

# WHAT IF AESOP OWNED A BUSINESS?

Fables to Help Entrepreneurs, Startups & Business Owners Excel at Business



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This book is dedicated to entrepreneurs and business owners who are making things happen.

Specifically, this book starts out with a story of 'Lil' Bessie' which is influenced by my grandmother who we lost years ago. It was always my goal to write a book and my mom wanted me to do something in dedication. I just needed to find the best way to do that and I'm getting closer to making that a reality with this book.

Enjoy!

## Forward

*What if Aesop Owned a Business?* It is an interesting question that strikes up a lot of ideas. What would his businesses be? Would it be online? Would it have a storefront? What would the name of the business be? What would his business model be? How would he raise capital?

There are much more questions, but the reality is that just like the question we ask, there are a lot of possibilities and questions that arise when starting a business.

We hope this book is an answer to many of these questions. We hope this ebook which is compiled from our contributors and freelance writers, along with inspiration from contributors to our site will help you manage and run a successful venture.

There is something that I always found fascinating about entrepreneurs and business owners. It is those people that have an idea and are able to grow it into a business that generate revenue and in some cases even hire people.

It is those people that have the guts and are bold enough to even attempt starting a business which what makes and shapes the world we see. Often many ventures are started with the idea of "What if..."

What if we can bend a piece of metal and fly across the world?  
What if we could check our e-mail, surf the web, listen to music at our finger tips?  
What if we could plug something into a socket and it would light up a room?

"What if..." Two powerful words that open up a range of possibilities.

At CEO Blog Nation, we hope that we help you think "What if...", empower you to go out to do it, and provide the information on how to do it. If there is ever any questions or information we can provide to help you managing or starting our business, don't hesitate to let us know.

This eBook is packed with over 140 business lessons, tips and advice for entrepreneurs, startups, and business owners. We have distilled some of the best information from our sites into these short, bite-sized lessons that are similar to Aesop's fables. The lessons will cover various business topics including business strategy, marketing, business planning, bootstrapping, financing, human resources, leadership and more.

I promise you this intro will be the longest thing that you will read. I grew up reading Aesop's fables and this entire book is very short and sweet just like Aesop's fables.

- Gresham Harkless, Blogger in Chief, CEO Blog Nation ([www.ceoblognation.com](http://www.ceoblognation.com))

## Intro

*“Lil’ Bessie was eager to learn everything that she could about owning a business. She had started her lemonade stand during the hot summer months in South Carolina, and even though business was good, she wanted to take her business to the next level. One day she found a book called What if Aesop Owned a Business?. The book contained business lessons, tips, and information to help Lil’ Bessie take her business to the next level. Every day after working at her lemonade stand she would find herself reading the book and extracting business lessons to implement every day.”*

### **Lil’ Bessie Learns About Social Media**

In a field one summer’s day the Grasshopper was relaxing with his feet up. In his lap was his laptop, and whenever his phone went off he would pick it up while he responded to his Tweet or Facebook comment. The Ant passed by with his large briefcase hoping to knock on doors and visit local businesses.

“Sorry, can’t speak right now,” said the Ant, “I have set the goal to knock on 100 doors today so I can get more customers and I don’t have time to waste.”

“That’s fine” said the Grasshopper, “best of luck to you. I hope you exceed your goals.” The Ant stopped and said to the Grasshopper, “Aren’t you going out into the field?”

“Not today!” the Grasshopper said while holding up a book which said something about social media for grasshoppers. “I’m doing all my work right here,” he said lifting up his iPad, “and here,” he said lifting up his phone. “And...”

“Sorry, got to go! No time to waste!” shouted the Ant as he rushed away into the field. As the sun set and the Grasshopper powered down his iPad and cell phone and ended his day. After a dinner with his family, he waited on the porch for the Ant to come back. He thought to himself, if I was this successful then surely the Ant must have sold the entire farm. After 8 PM and the sun had already set, the Ant slowly trudged in front of the Grasshopper’s house.

Looking forward to hearing the great news, the Grasshopper asked the Ant, “How’d your day go?”

In just a few hours the Grasshopper was able to Tweet a message announcing a one day only sale to his 40,000 Twitter Followers and 10,000 Facebook Fans. He had 3 Skype phone meetings, and he used his webcam to record a webinar which he blasted out to his 15,000 e-mail address. Just from the e-mail and another tweet he was able to schedule meetings which would fill up his calendar for next week.

“It was okay” said the Ant weakly. “I only had time to see about 5 potential clients. When I met Mr. Duck he wanted to talk and talk and talk, so I didn’t have time to go to that many customers and even Mr. Horse took up two hours of my time. I did set up two meetings, but I didn’t make any sales. I’ve learned my lesson, so I will wake up earlier and stay out later. Hopefully, I will be able to see 10-20 businesses tomorrow.”

“Anyways, how did you day go?” asked the Ant

“Umm...it was okay” his voice trailed off not waiting to throw his successes in his friend’s face. Earlier that month, the Grasshopper met with a social media expert that explained the importance of social media and how it could grow his business. She even helped him to optimize his website so that customers could make purchases directly on his site. In just a few hours he was able to Tweet a message announcing a one day only sale to his 40,000 Twitter Followers and 10,000 Facebook Fans. He had 3 Skype phone meetings, and he used his webcam to record a webinar which he blasted out to his 15,000 e-mail address. Just from the e-mail and another Tweet he was able to schedule meetings which would fill up his calendar for next week. He read the analytics report which showed that he received clicks leading to sales from his Twitter and Facebook updates. This left him enough time to have a productive lunch meeting with Mr. Owl and close a financially beneficial partnership.

Snapping back to reality, the Grasshopper said “I think this social media thing is here to stay. It works. You should try it out for a little bit.”

The Ant sighed, “Not you too.” He shook his head and walked back home mumbling to himself. The Grasshopper hoped that his friend would one day be able to accept change and embrace the power of social media.

**Lesson:** Don’t be like the ant. Accept change. Social media is the future and the present, and it is not an option but a requirement for the success of all businesses. The world is considerably smaller, so that now business owners can speak with clients on the opposite side of the world in real time. It is estimated that over 80% of Americans use social media. The names will change and the products may look different in the future, but social media is here to stay and it offers incredible potential to prospect, to increase sales, to market products and services, to develop and strengthen brands, to communicate with consumers and clients, and to listen.

## Be Confident, Be Fearless

There were days when Puma felt like she didn't have the power to get her business going. For years she had dreamed and planned for the day, but now every obstacle seemed larger than life. She just wanted to go back home and hide. While reading a book, she saw the words '**Be confident, Be fearless**' and it struck her as powerful. She could be confident and fearless. All she needed to do was step out the door and let the business world hear her roar.

## Give Up Some Control

Turkey was having trouble dealing with his children and keeping his business going. Each needed his undivided attention and if he gave more attention to one part, the other started to fail. He couldn't ignore his children, but he couldn't abandon his employees. Turkey felt like he needed to be at work all the time to make sure things were running well. When his friend Bison suggested he needed to **learn how to delegate more**, his work and family life improved almost instantly. Now he was free to gobble up all the time he could with his family.

## You are Stronger than You Believe

Mountain Lion was having doubts about her business skills. It had only been a few months since she started her business and already she had hit a brick wall and was scared to climb over to the other side. Her friend Moose sat down and gave her a pep talk, "**You are much stronger than you believe.**" From that point on Mountain Lion trusted the advice and climbed over the wall.

## Defining Immediate Plans

Rooster was doing well with his business. It was at the beginning stages, and he felt in control of everything. One thing he felt he needed was to **define some immediate plans**. The next few months he wanted to boost sales and make some changes; so with the help of his friend Pig, the two made some plans in a weekly and monthly schedule. Now when he was asked about the future of his business he had something to crow about.

## Have Patience

Jaguar was used to the rush. With business clients he did everything he could to make sure his products were out quickly and their needs were met as fast as possible. With his local customers, they knew what they were dealing with when making a deal with Jaguar. The quicker the better!

