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What Being In Business Really Means *Reality 101*

By

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Ever thought you'd like to be in business? Lots of people do! Many of these same people perceive that being in business really means 1) making the *big bucks*; 2) working fewer hours; 3) building up equity in your business; 4) being able to sell the business at some point in time for *millions*. Nice idea – theory or reality?

I have worked with entrepreneurs over the past 40 years and in just about every case, the CEO/President of the company claims he/she works twice as hard as the next hardest working employee. Why? Because any entrepreneur worth his/her salt must believe, *BIG TIME*, in their own ability to succeed and appreciate that succeeding will not happen without hard work.

Many entrepreneurs started their first business when they were very young. One of my clients did landscaping at age 12. When I was 11 years old, I created a window-washing business that made me more money with 10-12 hours work/week than a person being paid minimum wage earned in those days made over that same week timeframe.

For people who have never been in business, the *love* that entrepreneurs have for their business is difficult to understand. Yes, I said LOVE. Think about it. Compare owning/operating your own business to raising a child.

- The child is conceived and born
- You want the most for that child so you spend lots of time, energy and, yes, dollars helping that child grow up to adulthood.
- When the child is sick, you feel terrible.
- When the child is doing well and is thriving, you feel great
- Even when the child wants you to go out and play/do something and you're terribly tired after a tough day, you still do it because you love that child.

If you substitute ***your business*** for the word, child, you can start to see how an entrepreneur sees the business they own.

Think about it – entrepreneurs typically spend more time over a typical week with their *business baby* than they do with their real children. And unless they're crazy or worse, they wouldn't do it unless they loved their business enough to really devote their energies to make it succeed.

Deciding whether or not you're cut out to be an entrepreneur is sometimes difficult. The experts, including Strategic Planning & Implementation Associates Inc., who work with entrepreneurs, tell you that you should not start a business if:

- You have to take home income from the business during the first 12 months of operation

- You can't devote at least 60-70 hours/week during that first year. Remember you're the CCBW - chief cook and bottle washer – in charge of everything.
- You are not willing to invest your own money in the business. This often means you may have to take equity from your home/condo or, if you particularly fortunate, will be to find *friends and family members* who are willing to invest with you (not in place of you) to help cover the start-up costs. There are few business that don't need a minimum of \$100,000 to get off the ground. And that assumes no inventory (service business).
- You don't have the complete and total support of your spouse. It is amazing how many divorces come from entrepreneurs whose spouses don't have a clue what you do – and expect the same ol' commitment to taking care of the children, helping around the house, spending *quality time* and more. It is a rare entrepreneur that can meet that expectation. Often you'd find yourself unable to spend any time during the start-up phase because your time is needed with your *other baby* – your business.

Keep in mind that fewer than 20% of start up businesses succeed in the first 3 years of operation. And of that 20%, only about 5% of the total make any serious *big bucks*. The rest make a living – many just barely that.

If, after reading this article, you're still ready to proceed, then go for it! If you have the personality to do it right and not suck the blood out of your new business in the beginning (both time and \$'s), you will find yourself with something pretty wonderful – a successful business YOU created from an idea – your idea.