?

Nothing but stubbornness.

You're trying something, it isn't working. Instead of giving up, you ask, "I will try this in another way".

What you're is, yes, stubborn.

Being stubborn is frowned at in our society. Many times as children some of us were criticized and tortured for being stubborn, so we think stubbornness is a very bad attribute.

Now if by any means you have been tagged as a stubborn boy/girl while growing up, it's not necessarily a bad name.

Virtually every successful entrepreneur is stubborn.

The number one trait of every successful business owner, you will be surprised, is stubbornness.

How do I mean? You go and interview any successful business owner you know and ask him to tell you the number one secret of his success. He will tell you it is persistence.

What is persistence? Persistence is stubbornness, period.

It is when we want to repackage some words we give them a better name. Persistence is when you continue pursuing what you believe will succeed, even while other people around you think you're stupid.

How else can we define stubbornness? Stubbornness is when you continue doing certain thing, though you have been warned not to do it any longer.

This is my point.

If you have a child who is very stubborn, if well nurtured, that child is likely to grow up and become rugged, determined and persistent in pursuing his/her goals (in life or business)

Without a rugged, determined and a stubborn heart, I doubt if you can ever achieve anything worthwhile in the business world and life. This is because you will make mistakes, fall and fail many times. It is your stubborn heart that will keep you going.

Let's listen to what other people have to say:

"You need a stubborn belief in an idea in order to see it realized" James Dyson

"I am a very stubborn person. I think it has helped me over my career" David Beckham

So if you have perceived yourself to be very stubborn, if for many times as a child you were beaten so many times for being very stubborn, congrats. You're not a bad person. In fact, you have got one major trait you need to achieve success as a business owner.

2. If you hate receiving instructions

Some of us hate it when we are instructed (especially by someone we really don't respect or to do the task we hate doing). If you're the type who always frown at the way your boss sends you around or the way other people around you instruct you, look deep inside you. You have a powerful motivation inside of you.

Most people who are successful business owners today started in that way not because it was easier than getting job. No, it was never easy.

Most entrepreneurs are "proud" people who love freedom. They hate being guided by organizational rules. They hate being giving instructions. This "proud" attitude in them is the reason why they decided to be in business of their own so they will have no boss.

I'm a living testimony of this.

Ever since I was a boy, I love freedom. Not just that, I hate receiving instruction from people I don't respect (and I know I will likely not like my boss at work). I hate being asked to do the job or task I don't have passion for.

This "pride" in me is the reason why I told myself, "Titus, you will rather become a business owner or die!"

Let's face it. Most of us actually hate being instructed. We hate doing what is not our passion. In fact, most of us don't like or respect our boss at work, but we are not taking time to actually face this threat.

You don't have to die enduring instructions from people who you don't have any regard for, to do the task you hate doing.

I know you're angry. But I'm here to tell you that you can (and should) convert your anger to freedom.

If you hate receiving instruction to do what you don't like, it's a trait that shows that you can actually get enough passion from your anger that will sustain you while pursuing your business vision.

3. You are competitive. You love to defeat people and win competitions

Some of us can die because of our favorite soccer team. We want them to win, always. So many people can kill their rivals in romantic relationship.

Some of us love to take other people's girlfriends. Some of us feel good when we fight because of a girl and she eventually becomes ours.

This is not just jealous, it could be a competitive spirit. While it could be evil, it could as well lead you to wealth, if properly channeled.

We are competitive in nature. We love it when our football team wins. We love to drag things, make plans and defeat some other people. What a very good business trait, but misdirected.

Business people are highly competitive in nature. In fact, if you're not competitive you cannot succeed in business. I remember thinking earlier this year, "Titus, you have to 'kill' that man by all means". By "kill" here I mean, defeat him out of business.

If you have discovered that you are highly competitive in nature, you love winning, you love to defeat others and win, don't see it as a complete bad attribute. It's a sign you will do well in the business world.

As a little boy, I discovered that I'm very much competitive.

I noticed that whenever I engaged in any form of competition with any of my mates, I could go to any length to see myself a winner, even if I'll do few wrong things, just to win.

When I decided to be the best student in my class, I put my life on the bet. Even as a little boy of 15, I started reading at night, stopped watching TV, playing etc., simply because I wanted to defeat my mates in the class.

At the University when I was contesting election, I had a “political party” which was not formal or legal, we met privately, strategized and campaigned with level too high for the position I was seeking.

On the day of the election, out of about 4 contestants, I won over 80% of all votes.

To me, if I have to compete for something, I have to put my LIFE into it.

As an adolescent I decided that I’ll never “compete” for girls (because I didn’t trust myself, I could do anything to win any competition).