But when Jaguar began to deal with customers from other areas he noticed they did business a little differently. They took more time and reviewed things a little more than he was used to. Although it was hard, he knew **having patience was important to making sure his customers felt important.**

## Take a Look at Time Zones

Falcon had expanded his business to reach across the pond for the first time ever. He knew the times were different and it would be dark when it was light at his nest, but he was confused as to how he should deal with it. Eventually, Falcon realized that **to have valuable clients in other places he would need to make sure he paid attention to their schedule and time differences**. Things went smoothly after that and he kept a hawk's eye on their schedules.

## Giving Back to Employees

Snail wanted to do something special for her employees. Day in and day out they seemed to work harder and harder to make her business the best it could be. She had thought of doing some sort of trip, or a nice company picnic, outside during the regular workday, or even treats during work. All of these were amazing opportunities to show her employees just how much they meant to her. **Giving back to them would also give Snail just the boost in speed they needed.**

## Don't Be Afraid to Raise Prices

Flamingo was struggling in the tough economy. Clients were hard to come by and there just wasn't enough to keep the company going for much longer. As much as Flamingo hated to do it, he knew the advice from his accountant, Salamander, was the right step to take. He had to raise his prices. While some of his customers left, more came and stood by him. **Though his prices were higher he knew his product was worth it and he also kept his business alive!** Now he felt safe standing on two legs instead of one.

## Basic Tasks are the Way to Go

Chimpanzee could do a lot of things well. While other Chimps had a mind for sitting in a tree talking about strategy all day, he was busy building and making things work. He knew how to stop bowls from dripping and fix leaky wells when they were gushing water. **The basics, he thought, were skills that everyone would always need.** Because as much fun as the World Wide Web was and having a great number of Twitter followers, it didn't help you fix a broken well.

## Schedule Some Time to Play

Turkey was exhausted from everything he had been doing for his business lately. It seemed that with each passing day his energy was draining and he couldn't quite get enough rest at night. All in all, he knew the stress was going to win out if he didn't do something soon. Weasel sent Turkey an invitation one day to meet him in the park. Once Turkey met him at the park, Weasel told him a much needed message, "Every week you need to plan a time to come here and walk around. **You can't always work!**" From then on our Turkey made time each week to walk around the lake or just enjoy nature.

## Taking a Walk at Work Helps You Stay Healthy

Bull needed to get in better shape. He sat all day at his desk during work hours and breathed in the same stale air without taking many breaks. Although he was the boss, Bull was dedicated to his work and didn't feel like taking breaks would help his company at all. Finally after getting sick again, Bull decided something had to give. From then on **he decided to talk a quick walk outside at least once a day and improve his posture when sitting at his desk.** From then on out he felt a healthier and wasn't sick at all.

## Fundamentally Accepting a Leadership Role in Society

Donkey was comfortable and happy with his business. Clients were coming in and he was making contacts all over the village. He felt exactly like he was where he wanted to be. His friend, Goat, asked Donkey what the best part of being an entrepreneur was. Donkey said, "**Being able to make a change in our community** is the best part of being an entrepreneur."

## Identify the Type of Business

Bunny had decided he wanted to start a business. Although he had no experience with anything business related, he visited the local bookstore and asked the librarian for some help. She suggested Bunny look at the book about the basics of a business. Opening the book he noticed the first chapter was about identifying a business. Taking the book home Bunny decided **he better hop to finding out what kind of business he wanted to start!**

## Do Not Act Like a Man

Anteater had started her new business. It was in a field mostly dominated by men. She felt a little overwhelmed trying to figure out how she could make herself known, and even out the level between herself and her male counterparts. Her friend Dove told her the one thing she had to make sure to avoid was acting like a man. As easy as it would be to play the part, acting like a man would do little good in the end. So, after months on the job, **Anteater had made herself known to the men not by acting like one, but by working by their side as a woman.**

## Sophisticated and Simple

Gator was trying to design a new logo for her business because she felt her old one was much too messy. Night after night, she sat on her couch drawing different shapes and spelling out her company name in letters from huge to tiny, black to blue and even writing it backwards! She wanted so badly to make the logo stand out to her clients and everyone else. As she drifted off to sleep one evening she thought about how **all the best logos she had seen were very simple**. The next morning she drew up a simple, elegant logo that ended up really snapping with her clients.

## Freedom to 'Customize' Their Job

Otter loved his employees. Most of them were friends he grew up with and some of them were simply workers he had grown to love because of how great he got along with them. While he knew he was the boss of them, he didn't want to be too strict on them. He knew all of his employees were great at their jobs and he didn't have to worry about how they did. **Instead of micro-managing his employees, he gave them the freedom to customize their jobs and for that reason they felt empowered and motivated.**

## When Potential Clients Demand It

After a year of working hard, Sheep finally found some solid success. Her product was selling very well locally and in surrounding areas. Now and again, she would get a message from a customer across the big pond asking if there was a way they could take advantage of her product. There was no product like hers that they knew of locally, and hers was the best they had found! Soon thereafter, more customers began requesting her product. **Knowing she had a market of customers who truly needed her product far away, Sheep decided it was time to broaden her business border and provide her product all over.**

## Don't Be Afraid to Be Smart

Dog was timid in her business position and felt as though she needed to be more assertive. Her friends and co-workers gave her advice, but she wasn't sure if it was the correct to follow since she worked in a male dominated field. Dog knew she was quite smart and had the ability to do her job very well, maybe even better than most. Once she realized she could be smart and not feel bad about outdoing the men in her field she found that **being assertive was easier than she thought!**

## No Cost/Low Cost Online Job Boards

Just starting out in the world of business, Iguana didn't have an entire staff dedicated to finding him employees. Now and then he would interview candidates in his office, but it never seemed like any of them had the right qualities he was looking for. Knowing he needed to make a change, he starting to view sites and post the exact **job online on reputable sites**. After that, the right employees came knocking at his door instead of just any employees.

## Give Them Exactly What They Don't Expect

Owl was never the most outspoken in her networking group. She was incredibly proud of her work, and most of the time when she submitted a project her colleagues were extremely impressed. After a few months she wanted to be a little more known in order to get more business in the future. Her colleagues always thought she was quiet and probably wouldn't ever try and take on more responsibility, but after a long talk with her friend, Eagle, she decided in order to make herself known she had to stand out. Instead of being shy at meetings she spoke up and took credit for her work, managed small meetings and assisted executives. In other words, **she did what nobody expected her to do and it paid off with more business in the end.**

## Have a Strong Strategy to Go By

Though Jaguar had made all the right choices in his business, there was one thing he couldn't control – the recession. While businesses around him were falling left and right, Jaguar was trying to both keep his business profitable and afloat during the rough times. Not wanting to let any of his workers go, he decided he needed to sit down and make a few changes. He sold only the main products he started out with and made sure all his customers were taken care of. **The only way to make it through this was to have a good strategy and Jaguar was doing exactly that.**

## From the Very Beginning

Turkey was about to unleash his new handmade bracelet line. A few weeks before, he had been considering his shipping methods and how he wanted to handle shipping to those outside his area. He was unsure whether it was a good move or if he should wait for his product to get a little more established. His friends told him that if he **wanted to have a real business plan it had to include business all over the place and not just in his little patch of land**. Realizing his friends were right, Turkey opened his business to customers from across the United States at the very beginning.

## Don't Be Fake

Parrot was not so great in the sales department. More often than not, when he went on a sales call, he made things all the worse by trying to pretend he was much better at sales than he actually was. The clients could always tell he was faking and were too uncomfortable to do business with him. Speaking with his co-worker, Parrot learned that **even if he wasn't the best salesman in the world, faking a persona in front of clients would never land him a sale!** From that point on Parrot stuck to his true personality and even though he might not have been the best, his clients trusted him more with his flaws and all.

## Don't Forget to Share the Love

Rhino was a pretty stubborn boss. Although he liked his employees, he wasn't close to any of them. Most of the time he simply nodded to them each day and went about his business. One day his co-owner, Crow, **suggested he might want to share with everyone how great his team was doing. Crow knew this would help Rhino's employees to feel more appreciated for their work.** So from then on Rhino nodded, but he also complimented his employees for a job well done.

