

Overcoming Setbacks

Challenges and setbacks are an everyday occurrence in business. But the ability to recover from these obstacles is what separates successful businesses from the rest. Here are several strategies that can help you bounce back from the challenges you encounter.

Take responsibility. Far too many people blame the economy, government, competition and other variables out of their control when their business suffers. Years ago I had several items stolen from a hotel meeting room. For several months I became frustrated every time I thought about the situation and I blamed the hotel for the loss of the equipment. When it finally dawned on me that I was partially responsible for the theft because I failed to ensure the security of the room, my anger and frustration disappeared. This experience taught me a valuable lesson. Successful people take responsibility for the challenges that come their way. They don't waste time or energy complaining about their situation or blaming others. Instead, they take action to find solutions. We only have so much energy to expend in a given day. If we use it to complain, gripe or moan about our situation, we will not have enough to use toward building our business and making it thrive.

Create a support network. Successful people establish a network of like-minded people who can offer support and advice. They don't limit this network to people from the same industry; they also know that individuals from different businesses can offer insight to business challenges. I participate in a Mastermind Group and we meet several times a year to discuss and provide feedback to our current challenges. These meetings last just a few hours and offer great ideas and unique perspectives. You should also create a separate support group of experts including a lawyer, bookkeeper, accountant, and financial planner.

Invest in yourself. Work at improving yourself through books, tapes, videos, seminar and professional groups or associations. I know many successful business people who attend some type of workshop or self-development program several times a year. They attend industry meetings or events, workshops and seminars, and most are avid readers. They recognize that there is always something new to learn so they are constantly adding to their knowledge and refining their skills.

Be willing to pay the price. There is no quick fix or magic cure that will make your business a success. A thriving and profitable business is not created overnight. In fact, research has shown that it takes an average of eight years for a business to develop. It takes dedication, energy, and plenty of hard work. Peak performers understand that success is a process. They know that it does not happen quickly or easily and they are prepared to make the necessary sacrifices to make the business work.

Set motivating goals. I have long been a believer in setting challenging goals because I have learned that these goals help keep me motivated during challenging times. They keep you focused and give you direction. Write down your goals. Attach a deadline to

each. And post them where you can see them regularly. This is a powerful strategy that has worked for me for many years. Increase the effectiveness by writing and reviewing them twice a day.

Create balance in your life. I firmly believe you need to balance your business and personal lives. Years ago I talked about taking a particular course for personal development but always used my work schedule as an excuse for not signing up. Finally making the decision to attend the program changed my perspective. I found that spending more time with my family and pursuing a few personal goals increased my productivity at work. I became more focused, had more energy and was able to accomplish more in less time. Plus, I experienced a much higher level of overall satisfaction.

Be persistent. This is probably the most difficult aspect of overcoming setbacks but it is one of the most effective strategies. Far too many people give up too soon when they encounter challenges or problems. But successful business people dig in their heels and refuse to give up. They look for creative alternatives. They try every possible solution and, in most cases, they find an answer to their particular situation. I remember a friend of mine working through a bitter battle with his business partners and his ultimate solution was brilliant. When I asked him how he arrived at this answer he said, "It was the only thing left to do."

Lastly, love what you do. I believe this is the most important strategy of all. Loving what you do will help you get past the inevitable barriers, challenges, and setbacks you will face in business. If you do not love your business it becomes too easy to quit at the first sign of difficulty.

Copyright 2004 Kelley Robertson. All rights reserved

Kelley Robertson, President of the Robertson Training Group, works with businesses to help them increase their sales and motivate their employees. He is also the author of "Stop, Ask & Listen – Proven sales techniques to turn browsers into buyers." Visit his website at www.RobertsonTrainingGroup.com and receive a FREE copy of "100 Ways to Increase Your Sales" by subscribing to his 59-Second Tip, a free weekly e-zine.