Today, being competitive is one of my biggest strengths in the business world. When I wake up in the morning, I remember those I have to “beat”.

That makes me work harder.

If you find out that you’re competitive in spirit, you may end up being a great entrepreneur, if you’ll channel your competitive spirit to entrepreneurship.

4. If you love doing things in your own way

I remember as a little boy, if my father asked me to get him a cup of water (for example), I may bring a jug full with water. My father (and others) would complain, “why don’t you know how to follow simple instruction?” I would protest saying, “Daddy, I thought you would need much water, since you’re just coming from the farm”

In our society, it is stupid to do things in a different way other than the lay down way. You're considered a lawbreaker and an idiot, but I'm here to tell you, it's a very good trait to love doing things in your own way.

Darren Hardy posted a photo of some great men on his Facebook page, titled, "Do you DARE stray from the herd?" by this, Darren means, can you have courage to do things in your own way? If yes, you can become a successful business owner.

You ask why? I will explain.

Innovation is the blood of any successful business. Without innovation, there will never be a successful business.

How do we get to be innovative? By straying away from the herd. By doing things differently.

If you've discovered that you're a "stupid" Joe who receives so much criticism for doing things in your own way, you have got a very great business skill.

5. If you complain about many things

Complaints is a negative attribute. I hate it. This is not to say that I don't complain, but I don't love to complain only with my mouth. I love to tackle issues. Complaint leads us to negative emotion (either of hate or of resentment) but we can redirect that emotion into another (positive) emotion of passion.

Many entrepreneurs started their business journey by finding solution to certain things that really make them angry.

Not just business, all other greatness emanate from the emotion of hate turned to passion. It was when Martin Luther got angry that he started leading protest against racism. It was when

our forefathers (Jomo Kenyatta, Tom Mboya etc) got angry that they fought for independence. It was when Isaac Durojaiye got angry that he started mobile toilet business in Lagos.

Anger is a furious emotion that is very powerful. If properly directed, your anger can solve a national problem that will make you rich, so stop complaining and see how you can create solution to some problem you're complaining about.

6. If you talk too much

If you talk too much, I personally may not like you. But that doesn't make you a bad person. Sales people are usually talkative. Now you see, selling is an integral part of business. Every business person must have selling skills.

If you have been criticized as being a talkative person that may be a strength in you which can help you to succeed faster in the business world.

7. If you're domineering

Being domineering is a very bad attribute. I'm guilty of this trait. I have started working on myself for some time and I cannot tell how far I have improved now (until situations test my heart).

Domineering people are people who always want to have their ways. When you're arguing with them, they want to prove they know it all. When they are contesting election they want to win with 80% (I remember I did this on campus). They just want to dominate.

A bad trait (I'm ashamed), but which can be turned into a business success.

Most business people are domineering. They want to get all the market, though they know it's not possible. They are just too passionate to win, win and win.

I remember reading from wordpress founder, Matt Mullenweg. WordPress is the most popular website hosting platform in the world. It powers over 60 million websites and blogs, yet I heard Matt saying, “There are still many websites not on wordpress!”

Only a domineering person can think that way. For most business people, taking 70% of the market share doesn't please them. Why not ALL, is the way business people think.

Call it greed if you like, the truth of the matter is, it's the domineering spirit that keeps entrepreneurs working very hard.

Were you criticized of being domineering? Then you may be a successful business owner.

8. If you're too inquisitive

Are you the type that asks too many questions and you're told it's not good? Don't mind your critics. The fact that you ask too many question (maybe when you're a child) is an evidence that you are a researcher.

Business people are naturally researchers. They are people who search around to find out what others don't know. They are people who search for information their competitors don't know, then use such information to win their competitors.

If you're inquisitive, you are a researcher. If you're a researcher, you can succeed in the business world by learning few other business traits.

9. If you love to fight

Lol. This is really bad if you're over 18. But maybe you loved to fight as a little boy. This may be because you're confrontational. It's a good business skill.

How? Many times there are so many people in the market already doing the kind of business you want to start. You need a confrontational spirit to be able to get in.

Business person must be able to say, “I will face them and win them”

10. You love making things.

As babes, we all love making things. We love arranging, molding and making things. This is one of the signs to tell us that most of us can be entrepreneurs.

Entrepreneurship is all about making things, tangibles or intangibles, softwares or art. Creativity is part of us all and we can make business out of our creativity.

11. You love learning.

Well, if you hate learning, no matter any other skill you have, you would become nobody.

I had a conversation with someone, who loved to read my business training eBooks, few days ago.

He was telling me the reason why he felt he didn't need to learn more about business. He said, “I have started business before and I think I'm doing well”

Hahahaha!

