

Are you still passionate about your business?

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25 Aug 2011

Does your business still excite you as much as it did in its infancy? Do you still approach every day with a "want to do" attitude? Are you still as creative and innovative as you were when you first crafted your product or service offering?

I've watched my young daughter's excitement to every new experience lately and it got me thinking, what if we approached our businesses with the same child-like enthusiasm? If we looked at everything through fresh eyes every day, like we were seeing it for the very first time, how would this impact our daily processes? Would it have an effect not only on our bottom line but also on our levels of fulfillment?

Child-like enthusiasm

- **I finally followed the right passion** - choosing the right career path whether it's from the start, or 14 years down the line (like I did), will definitely give you the energy and enthusiasm you need to drive your business to success. There is nothing as good for the soul as going to sleep at night knowing that you spent your day doing something you love.
- **I found a brainstorm buddy** - this was a really good move. My brainstorm buddy is my equivalent of a mentor. We get together once a month or so over lunch and talk about our businesses and in between we catch up on Skype. We brainstorm ideas for each other's projects and generally make each other look in fresh directions that we hadn't thought of previously. We also chase each other to deliver on our decisions.
- **I'm getting myself out there** - perhaps it's because I'm older, perhaps it's because I'm wiser but I'm no longer afraid to pick up the phone and make the calls I need to make, or write the articles that will build my personal profile within my industry. I see each day as a challenge to get out there and meet new people, and forge new long-term relationships.
- **I'm constantly learning** - I keep myself updated about what's happening in the industry through online research, engaging with others in my industry and like a child, I'm always questioning the way to do things. I'm not afraid to ask questions. I do this because the more I learn, the more I grow, the more value I'm able to bring to my clients.

All of these things have helped me stay positive and enthusiastic about what I'm doing on a daily basis.

Looking at things with fresh eyes

At a recent event I attended, Dr Gavin Symanowitz spoke about changing your thinking to change your business. The point that struck me most was that in business there is often a tendency to keep doing the same things (whether they are working or not) because "that's the way we've always done them."

When you look at things with fresh eyes you open yourself to new opportunities, but more than that it can give you a much deeper understanding of your business.

You need to be constantly assessing:

- **Your target audience** - are their needs, wants and responsibilities still the same as they were when you started your business? If not you need to change the messages you're sending them to make them more relevant. Are their new audiences you could be talking to - often if you've changed your product or service offering this can open up new avenues and opportunities for your company to explore
- **Your competitors** - are they still the same competitors when you started your business? Have some closed up shop, expanded - are there new players on the block that you need to be watching. How are they doing things differently to you, and are they gaining or losing market share?
- **Your policies and procedures** - are your policies and procedures helping or hindering your business? Sometimes it is a case of it's been working fine for ten years so you assume all is well. Have you done your research? Do your customers have an easy ordering process or are their too many steps in the process - is there a faster more efficient way to do things?

We all want to make our lives easier and our customer's experiences better. We want our business to grow, not stall and looking at things through fresh eyes often helps us to do that.

A focus on creation and innovation

Do you remember the excitement you felt when you took those first wobbly steps towards starting your own business? You had an idea of what you'd like to be doing, and a general idea of how to go about it, but more than anything, you had a hunger, a passion, a driven desire to go out and do it. You had identified a gap, an opportunity and you wanted to be the one to fill it. You were focused on creation and innovation as you raced to get your product or service to market.

Is your focus still on creation and innovation? Are you still striving to make things better for your business, your employees, and your customers? When you stop focusing on improving the status quo, and settle for where you're at, your enthusiasm for what you're doing on a daily basis can take a knock.

Being innovative isn't just about coming up with new products and inventions; it's about finding new and better ways to do things in your immediate environment.

- How does your sales process work?
- How do you reward employees for a job well done?
- How do you approach customer service differently to your competitors?
- Is there a process happening in a different sector which could be tweaked to work successfully in your sector?
- Is there new technology that could be applied to your processes which would allow a smoother more efficient ordering process?

What keeps your passion for your business alive? Is there something that you do to challenge your status quo on a daily basis?

For me personally it's doing what I love every day. It's also the constant variety, and the brainstorm sessions around my business and my clients businesses that push me to find new and better ways to do things all the time.

Whether you've had your own business for six months or six years, it's always a good idea to spend a little time on a regular basis reminding yourself why you do what you're doing and asking yourself if you could be doing it better - not just for yourself, but for your employees, and your customers too.

I am a Johannesburg-based freelance writer and editor with a talent for crafting well-researched, strategically aligned, and professionally written communications and searching out and telling interesting brand stories that create interest in and loyalty to brands. I have worked with local and international clients for the past 20 years.

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