## Answering Questions from Customers

Badger was not the best at trying to figure out the new trends. His friends all urged him to start a blog for his business and start connecting with his customers. Unsure of what to do with a blog, Badger studied a little online and then went to check on his email. Finding question upon question waiting for him from clients, he suddenly realized that **if he wrote a blog and answered the questions on there it may help other customers in the future!**

## Consider the Industry

Monkey and his friend were having coffee one morning. They were discussing if men and women would ever be equal in business. His friend gave a little shrug, "I guess it depends on the industry you're in," she said. She explained that sometimes there are shifts in a certain industry and it begins to favor women over men and then men over women. **Equality may be a constantly shifting topic but looking at the industry can be a telling factor.**

## How to Romance Your Customers

Fox had started his business around the same time he had gotten married. The similarities were astounding as time went on. He treated his customers much like he treated his wife when they went out. He had to keep her happy, like he did customers. Pay close attention to what they were saying in case they brought it up later, much like his now-wife. Of course, **he had done well enough with his wife, so he figured making his customers fall in love with him would be almost equal to this!**

## Entrepreneurs Are Born, Not Made

Pony felt since he was a young foal that he was different. Every job he had, Pony seemed to want to change things up. He wanted to mix up the rules and put a new spin on the job. Time and time again he left a job because he felt like it just wasn't the right fit. After another year of this Pony decided enough was enough. If no other job would suit his needs he would just make his own position. **Once he started his own business it was like a thunderbolt, he was instantly in the right place.**

## A Smart Way to Distribute Your Company News

Raccoon was trying to figure out a more creative way to share his business news. Sending newsletters didn't seem to be working with his type of business, and he wanted to make a little more impact than just sending a quick couple sentences about the news. **His friend Snake suggested he look into starting a blog to keep connected with his customers.** Now he had a space to share his news and also keep in contact with his customers on a more personal level.

## Face-to-Face Time in the Local Communities

Hawk had started his business and found his first roadblock. His budget for generating leads was tiny and he needed to find a way to get some business without spending a lot of money. There were a good number of people he knew in the community, so it seemed like the best option at the time. From there he went door-to-door talking to the local businesses and his friends to help him generate leads at next to no money.

## Consistently Engage Customers

Elk wanted to always be in contact with her customers. She didn't want to be one of those business owners who avoided all customers contact and left other people to take care of it for her. Although she was busy, she knew there had to be a way to keep in touch with customers and keep them involved. Elk had a personal blog she wrote on and figured that might work just as well for business as it did for personal! After a few weeks of writing a blog for her business, she realized that her customers knew she was around and active and they felt all the more certain when dealing with her company.

## Article Marketing to Help With Leads

Low on cash but stocked full of ideas for articles, Moose decided that perhaps writing was the best way to generate some leads without spending a lot of money. He knew his business very well and had been involved in the field for years now. Writing articles and getting them posted on both his blog and other blogs would surely get him noticed. A few weeks passed after his first two posts and people began contacting to ask questions because they felt by reading his articles they really got a sense of just how much he knew!

## The Majority of Meetings Aren't Necessary

Crow hated meetings. He saw no point in sitting around listening to people talk about business when they could be out there doing business. All companies he had worked for had an equal view on how important meetings were to a thriving business. When Crow started his own business he was determined that meetings would only happen once in a blue moon. Maybe other companies valued meetings but Crow and his employees value not having meetings more.

## Showing Yourself as an Expert in Your Field

Panda was an older business bear, and had a lot of experience in his field. For years he had mentored younger entrepreneurs and did so free of charge. Now he was starting his own new business and wanted to make sure his message still got to the people who needed it. Being an expert in his field, he felt that using his blog would help his new customers to see just how experienced he was in the field. Just as soon as he began blogging, the clients began pouring in because they knew just how much of an expert he was.

## Rebel by Truly Being Yourself

Koala was sometimes shy in his business practices. Time and time again, he said something other people thought was odd or out of place in their business world. Finally he decided if he had his own business, his quirky thinking and creativity could be free to live and thrive. Quitting his job and starting his own company gave him all the freedom he yearned for all those years. He hired employees who not only liked his quirks but encouraged him to let them in on all his wacky ideas. In the end, truly being himself was what really mattered.

## Listen to Your Customers and Put Their Needs First

Dog knew he needed to get a few feet on the businesses closing in around him. Some of them sold equal products, but he knew he had something that the other businesses didn't on his side – his ability to listen and put customers first. For the others guys it was all about making money. This didn't work well in getting them returning customers. So to succeed even more, Dog pushed his level of personal customer service even higher.

## Combine Old Fashioned With New Trends

Skunk had been debating on trying to go back to the old ways of marketing. The world was so full of technology but it seemed more and more people were going back to how things used to be. His friend Badger suggested he try and combine the two to create a more potent marketing plan. By doing this Skunk got the marketing style he wanted and satisfied both sides of his client base.

## Business Will Diverge Between What is Cheaply Made to Highly Personalized

Baboon had been sitting in on a meeting with his business partners and they were discussing the future of business. Some of them had some zany ideas and some reasonable ones. When Baboon went back to his office late at night, he sat at his desk and wondered himself about the future of business. Digging through a few pieces of mail on his desk, he saw a handwritten letter from a customer expressing how pleased she was that he took the time to call and discuss her issues with her. This, he thought, would be the future of business.

## Protect Your Reputation at All Costs

Mouse and a friend had their business running well over the last few months. A lot of people had been discussing with them what should be done in the future. One thing, Mouse had discovered, was that some customers would never be pleased no matter what. And some of them would even go so far as to spread mean things about a company. So Mouse decided that she would hire a consultant to make sure her brand was as sparkling as it currently was well into the future.

## No Brick and Mortar for Us

Falcon was happy with how her business was run. While everyone else in the village woke up and went to their perspective places of business, she remained at home and simply walked into her office. For her company there was no building. Each employee worked from home or on the go – whichever they preferred. Falcon knew very well this was not the norm but being able to have a flexible life and enjoy doing her work while at home was truly thinking outside the box.

## Marketing is a Must

Gator knew he was low on cash when starting his business. Every other entrepreneur he knew was low on cash as well, but handled it in different ways. One such entrepreneur was his friend, Owl. Everything Gator knew about being an entrepreneur he had learned from Owl. So when Owl made it clear that if he wanted his business to go far he needed to put an emphasis on marketing. Owl knew it cost money, but he also knew that without marketing Gator would be in big trouble in the long run.

## Unique Appreciation of Employees

Lion was a good employer to work for. All his employees knew it and anyone on the outside would immediately proclaim how wonderful it would be to work in a place like this. Instead of a strict dress code, he allowed employees to wear what they liked, within reason. He gave all his workers paid time off, no matter what. And his business was closed on all holidays and during the weekends so his employees would be able to spend time with their families. Plus, the culture and environment of work was fun and relaxed. By doing this his employees actually worked harder because they were less stressed.

## Creating an Experience Around a Boring Service

Aware his line of work wasn't the most exciting, Pig had been feeling rather down about it all. Next door there was a cute shop with lots of great gifts and funny products that he knew people went crazy for. When his customers came to him it wasn't exactly a big party. So one night he decided to change that. The next day he got some funny posters, set out a great array of food, and made fun of his line of work to put the customers at ease and in high spirits. Now he was just as fun as the shop next door while still providing the same service he had before.

## Keeping in Contact with Clients is the Most Important Thing

As her business grew, Gorilla knew some changes needed to be made. She was getting more customers in her shop, and keeping track of everything and everyone was turning out to be a lot harder than expected. Once some of the small stuff was handed off to her employees; Gorilla was able to focus on the one thing she knew was most important to the company – customers. She made a list of all the customers, past and present, she hadn't spoken with in awhile. From then on she made it her mission to speak with them at least once a month even if it was just a quick letter in the mail thanking them for their service. This way, Gorilla kept in contact and didn't leave her customers out in the cold.

## Measure Seven Times and Cut Once

Puma had been taught at a young age that one of the most important things about business was to make certain before pulling the trigger. All her life she had heard the saying about measuring seven times and cutting once and it was a phrase she took to heart. While some business owners may have cut corners to save time, Puma always double and triple checked her work to make sure things were as they should be before the order or product was made. That way she never had to worry about the 'what if' of her mistakes.