To think that way is to die soon.

I then told him something like, Well, myself you're talking with has been in the business world for many years and by God's grace have tasted some good success, but this month, I plan to read 8 books.

That's no exaggeration.

If you come to my house today, I'll show you at least 10 new books I am planning to read and about 20 others I may soon buy.

Most people don't know, most rich people you see on your TV are great readers.

One of the richest African is Strive Masiyiwa. When someone asked him how many books he should be reading per year, he answered, "develop your capability to read 2 books per DAY"

That's too much to believe for most of us and I don't ask you to even try and read half of that but my warning for you is, if you do not form the habit of learning, daily, you'll not be among the champions in the future.

If you look at the above 11 traits and find that 5 or more of them are in you, you may just be the next richest man in Kenya.

No. it won't happen by magic. You will need to acquire other business skills and be willing to take action.

You will as well need to learn how to discover business opportunities and ideas, so has to showcase your business traits

As i am about to conclude this book, let me tell you something...

There are hundreds of thousands of Accountants all over the world, there are hundreds of thousands of Nurses, Bankers, Medical Doctors and Lawyers.

But talk about entrepreneurs, only few people bear that name.

But why?

Blame our school system! “Titus has come again!” Some people would say.

You see, I have been warned by many people to stop criticizing school. However, none of them has given me any convincing reason not to speak against this deadly institution that keeps on deceiving and brainwashing the whole world.

Why are only few people successful business owners?

Some people could say that because business is too tough but they are wrong. Is Medical science not tough? Is Law profession that easy? Ok. is it a joke to be a soldier?

Yet, millions of people made it to be soldiers, great soldiers.

Some other people who don’t understand would say it’s because capital is needed to start a business and most people could not find capital.

Ignorance!!!!!!!!!!

The single reason why we don’t have many entrepreneurs in our world is because children were never trained to be business minded. Nobody teaches our children to think business, dream business, not to talk of doing business.

I strongly believe that it is a calculated strategies from some of our callous forefathers, in order to keep most people in the world in the bondage and in captivity of job.

At age 2 we take our children to school. They start teaching them A, B, C and 1, 2, 3 which is very good.

They later start teaching them arithmetics and little social and science studies which are as well very good.

However, just about 9 years after they have been in school, they started teaching them how to be good employees.

Being good employees is what they would learn for the next 9 years or so.

How then do you expect them to be entrepreneurs? I think someone (or the whole world) is crazy!

I think the whole world is crazy because we all know (quite well) that there are no more “good jobs” anywhere and we keep on teaching our children how to be employees.

What do you think about that?

It’s crazy!

It’s crazy!!

It’s crazy!!!

Now if you’re an adult, I have this truth to tell you.

You're not an employee because you're weak. You're not an employee because you didn't get capital to start your own business. You're an employee because you were never trained how to be an entrepreneur.

Some people usually call me and say, "I have tried and started some businesses in the past but they crashed"

That's good of you. That your businesses crashed doesn't mean that anything is wrong with you.

I myself have started about 7 businesses all my life and guess what? Only one really succeed very well. And so what? I continue trying, trying and trying.

Every successful business owner has failed several times before. Most of them have lost businesses and gone back to zero. They only learn how to jump back to the battle field (which is part of the training you'll get if you've ever been trained to be an entrepreneur)

One other reason why your businesses would never succeed is if you don't sit down to acquire business skills.

Business is NOT a joke or a game that you play with money. Business is NOT just buying and selling. Business is a war, a battle and a profession.

There is a long learning curve (just as it is in every worthwhile profession). You joke with the learning curve, you fail and fail and continue failing.

I have read from hundreds of books about business. That's the reason why I could play my game smarter than my competitors.

Business is NOT an invisible science. It's practical, sweet and sometimes very, very simple, but, you must take time to learn how to fight the battle of the business world.

If you are actually serious in this business journey, continue reading my business eBooks. Knowledge is power no matter how much it costs you to find it.

I hope you have learnt a lot and you are now ready to start your own business from the scratch.

We have now come to the end of this eBook, please do whatsapp me on my number and give me your feedback about this eBook. I will greatly appreciate.

Oh! Wait a minute... Before i finish this eBook...

I stand to tell you the truth. Business is NOT as tough as you think it is.

In fact, after you are trained and get started in the business world, you start seeing business as a game, a very sweet game. Come and ask me!

To me, business has become a game. I love business. I love to KILL my competitors (don't mind my wrong use of word). I love to gather my team and play, to defeat competition.

I don't know why you or other people love jobs. Come on business is sweet and highly rewarding.

Bye!



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