



with Donna Messer

50 Ways to SPICE Up Your Business and Still Have a Life!

You need to beSmart, Profitable, Innovative, Creative and Ethical!

1. Location, location, location. Start with the end in mind. Home based vs professional office.
2. What's in a name? Branding is important, make the name you choose send the message.
3. TEAMS. How do you find the players you need to make your business successful? Once you find them you need to keep them. Empower your team, have a written employee manual that sets the rules and the rewards.
4. Home based business? Train the family to be professional when answering the phone, the door or the neighbours. Keep your balance, all work makes for an unhappy family.
5. Leadership. How do you determine your leadership style? Learn from the experts, read their books, take the personality tests and recognize your strengths. Put your leadership plan in place and stick to it. Be a role model.
6. Enthusiasm. Positive thinking is important, there will be times when a SMILE is all you have to start with. Empower, lead by example and get the job done!
7. Sell your strengths. Buy your weaknesses. It is better to contract out, than try to accomplish something that isn't your expertise. Barter when possible.
8. Be There! Set a good example, be on time, personally and with the product.
9. Invest in technology. Make sure that your phone system, computers, database are top notch. Use the technology to the fullest and update regularly.
10. Follow up. How do you measure your results? Write the business plan, put the targets on your wall where you can see them and chart your course. If you are not measuring up - find out why and make the necessary adjustments.
11. Image - you are the business! Make sure that you look the part. Be professional. In person, on the phone or through email. Branding, image and success go hand in hand. Keep a smile on your face and in your voice.
12. Affirmations. Start each day with a positive statement, attitude is everything. "Today is a good day, I will accomplish what I set out to do."
13. Do your homework. Compare your products and services to the competition - how do you measure up? Go the extra mile to make your product or services outstanding!
14. Build a strong and effective database. Target your market and make sure you have identified how to reach them. Utilize the web - gather lists of organizations, associations, government agencies and industries who would benefit from knowing you and your company.
15. Plan your strategy. Do a survey, find out what your potential clients want, and fill their need. Don't sell, find out what they want to buy!

16. Put an action plan into place. Use the SMART acronym, specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and timely.
17. Co-opetition. Work with your competitors. The term was coined by the credit unions when they wanted to take on the big banks - using co-opetition, they could compete!
18. R & D. Research and Development? Yes, but it is also Rob and Duplicate - there is nothing really new, look to the past to improve the future. Remember Thomas Edison? He found existing products and made them bigger, better or best!
19. Use the 3 R's. Re-package re-use, re-invent.
20. Understand your market and your own personal needs. Ask the questions - Who are you? What do you need? What will you share?
21. Launch an action plan, evaluate the results, measure, monitor. Time invested should produce a measurable return.
22. Start each conversation with the words "How can we help you?" Listen carefully to the answer. It's not about selling product, it's about building rapport - fill the need.
23. Arm yourself with ice breaking conversation. Learn the art of effective networking.
24. Share your resources. Be proud of your business and those who work with you.
25. See Success! Visualize accepting the award, or nominating a customer to win an award.
26. Believe in people. See their strengths, encourage them to utilize them. Dream big, you can always scale back!
27. Refer, Re-unite and Recognize. People appreciate referrals, keep in touch with past contacts. Be honest, sincere and enthusiastic when it comes to recognizing your peers - you get what you give!
28. Don't ask for referrals - earn them! Show and tell, don't sell.
29. Volunteer - find your niche, what do you care about? Get involved.
30. Keep in touch. Always leave the door open for new business, it often comes from old friends, past clients and associates.
31. Find common denominators. What do you have in common with your peers, your customers, and your potential clients? Build rapport, find common interests and goals.
32. Joint venture. It's not just for big companies. Strategically aligning yourself with companies who compliment is often one of the most successful ways to grow.
33. Write. Learn to write about yourself and your company - write informative articles about relevant issues - become an expert. Don't write ads - write about resources, contacts, sources of reliable information.
34. Media. Learn to write media releases - if this isn't your strength, barter or hire a media expert. Get you and your product in front of the press.
35. Learn to listen. Practice asking relevant questions and then just listening to the answers. Don't interrupt. You will be surprised at how much more you learn.
36. Turn negatives into positives. There is always two perspectives, try to see both sides and come up with a way to move forward.
37. Make it better. Take your product or service and find ways to improve it - make it easier to use, faster, lighter, more efficient.
38. Become an expert. Write articles for relevant newsletters and industry publications. Volunteer. Be an "expert" on panel discussions.
39. Promote yourself and your product. Brand everything you can, create awareness.

40. Put in 10 times as much effort as you think it should take. (10:1 ratio. 10 inputs for every 1 output.)
41. Bring in 3 partners, advisors, friends or colleagues and let them advise and support you.
42. Be heard. Consider being a guest on local radio. Be easy to find. Put your website on your car. Be resourceful. Re-cycle last year's promotional materials and donate them to charity.
43. Be open minded. Always find a win/win.
44. Package your business so that it adds EXTRAORDINARY value to the consumer, not just the customer.
45. Motivate yourself and others by creating a visual display showing measurable progress on you business whether it's a product or service.
46. Bring in customers/users and alpha testers at the very beginning and LEARN from them.
47. Link the business to your vision. When both are connected, the business gets a big lift.
48. Maintain a healthy reserve: twice as much capital/expenses/time as estimated.
49. Force the business to prove itself, in some way, during each stage of its development.
50. Trust your gut!

Donna Messer is Canada's first Spice Girl, the founder of Orange Crate, the little "Spice" company that grew. Donna is an author, speaker and trainer. She has launched 100's of businesses for clients around the world. She is also the founder of ConnectUs a company that builds business by building relationships.
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