## Not Counting on the Traditional Paths

Tiger was always the traditional business owner. For years he had managed the same business, nearly the same employees and did things the traditional way. But right outside his door there were new businesses coming in that didn't want any part of the traditional life he had built in his business. They were unique and creative. Tiger thought he needed to be like these business minds if he ever wanted to get a paw up on things. Over the next few months he completely broke out of his mold and started to tweak his business from traditional to exceptional.

## Stick to your core strengths

Cat had always known what her strengths were. When starting her own business she felt certain pressure to try her hand at other skills and attempt to do a little of everything. After months of trying this, and failing for the most part, Cat decided she needed to go back to basics. She knew her core strengths and thought that if she stuck to those it would probably be a wise choice!

## Take Business Seriously, But Don't Take Yourself Too Seriously

Goat considered himself a pretty serious businessman. Oftentimes he would stay in his office well after the time to leave and study over numbers and reports. When he met with clients he was all about business. A friend suggested that he might take a little lighter approach with his clients. Hammering out business constantly could make deals seem much more serious and stressful! Goat decided it was a tactic worth trying, and his clients felt so much more at ease and friendly with Goat that they decided to give all their business to him.

## Be Patient

“Right here, right now” was a favorite saying of Hippo. He liked things finished in a timely fashion and when a product was delayed he found himself becoming impatient with everything. Knowing full well that to be a good boss he needed to be a more patient person, he learned that just because something didn’t happen right when he wanted it didn’t mean it would ruin his entire business. For Hippo, learning patience was key to being a great leader.

## Having Absolute Confidence

Bear had an issue with being the most confident voice in a crowd. When he started his business he always became shy when he was placed in the spotlight to help lead. While sitting in his office one night, he read a message from one of his colleagues that said being bold and confident with his business would give employees more confidence in the company. Like or not, Bear knew he needed to be confident. Not only because his employees needed it but because Bear wanted it as well.

## Deliver on Your Promises

Donkey had always been known as one of the best business owners around. Not only did he sell his products at a fair value, but he also made an extra effort to always be an ethical in how he ran his business. He was good to his employees and always went the full mile with his clients. The most important rule of business he followed was always keeping his promises, no matter what. Doing this not only made him feel good but it made his clients feel more comfortable with his business.

## Be a Smart Rebel

Porcupine was of the younger generation than all the other business owners in his area. Since becoming a business owner himself he decided that his business wouldn't be like any other in town. But before he mixed things up and went the path of a rebel, he thought long and hard about whether he could commit to such a title and if being a business rebel was something that had to be done for his business. Knowing that rebelling just for the sake of it would lead to disaster he weighed each option and knew, finally, that his business could only run with a rebel behind the wheel.

## Receiving Positive Feedback From Clients

For Tortoise, there were so many things he loved about his business. From the products he sold to the hand-delivery method he employed, there was just something so invigorating about how things worked within his world. One night when speaking with his friend Badger, the question of his favorite part of the business came up. Tortoise thought for a long time about this question before answering in a simple, thankful manner, “My favorite part is the cards and notes from my customers in praise of my work. That is what gets me from day to week to month.”

## Why be the Same...

Once Boar's business was up and running, he looked around at his town and thought about all the other businesses. Boar had always liked to push the limit and create funky, unique items that sometimes customers were surprised by. Even while surprised his customers always came back looking for the next big thing. So while all the other places near him were doing the traditional things, Boar decided that running his business the 'cool' way, instead of traditional, was the only thing he truly wanted to do.

## Being Able to Help People

Time and time again Bull forgot that he was doing business when meeting with customers. They were like old friends of his, chatting and talking well into the evening. Of course, each meeting was business but each meeting left him feeling glad he was in this sort of business. At night when there was stacks of paperwork to go over and meetings to figure out for the next day, he thought back on the day and realized that his favorite part of all of this was the joy he got from helping people.

## To Showcase Your Company Culture

Oxen had a unique company culture at his business. His staff was fairly young and while they created, they enjoyed having fun. Most of them were on the site Instagram and enjoyed sharing photos with all their friends. Knowing this was yet another outlet to promote his business, Oxen thought it might be a good idea to show customers and potential clients a little of the behind the scenes action. So he began having his staff take pictures of the fun they had at work and post them on the site. That way everyone would feel like they were part of it.

## Be Honest About Your Skills

For Owl there were times when he had suspected some of his competitors fluffed up their skills a little bit when speaking with potential customers. They made everything seem a lot better than it actually was. Owl didn't see this as a very honest and ethical thing to do to keep any clients coming his way. Even if it made some clients run to the business next door, Owl slept well at night knowing he was completely honest about what he could and could not do well.

## Continually Innovate

Kangaroo had been sailing along with her business for a few years now. The business had its highs and lows, much like any good business had in its lifetime, but now Kangaroo had begun to worry her business was becoming sluggish and stale. Instead of hopping away from all her problems, Kangaroo met them head on and decided some innovation was in store for her little business; because if her company was always changing, it could never really be stale.

## A Passion for Serving Others

For years and years Mule had committed his life to serving others. As the boss of a small business, Mule learned early on that some of his workers looked to him as much more than just a simple business leader. They looked at him as a mentor and an example of what a CEO should be. He always made time for his staff and made every effort possible to show how thankful he was to them for all their hard work through the years.

## Do Something Different – Really Different

Fox was in his den when a sudden thought came to him. It was a bolt of lightning in the form of a new product. His business, fortunately, had just released a new product to the public and people were thoroughly enjoying it. This new product would be a companion to the other. So instead of telling his staff about it, he went home each night and worked until it was completed. Inviting all his clients and staff to a meeting, he unveiled the new product to everyone just a few weeks after the first product. It was a huge surprise and a huge hit with everyone. Doing something different kept everyone on their toes.

## Find Something Useful and Trendy

Hippo loved the prospect of giving her business a little extra boost by showering some of her clients with some free goodies. There were so many items to choose from in the book that she wasn't exactly sure which item would be the best for her and the most exciting for her clients. In the end she decided to go on a different path than she normally did, and order some exciting and trendy gifts that were sure to both make her clients feel appreciated and ensure her business would never be forgotten.

## Items That Reflect Your Company

Swordfish had been building a market for knives at his company, and wanted more people to know about the new line he was about to introduce to the public. He had the idea to send around some colorful rubber knives as a fun gift for customers who may have been interested in the new line, but he wasn't sure if that was too on the nose. His friend told him that sending fake knives was just the thing for his business! They might not have been known for their knives but this gift would be exactly the thing to attract customers.

## Showing What Your Business is All About

Raccoon had started his business from the ground up and decided that it was finally time to get it up and running online for more people to see and visit. He had a small website up and running; but it wasn't much and his customers barely knew it even existed. So he decided to make the website a little better and a little more unique. Therefore, he designed the website from the ground up and made it known what kind of products he had, his services and what his company actually stood for. That way his website was both unique and showed what he did.

## Intimate, Authentic and Unexpected

Bullfrog had seen her competitors down the street. A few of them had placed out fancy signs; others were having free treats on special days. Knowing her business needed to be playing a little catch-up with the rest, she decided sending out some gifts that were a little different than the others were doing. For a week she did her research and looked at various promotional items. Finally she settled on a very unique trio of items that could be branded with her logo and that her clients would never expect in a million years! From then on her clients remembered her for not only her products, but the unique gift they had received.

## Branding Online Needs the Human Element

Penguin had been building up her business and making it known to the public. There was a steady base of new consumers who were not only promoting her brand but also jumping on board with her entire business in general. Though Penguin enjoyed having such a trendy brand going, she also didn't want it to become too impersonal. So instead of everything just being about her business she also included some personal stuff and pictures, and she even started a blog that was semi related to her business. This way she still kept a more personal, Penguin element to all of it.

## Look at Your Audience Before Choosing

Rhino and his co-owner were running through a catalog they received in the mail all about promotional products. These items seemed like they could be a unique way to spread the word about their business and also give their customers a unique item to connect them with. Before choosing a few items to brand, they studied over a few and, more importantly, studied them in relation to their customers. Which item would the customers use and which would they enjoy the most? Once they figure this out they ordered the products to send them out.

