

Want a (more) Successful Business?

Focus on These 5 Things:

By Debbie Allen

It shocks me to see how many entrepreneurs continue to get in their own way by focusing on the wrong things in business. Don't focus on what you don't know at first you'll just get frustrated and stuck. Focus instead on what you *can* do and keep going to gain momentum. The following are some of the basic skills that will drive you to (more) success.

1. Focus on what works for easy success. Many entrepreneurs believe they'll succeed, but they lack the basic business skills and common business sense to back up that belief. They waste a lot of time focusing on expensive details.

For instance, when I work with entrepreneurs in building or reinventing their businesses, I help them develop or re-create their branding. Occasionally, I get a client who gets stuck on such details as perfecting the font on the logo when he should be focusing on areas of the business that generate profits. People like this make it hard for themselves, instead of making it easy by trusting the process.

Obsessing over perfection or the wrong details isn't cost-effective. You must learn to prioritize. Know how much time to spend on each aspect of your business, and don't waste time on less important tasks.

2. Avoid "Squirrel Syndrome." It's not uncommon for a business owner to spin their wheels and lose focus. When this happens, many people start looking for the next bright, shiny object to grab hold of. This is called Squirrel Syndrome.

- Squirrels have a severe inability to focus.
- Squirrels often dart back and forth—doubting their decisions—unable to choose a direction.
- Squirrels have something to teach us: what not to do.

The Squirrel Syndrome may cause abrupt dashes from one idea to another or one project to the next. When this happens, you become unfocused and may even become frantic about not getting things accomplished. The result is, you delay or never complete important projects to reach your goals.

You can avoid Squirrel Syndrome by learning to recognize when a squirrel shows up in your life. Refocus by taking the time to define the project or direction in which you need to go. Then stay on task and turn off all distractions. Remember, every time you stray off course, it takes that much longer to reach your goals.

3. Focus on activities that create results. Focus is one of those critical habits you need to master if you want to be successful. Improve your focus on the day-to-day business activities you do best, and from which you produce extraordinary results. If you don't, you'll create high stress levels and may experience burnout. When you spend most of your time and energy doing the business tasks you're brilliant at and allow others (like employees or subcontractors) to do the rest, you reap the biggest rewards.

For example, don't try building a website unless you're a webmaster, and don't try learning technical skills if that isn't the best use of your time. Outsource those things instead to someone on your team or in the GROW Business Network and focus on running your business so it can prosper.

4. Multitask mindfully. The key to multitasking is to do it strategically and mindfully. Mindful multitasking allows you to stop reacting to distractions, such as the automatic reflex to answer the phone or read an incoming text. It allows you to focus on the actions that provide the best results and disregard everything else. After you set your intentions for the day, create a to-do list that you can tackle using mindful multitasking, allowing yourself to be present in each action you take for the day.

5. Focus on developing one big project at a time. Don't try to start multiple projects at once—it fragments focus and time. Entrepreneurs are creative people, often with many good business ideas. It's hard turning off the desire to act on multiple ideas at one time. But if you split your attention between more than one big project at a time, you'll run into trouble completing anything at all.

Here are 5 ways to **remain focused** on whatever your task at hand may be:

1. Write out what you need to accomplish each day so you don't forget important tasks. When a new idea comes to mind don't stop what you're doing. Simply make a note of it and come back to it at a more convenient time.

2. Focus on your overall ideas and then implement an effective action plan. Keep your top three goals in mind and commit to achieving them each week. Write down the specific actions you need to take to achieve those goals.

3. Tackle creative work first. Mindless work will drain your energy, lower your focus, and waste your time. When you start with creative work at the beginning of the day, you can work on the most complex projects when your energy is highest before moving on to simpler tasks, such as answering emails or returning calls.

4. Understand what's worthy of distraction. Don't allow last-minute, non-emergency issues to kill your focus. Stay on task and stick to your commitments. Prioritize other tasks and put together a timeline so you're not needlessly distracted.

5. Unplug from email, social media, and phone calls. Take a break from all outside distractions and focus on the task at hand. You'll get a lot more done when you're not constantly interrupting yourself.

