

# BUSINESS INSIGHTS

## The most important thing is to figure out what's most important

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I guess that I have a different perspective about business success. First, it is driven by what the individual business owner or founder wants to accomplish. There is a global perspective that it is all about making money. The research

seems to focus on this. I am not sure, based on my perspective, that this is the only reason. I would speculate that independence as a reason is as valid. Why, because I have seen business owners that make decisions away from money and towards pursuing other values.

This is important because it impacts the actions that an owner is willing to initiate. The actions are closely linked to their motivations for taking the risk to be in business in the first place.

My experience indicates that the business practices, while important, are available to everyone. I mean that what to do when a problem or change presents itself is available to everyone; whether it be on the internet, the SBA or in numerous business books available to every owner.

It is important to understand the owner's vision of success, whatever the color. I think they become confused due to the basically materialistic view caused by societal pressures, which causes lack of clarity of purpose. It is quite possible to have a good business that satisfies the owner's values and the needs of customers while making a good living.

What most owners are looking for is fulfillment, whatever the definition. We should understand the goal and not assume it is the almighty dollar. This is important to understand because the potential solutions are very different.

The circular argument is this; somebody once said, "the most important thing is to decide what is most important." Can you clarify your goals, independence or



money? Independence does not mean lack of money, it means there is another definition and this business might look very different. It could be a good feeling about how you treat customers or a passionate interest in the subject. The point is that whatever it is that fulfills you, since you have taken the risk, should accomplish your dream.

The reasons I have come to this perspective are twofold. First, I have suggested many strategies that, if implemented, would prove fruitful for founders. The interesting part is that some owners would implement the suggestions and others would not. The implementation was not a ques-

tion of money or about execution. I came to understand that it was about what the owner actually wanted the business to add to their life.

Second, business owners are very complex people and the businesses they create are also complex no matter how simple the business. It is important for the owner to clarify exactly what they want the business to provide in their life so the business is designed to do that. The best example of that is when a client said to me, "I want to make \$60,000 a year and be home for cookies and milk." ■

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