## Playful Site Design

Beetle had been working on a site to help his customers get a feel for what his business was all about. Since the majority of clients he did business with lived elsewhere, his website was mainly what they interacted with. While his product wasn't the most exciting thing in the world, he made extra sure his website was. It was unique, cheerful and had little quirks about it. You clicked one thing and fireworks might shoot over the screen. Once in awhile a little creature would crawl out from the corner of the screen to say hello. All of this showed his customers that while his product might have been boring, his brand was anything but.

## Quality Over Quantity

Crow was about to purchase some items to brand his business with. They would have his logo all over them and be sent to clients and potential customers. While looking around he noticed that he could buy some cheaper items and more of them, or spend a few dollars extra to get something great. In the end he decided that quality was much more important than quantity and his business would be judged on the promotional products.

## Showing What Your Business is all About

Turkey was in the process of starting her business and making sure everything was in place before the big reveal. She had her products in place, marketing partners and just about everything else one would need for their business. The final straw was to make sure her business was branded online properly. Meeting with a website designer, she made sure the website showed exactly what her business was all about from the way products were shown to the biographies about her workers. Showing what it was all about was the best way to brand her business online.

## It's all About Consistency

To Hare, branding your business was the one thing he worried about most. He knew his products were solid and they nearly sold themselves, but one major thing he lost sleep over was making sure his brand was as strong as his products. Instead of flitting from one thing to another, he decided that staying consistent with his branding message was the right way to go and was confident this would be better in the long run.

## Align Your Personal Image with Your Brand

Sparrow was a fairly fashionable gal. All her friends came to her for fashion advice, and her male friends would begrudgingly allow her to pick out their clothing. Everyone who met her always commented about her being so unique in her style and the way she did certain things. So when it came to her business, letting her personality and image shine through was a perfect way to help brand her business.

## Do Research on People

Cricket wasn't about to just go rushing out to find someone to help design his website. Every single day when he got online there were ads and emails from sites and people begging him to let them help. On the surface all of these people seemed reasonable and great at their job. But having had several friends who got into trouble with shoddy website designers, Cricket didn't want to make the same mistake. So he took the time, researched all of the designers, and decided on the best person for the job.

## Put Your Logo on Everything

Gecko had just bought an entire shipment of various promotional products. Before the purchase, he asked some of his fellow entrepreneurs their thoughts on how he should brand the items. Some said no to the logo, but most agreed to the idea. So that evening before the purchase, Gecko thought long and hard about what to do. It seemed almost dumb not to put his logo on each and every item. It was a huge lost opportunity to send out random items without his logo on them.

## Take Inventory of Your Values Today

Lion had been debating about giving his business a new gloss to it. It had been several years since he started the company and over time his values and goals had changed somewhat. His brand didn't exactly reflect that as it was now. The next day Lion took stock of his new outlook, and met with some designers on how to change his business. In the end, the new makeover not only won over some new customers but also perfectly reflected what his vision was now.

## Tell the Truth and Fix What's Been Broken

There was a mistake. Mouse had let orders go out that contained absolutely nothing in them. Large orders at that. When the calls started pouring in of angry businesses that had trusted their supply to be filled, Mouse was frazzled. As much as he wanted to bury his head in the sand and let someone else deal with it all, or blame it on the workers, he called each one back and apologized for his error. He sent them all the correct orders at a big discount so their loyalty was given due respect.

## Start With Your Online Presence

Turtle absolutely loved his website...when he first started his business. Over time his online presence had begun to show some wear and tear around the edges. There were a lot more modern sites out there and it was getting harder to compete with the online side of things. Finally after some advice from a fellow entrepreneur, Turtle hired a consultant to take a look at his presence online and guide him where it needed to go. After this, his online presence and website was on par with the rest.

## Give it Time and Space

Steer had made a lapse in judgment and ran an ad that was meant to compete with another company; but it came off as an angry attack. He certainly didn't intend for it to come off like that, but the more people saw it-the angrier they became. Customers were starting to leave or demand answers from Steer. Each time he tried to reply it seemed he only made this worse. Steer realized the best thing for him to do at the moment was step away from the spotlight of business and give it some space. The other owners would run things until it got back on track. Sometimes, when bad things happen, giving time and space is the only correct approach.

## From the Bottom Up

Monkey was on the verge of turning her business inside out and upside down. She had decided on hiring a designer familiar with her field, and began to meet with him every week to discuss what needed to be done. Some people changed a few things about their business just to make some waves. Monkey and the designer decided that making small changes wasn't enough. To make a brand new image they had to start from the ground up. Everything changed, but the vision of the business stayed the same.

## Know Your Customers as Deeply as Possible

Giraffe has been reading up at his local library about what it meant to be a good, bold leader. Each book he went through had a similar theme to it – customers. Keeping customers happy was the lifeblood of any good business. Having only been in business for a few months, Giraffe had done well with his customers so far and wanted to keep it that way. Taking note of all the books, he made a simple plan for his customers. He would get to know them not just on a business level but on a personal level as well. He would know how many children they had, what places they liked to eat so he could send gift cards out as thanks and other little things to help him connect.

## Incite Your Audience to Feel Something

Panda was a writer at heart. His family had always owned a business since birth, so when it was time for him to take it over he did so, though he brought with him his love of the written word. The business not been focused much on the art/writing part of things but Panda decided if he wanted the business to be a reflection of the new era...it needed to reflect himself. So he began to write stories which spoke of his brand and of how he would be running the business. They were filled with passion and inspiration for where he would be taking the business. He wrote stories about his family, struggles, and customers he had met growing up in a family business. This not only presented a strong brand to customers but gave them a taste of what kind of leader he would be.

## Piggyback Off Current Events

Rooster was a keen observer of the news. He always kept current on events going on both in his town and out in the world. One such event had caught his attention over the last few days, and since it dealt with his business in some small way, he figured it would be wise to jump on the train and help his business along a little. Rooster sent out a pamphlet to all his current clients and ran a story on his website urging customers to consider his product with the recent events. Having the ability to spin the news to help his business was a fine way, in his mind, to keep his business relevant and in tune with what was going on in the world.

## Teamwork is Key

Duck had planned for a company picnic and the day was almost upon him. He knew all too well that his workers weren't always going to be thrilled about spending their time with the people they worked with, and the boss, on the days that they were off of work. But having a company picnic was a chance for his workers to bond over games and sports. It was a chance for him to learn more about them outside of work, and for all of the company as a whole to learn how to work together in a more cohesive manner. From the customized t-shirts to the prizes for each team, the company picnic would bring them together in a tighter community – much better than any boring meeting would.

## Make an Effort to Target Young Adults

Bear had a product that usually appealed to an older audience. Knowing there was an entire market share he was missing, Bear decided to put some steps into action. He hired a younger designer to give his website a few extra perks that may appeal to a younger crowd. One of his friends helped him create an app for phones that the youth could visit on the go. He still stayed true to what the values and message of his company was, but he did so in a way that both young and old alike would enjoy.

## If You're Not Prepared to Wait and Learn, Hire an Expert

Owl was ready to get his branding in gear. He had been to the library reading up about how to best brand a business. There were articles pinned to the walls of his office and books piled on the desk. There was little doubt in his mind that he could brand his business in such a smooth, quick way that his competition would be blown away. Sadly for Owl, his enthusiasm did not couple with patience. When things weren't moving fast enough for his liking, Owl grew upset. He felt all this waiting around was costing him more money and causing more pain. One evening he finally decided that he could be patient no more with the branding and hired a professional to help create a business brand for his company. Now instead of wasting his small patience on branding, he could focus his effort on other areas.

## By Providing a Referral

Rabbit knew the best thing she could do for her business was to get a customer to give a referral. The moment a great customer gave their approval to a friend or a co-worker she knew that it most likely would generate more business. So all her efforts were put towards generating some good referrals and creating an incentive program for those customers, and Lamb saw a great rise in her business from that moment on.

## Creative Internal Branding Exercises

Talking to friends one morning, Lamb was discussing how he could put a fun spin on branding his business. Were there certain ways of doing so that he had completely overlooked? Steer gave a little shrug before sipping from his mug, “Maybe you could start from the inside out?” To Lamb this seemed like a reasonable idea. If he had some sort of branding event inside to get his employees motivated then it would give a stronger presentation to the outside world.

## Infuse Your Personality

Goat has a very outgoing personality. He had always been the life of the party when he would go out with his friends. To his employees, well, he was an even bigger ham with them. Time and time again his employees told him he needed to play that up and make it part of his brand. While the product he sold was rather serious he figured maybe it wouldn't be a terrible idea for him to do so. The next month he had some funny posters printed up and a media ad ran showing off his unique and silly personality while promoting the company. After that his customers seemed to feel more comfortable doing business with him, and it also branded him as a relaxed business owner to do business with.

## Positive Online Reviews of Your Products or Service

The online world of customer reviews and disapproval was something Pig hadn't really considered as far as his business went. He didn't have any negative reviews at the moment but he didn't have a lot to go on. People just weren't writing anything. When one of his co-owners suggested maybe they should focus on getting some reviews online, he decided to send an email to some of their recent clients to see if they would be interested in writing a review. He didn't bribe them with coupons or kind words. He wanted them to be totally honest. That way when people went online they could see what other people thought of the product. It was a great way to involve both the present and potential customer.

## Building a Fun Mobile App

Mule was trying to liven up his branding. He'd started out with a few fun events for his employees and potential customers, and now he was trying for something a little more sustainable. Finally he hit on it – create a clever mobile app for his business. Not a boring one that nobody wanted to download, but a neat one that showed off his company at its finest. This would be a fun way to highlight the attributes of the company and also be informative to customers.

## With Advocacy and Credibility

Reindeer was speaking with a customer when she heard the customer say something that struck her. The customer had been asking whether or not her company did any sort of charity work. Reindeer did charity outside of work, but she had never considered making it an event inside of her business. Instead of beating around the bush she asked the customer point blank if they would be more likely to buy from her and tell their friends about her business if she was involved in charity work with her business. The customer thought a moment and then nodded, "Yes. A company which gives back is much better than a selfish one." From then on Reindeer sponsored a charity close to her heart and once a month she and her employees went and volunteered.

## Creating Online Videos

Frog was getting a lesson in the world of online branding when she stumbled across an article about making videos. This seemed exactly the fun idea she had been looking for to give her branding a little infusion of creativity. Getting together some of her younger employees she urged them to make a fun video all on their own. From start to finish they would be in charge of it. After the video was finished she discovered not only was it a funny, creative video but also her employees had connected with one another much better than she could have ever imagined.

## By Being Passionate About the Brand

The one thing his employees and clients never doubted about Bear was that he was passionate about his brand. Each day he came into work and immediately launched into whatever innovative thought popped into his head. Time and time again, he would call out to everyone and get their opinion of his product. He branded his car with sticks about his product and would talk to nearly everyone he saw about it. Because of this, customers felt safe doing business with him. His brand was an extension of himself and they knew that by doing business with him, he wouldn't let them down because it would be letting himself down.

## Unique Business Cards

Baboon had started one of the first ice cream shops in the part of his jungle. The spin was that his shop sold some wacky and fun types of ice cream that some people were nervous to try out. To help get the word out he created a fun business card. The card was shaped like a cone of ice cream and had the usual information on it. But attached to each business card was a small coupon on the back which the customer had to solve. It was a riddle for a unique ice cream flavor. That way the customers would always remember the card they got that zany coupon from. And, of course, the card stood out against the usual rectangle variety.

## Offer a Product That Is Repeatedly Unique

Tiger was focused intensely on her product. Not just the product, but the experience the customer would have with it. Each time the customer came back she wanted there to be something a little bit new they could do with their product. She wanted there to be updates, but not small updates that they would forget about easily. She had designed her product to be used in a lot of different ways and she didn't want that to end. So instead of resting on her laurels, she presented the customer with a brand new part of the product each time they came in for a visit. This meant the customer would not only continue to be excited and experiment with their product but also share it with other people.

## Don't Let Your Thoughts Get Invaded by Negativity

Lion had been in a rut lately with sales. His team was going strong but for some reason he had been slipping with closing deals and making sales. In the evening he sat and thought of ways he could do better and be different in his routine. But the more he thought about it, the more he became exhausted over the issue. Confiding in the co-owner of his company, Lion was surprised with the response. "Stop complaining," said Goat gently, "So you've had a few bad meetings. You need to look for solutions. Instead of focusing on the negative, look for the positive." With that advice in mind, Lion found that with each meeting of clients he began to get back on track.

## Tap Into the Knowledge of Your Current Customers

Seal was trying out some new techniques a friend had advised him of. He was new to running a business, and would take into account all advice his friends could give him on the matter. One topic which kept coming around was the fact that he needed to listen to his customers. They might not have been business owners or even know much about business – but they knew exactly what they liked and exactly what they hated in a company. The key, Seal thought, was to use the knowledge of his customers to help his business along. So he hit the ground running by listening to his customers and patrolling the floors to sneak in time with unsuspecting customers to gauge how they felt about his business. It was the most useful tactic he could think of!

## Being Able to Train Various Personalities

Baboon had been speaking at a conference for new business owners. When he was getting ready to leave for the evening a young entrepreneur came up to him with one simple question about his leadership. The entrepreneur was very timid, and wanted to know about what the best part of his role was. For a few moments Baboon thought about the simplicity of the question. Finally he replied honestly, "You are very shy to be a leader. You're the reason I enjoy my role as the top rank. I get to tutor people like you, from shy to stern and strong to arrogant. I get people from all backgrounds and how I handle them is exactly what gives me a thrill as a leader."

## Life Changing Relationships Happen Regularly

Raccoon met for the last time with one of his employees. The employee was leaving the company after many years, and had asked for the meeting to tell his boss thank you for all the years of leadership and training. Raccoon sat and listened as the young employee told him about his new job, and how he would always be up to help out Raccoon if there was ever a need. After the meeting Raccoon went into his office and smiled happily. It was the life changing relationships like this that made being a leader the best job in the world.

## Your Reputation is Everything

Canary had taken the reins of a business over when the owner made a move that wasn't in the best interest of customers. There was a team to help her recover, but she soon realized the most important part of the business was not what she expected. It wasn't the product or the procedure necessarily...it was the reputation. Customers would not come to a company with a shoddy reputation for treating clients like disposable income. It took several months to get things back on track with the business; and Canary, for most of those months, put her sole focus on setting their reputation back on track.

## A Domino Effect

Penguin had been sitting one evening and looking over a project that was about to be finished. From start to end he had been a big part of things, and he could see what an impact it had on things. Being a good, solid leader meant that he was there for his employees no matter what they needed. Any mistake they made in the project, he would be there to help them out. When they needed a sounding board, he was there. Penguin could see that he not only helped in the immediate but in the long run.

## Websites Don't Need to Cost a Lot

Elk was debating on buying a website from a professional. Unfortunately the quoted cost to her was way more than she wanted to spend. When she looked online at different prices she discovered that she could buy a website that was easy to build by herself. It was a lot less money than having someone build the site for her and being reliant on them if the something was to go wrong. It was the perfect plan!

## We Did What Everyone Said We Couldn't Do

Zebra had started his business for one reason – because he had always been told that he couldn't create the product he wanted. His co-workers never thought it was possible and his boss always downgraded his ideas telling him that instead of thinking up ideas that would never happen that he needed to focus more on the task at hand. So once he left his job and began his own business, that product everyone said would never work was built in under a year.

## Have a Plan and Stick to It

Moose was about to open the first franchise of his business. There was such a demand for his product that he wasn't sure whether he needed to meet that demand, or mix it up a little so customers would keep coming back for his product. Sitting down one night, he kept looking over papers and debating on what he should do with the newest addition. Finally after a lot of thought and advice from his fellow entrepreneurs, and the owner of the new franchise, he decided that they needed to do exactly what they were doing now. What's why customers kept coming back, right? So Moose made a plan for the new franchise and stuck to it, he didn't let outside thoughts creep in after that.

## Deal With Your Emotions

Eel had been having a difficult time with his business. There was so much stress in every detail of the job; and for that reason Eel was having serious doubts. When employees had issues he would get angry with them and sulk the rest of the day in his office over it. When his co-owners made comments about his behavior, Eel decided that taking a few days off was the best thing to do. While off on vacation Eel realized that taking everything to heart in his business wasn't going to help anyone; getting angry at his staff only hurt their desire to work there. When he came back, Eel kept his emotions in check and his mind strictly on business.

## Focus on Customer Service and Satisfaction

Turkey had just opened his third franchise and things were definitely looking up. After the first month of the franchise being in business he decided to call a meeting with all the owners. Turkey was proud of what they had all accomplished, but he wanted to make one thing very clear to each owner. Customer service was always going to be the top. If they lost profit to make up for an error, fine. Having the customer leave their store satisfied with their purchase and how they were treated was the priority. During the meeting everyone agreed that putting the customer first was the most important thing for all their businesses.

## Tips to Create a Successful Franchise Business

Llama had buried her head in her business for so many months that she had almost forgotten what having free time felt like. She called up a friend who was also a fellow business owner. Her friend suggested putting down the phone, shutting it up in a drawer, and taking a walk outside. Llama was hesitant. What if someone important needed to get in contact with her? Looking at her phone uneasily she took the advice and left the office for a nice, long walk and was able to finally experience some time to relax.

## Prospective Employees Need to Have that Entrepreneurial Knack

Dog was finally ready to hire his first employee. He knew there were several different ways to go about doing so; but before that he wanted to figure out the perfect type of employee to hire. Initially he wanted to hire someone with a mind like his; someone who liked to take chances in business and changes things up frequently. For that reason he decided it was best to actually hire a fellow entrepreneur, or at least someone with an entrepreneur's mindset. When he did eventually hire that person he realized having another 'Dog' around was the perfect fit.

## Management and Employee Success Are Intertwined

Kangaroo was attending a seminar by a business leader who had started 15 businesses in his lifetime. Most were successful and he sold them off to begin a new business. While sitting and listening, she paid extra attention to one point he had made – managers alone create success for their employees. Kangaroo realized that nothing could be truer. As a manager she gave her employees the right opportunities to get ahead in the business and create great things. After leaving the seminar she realized that going back to her business meant she needed to go back with the knowledge that it was on her shoulders.

## Put Skin in the Game

Armadillo had been working on changing things up with his business. A group of business partners had met to discuss some exciting changes which could be made to liven up things around the office. Armadillo had been having some ideas of his own during the meeting, and decided to speak with his co-owner when he returned to the office. He wanted to empower a group of employees to begin designing and thinking of new ideas and products to pitch to him. He wouldn't just let them do so without reward or interest, but each month they would all sit down and discuss the news ideas and hear their pitches. The winning idea would receive a public viewing and a bonus to the lead designer on the project. This way he would be committed to their innovation.

## Pay Special Attention to Social Media

Wasp was a little old-fashioned and comfortable with his business. His staff members were young and getting even younger as the years went by. Finally it occurred to Wasp that perhaps he should look into trying to capitalize on the growing market of tech-savvy young people with money to spend. He went to his young staff members and asked if they might have some suggestions for him to start with. Each one said that social media was the way to go. So from then on Wasp involved himself in the task of learning all there was to learn about social media and how it could attract a younger audience to his brand.

## Find a Great Business Partner

Whale was excited and ready with his idea to open a new business. The only problem was that he knew, without a doubt, that running a business alone was more stress than he could handle with his other duties. Asking around he realized that the best solution for this problem would be to find a great business partner; someone to equally shoulder some of the responsibility. By finding a great business partner through local resources, Whale was up and running with his business in a matter of months and no longer worried about having to carry the entire burden on his own.

## Keep Them Wanting More

Lion might not have been young himself; but lucky for him he had three kids. He knew exactly the steps he needed to take when trying to attract their attention. At home, if he gave them everything they wanted all at once they would get bored easily and run out of things to do. But if he teased them with hints of what was to come, he could keep them on their toes and looking forward to the next surprise. This was the same thought he brought to his business and to attracting a younger audience. If he kept his young customers expectant and excited they would continue to return.

## Take a Break

Rhino was in the business of overworking himself. There wasn't a time during the day that he either wasn't working, having meetings, or generally thinking about something related to work. And by the end of each month he was completely and utterly exhausted. Finally when he wife visited him for lunch and heard him talking nonstop about his business, she decided there needed to be a balance. Instead of lunch she told him to take the day off and come with her to the park. Taking a break from work, Rhino realized, not only helped him mentally but also physically.

## Design Is The Silver Bullet

Panther was a young entrepreneur so she had a leg up when it came to branding her business. She knew one thing that the older generation might not have been aware of when it came to business – style. Younger customers wanted to buy from a company that was fashionable and edgy. Being proud to put the logo on their car or wall was a major bonus. So Panther always made sure her logo was hip and her brand's outward projection was cutting edge. This along, as well as a good project, left her with a steady stream of young clients.

## Survey Your Customers – Literally

Falcon had been thinking of new ideas to get a sense of how customers were reacting to her brand and business as a whole. In the past she would call around to customers and ask for their opinion, but most of the time they didn't answer or were confused by why she would be calling them in the first place. Finally she gave up the cold calling and decided to take a more timeless approach – surveys. When customers came into her store they were given survey cards to fill out. At the end of their shopping trip they could get a certain percent off their purchase if they filled it out completely and to the best of their ability. It was a sneaky way to see how they truly felt but it not only benefited her as a business owner, but her customers as well.

## Good Service is What People Buy

Moth had hit a bit of a snag with her business. It seemed like it was slower than usual and she just didn't understand why. For years her business had been at the top of its game and now things were at an impasse. Maybe she had gotten lax on her customer skills being behind the desk all day. Maybe her employees didn't really have their hearts in the product anymore; now that it had been a success for so long there wasn't anything to try for. Sitting down with her supervisors she discussed all the issues with her business, and found out what the issue was – customer service. It all stemmed from that. If the customers weren't happy with the service, they wouldn't be happy with the product.

## Make a Prototype

Gecko was getting into the swing of the whole business concept. He had never been much of a businessperson, but he was an inventor. He spent hours in his basement thinking up products and sketching them out on paper without really putting them into actual production. One evening he hit upon his best product yet. He ran to his basement and began to sketch out the idea. The entire evening was spent drawing and shaping the product. He wrote guidelines and jargon, rules and instructions. At the end of his planning he realized this could actually work. Calling up an actual businessman he knew for a hint on what to do next, his friend told him plainly to actual build a prototype. If Gecko couldn't build anything he needed to hire someone that could. A product, even if it was amazing on paper, wouldn't ever sell by that alone.

## Investing in the Customer

Llama was still in school but had the idea of starting a business that she just couldn't get rid of. In classes she would daydream about the business and decide different models. There was only one catch – she didn't have much money to invest in starting a business. With \$100 in her pocket she went and spoke with her business professor. He suggested that the number one thing she needed to do with that money was to get a paying customer and invest in them, make sure they were happy with the results of her work, and it would lead to her business actually becoming a business.

## Get Involved in the Community, Listen, and Focus on Health

Penguin was having a difficult time trying to balance everything at once. When things started to slip beyond her control she sat down at her desk one evening and decided to completely overhaul her work attitude and what her priorities were on. While she had once been a proud member of the community board, this had fallen by the wayside during her business career. Even her health had taken a bad turn because of all the sleepless nights. Right then and there she decided that if she was going to maintain her balance in business and not get swept up that she needed to go back to the things that helped – sleeping and community service.

## Invest in a Professional Logo

With just a few bucks in his pocket and the desire to help, Rhino was ready to start his business. He'd been building and planning on paper for years now, but the thing about planning on paper was that it cost nothing. In the library he roamed over countless advice books and went online searching for answers. Finally he hit upon one main theme. If he wanted a successful business he had to make it look good from the outside in. So the money he had saved in his pocket went straight to the one thing he would be known for – his logo. He had a designer create a beautiful, unique logo which in turn ended up attracting customers.

## Morning Walk, Block Facebook/Skype and Workout

Cat was always connected. She carried her phone with her anywhere she went, and even during vacation time she was always checking her Facebook or Skype for anything related to her business. Over time this began to feel like more of a chore. It didn't seem like it was benefiting her business, and it was starting to wear her down. Finally she had had enough and decided that if wanted to maintain her sanity and keep things manageable that she needed to take a step back from Facebook, relax and enjoy her mornings, and maybe even get in a little jogging time to help her keep a balanced lifestyle.

## Getting Attention

Kangaroo was at a business lecture as one of the presenters. He didn't have to give any speeches but when a group of young entrepreneurs came up to him after the day ended, they had some questions for him to answer. Their biggest question was what the biggest hurdle was when he was trying to start his business. For a few moments he thought back on the beginning of his business and all the muck he had to plow through to get to the state he was at today with his business. Finally he decided on the most prominent one – getting noticed. “It was hard to get noticed in a sea of startups,” he said with a nod, “They all want one thing – a good product at a fair price. Anyone can do that if they want to. But it takes doing that and more to get noticed. You claw and fight and climb your way to the top through unique design, innovation and doing what the other people can't or won't.”

## Buyers Can't Inquire if They Don't Know You Exist

Badger had been working on a promotional plan for weeks now. Finally he had finished and crossed all the t's he could think of. Bringing it to the attention of his co-owner there was one huge problem – he left out the part about bringing his company to the actual public. No matter what kind of promotion he did, books, magazines or television ad's, if the buyers had no clue what his business was about or even what it was they surely weren't going to buy from him just because they saw him on television!

## Make Sure You Have Compatible Personalities

Beaver had been working with his son for several months now. It was an internship with his son, but he wanted to bring him on full time as a worker. Although Beaver loved his son, he was slightly unsure of how they would work together. Beaver had a very stern take when it came to business. Customers liked knowing someone was in charge and things were getting done. His son, on the other hand, liked to let customers know that he was his friend and move at a slower pace with them. So before Beaver hired his son he had to make sure their personalities matched up when it came to working together or it would likely lead to trouble.

## Don't Buy Fancy Equipment

Whale had been looking over some glossy new office supply magazines sent to his business. Each page was full of beautiful new supplies which, he thought, would make his company much more of a success in terms of how it looked. His business was new and he had been bootstrapping since the opening day. And although all the beautiful new items would look fantastic in the office...deep down he knew it would be a waste of funds that could be better spend on customers or his products.

## Professional Respect

Otter was always raving to her daughter about the latest product she had come up with at her place of business. Her daughter also ran a small business with similar products. After a few years they decided to merge the two and become co-owners of the single company. While Otter always had ideas, her daughter knew just how to put them into action. One never became jealous of the other. If they did, they met together alone and discussed why it was bothering them. That way they maintained a level of professional respect and neither found themselves hurt.

## Think Like You Have No Money to Spend

When Lion was about to start his business he came across an article which changed the way he thought about the beginning. It urged all new entrepreneurs to think like they had no money to spend. Lion thought it was a great idea. Instead of hiring outside help to do simple, basic tasks he decided to take some time out and study around for tips and video examples. By doing this he not only saved a ton of money in the beginning but also bettered himself in the process.

## Office Time Is Not Family Time

Penguin was having a spat with her son at home. They had been arguing over whether or not he could build a porch onto the back of his room to have some more privacy. The trouble was her son also worked with her at their shared business. While the argument wasn't a major one, she knew that if they let their personal family argument become a work issue that their business would begin to slip. Penguin decided to sit down with her son one night before they went back to work and speak with him about the problem. They agreed not only on the porch but also on never bringing up family matters at work.

## Exercise Everyday

Hog had been feeling like he didn't have much energy to do anything around the office. He sat behind his desk and let his employees do their work without walking the floors or getting involved in any of the smaller meetings. Realizing he needed to get some of his energy back, he started to walk each morning with his wife around the block. It only took them 15 minutes to do so but over time Hog realized that just getting in a little exercise helped him feel like normal again!

## Set Daily Priorities

Seal knew the only way to get what he needed done in the day was to make a list of his top priorities. Each morning after breakfast he would sit down with a full list of things he needed to accomplish, and one by one he could mark things off and cancel meetings until he had a final list of 3-5 tasks for the day. Each of these things were what he knew would make the most difference each day if he completed them. This was a much easier way to set his day up and also make sure his priorities were in order with his business.

## A Personal Assistant

Chipmunk had just bought the new iPhone and had been researching ways that it would help him with his business. There were obvious ways, like Apps, to help him with payments and keeping up with clients. Even the most basic Apps, like calendars and calculators, helped out a lot in his daily life of trying to manage everything. But the one thing he loved best about his new phone, which made his life just a little easier, was Siri. She could help him find information and assist him with small tasks. She acted like the personal assistant he never had!

## Schedule Repetitive Tasks

Each day there were certain things that Falcon knew she needed to do. They were small, daily things that sometimes got in the way of running her business. Checking on her Facebook wall and other social media sites slowed her down. Talking to a friend about this very thing she learned that he, also a fellow business owner, would usually schedule things like this at one single time in the day. In the afternoon when he returned from lunch, he would hop on all of his social media sites for the business and schedule posts or reply to comments. This way he was ready for it each day and it never got in the way of his other duties.

## Interviewing People Outside Your Network

When starting her business, Baboon wanted to make sure that she would have all skills covered. Her company was filled with her friends as workers, and she debated whether or not she needed to just stick straight to the people she knew and not wander outside of this. But Baboon felt that the best business had people from all backgrounds within it, not just her friends. So Baboon went online and looked at hiring sites and networks to find some other workers which may have been the right fit for her job. Soon she had hired a handful of people she didn't know at all, but knew they were capable of creating some great things.

## Keep Positive

Crow could easily have gotten upset about certain things in business. There was a lot of stress to deal with, of course. There were issues with hiring, employees, products, and any number of things. There were times when Crow just wanted to throw up his wings and take a month off from doing anything at all. But knowing how unhappy he would be without his business, Crow held one idea firmly – keep positive. There was plenty of bad to dwell on outside and within his business, but Crow knew that remaining positive kept everything else on course.

## Gain Relationships With Colleges and Universities

Panda had been looking for employees for the new business he was trying to get off the ground. Instead of doing so through online sites dedicated to getting workers hired, he went another route. He contacted the local college in his neighborhood and requested that they sent the resumes of any graduates looking for a job in his field to contact him to see about a job. Youth usually had the fresh ideas and he thought that also giving recent graduates a leg up on getting a job would not only help him, but also his community.

## Bad Customer Service Can Be Viral

Shark knew customer service was the most important part of any business. So important, he thought, that he began giving a lecture on it to any new recruit he hired. One of the biggest things he emphasized in his speech was that fact that in this day and age one slip up can be send around the world in a matter of minutes. The power of YouTube had already been a platform for customers to show how they have dealt with horrible customer service. You don't know when you are being filmed, Shark said. So it is better to act as though you are always being filmed.

## Having a Mentor

Camel had been working at dead end jobs for years now. His true passion was creating products instead of simply making them from some book. Suddenly, one evening he realized that he needed to make a new start. One that didn't involve him following by another set of rules someone else had laid out for him. He had the ideas, a plan he'd written for fun long ago, but now he knew one more thing he needed before the business could be started – a mentor. Someone who knew the whole business realm and could prevent him from making a lot of mistakes he could avoid. Going online and to the local business center he met individuals which could act as mentors. Camel knew no business owner should be too proud to accept help from a mentor figure.

## A Great Name

Dog sat in his kitchen at the table with a sheet of paper and several random words written on the page. He knew that if he didn't find the perfect word it would hurt him in the long run. The entire evening he had his laptop in hand looking over the dictionary. Finally he started to mash words together in order to find the best of two worlds. Eventually he hit upon a word that was perfect in his mind, one that would be a jumping off point for customers to ask where he got the name. To Dog, naming his business was one of the most important parts of getting it off the ground.

## Know and Have a Good Sense of One's Self-Worth

Turtle wanted to make a good impression on his new staff. He knew he was at the top of his game, and that he had a lot more experience than most of the workers he led. Instead of tooting his own horn and acting as though he were the best in the industry, he took a much different approach. He went down and asked each of his workers what they thought their best quality was as an employee within his company. Turtle knew his value in the company. As a leader within the company, he was there to make his workers shine at the end of the day; and because of that, he didn't have any reason at all to act as though he was much more important than he actually was.

## A Mission Statement

Lion had built his business up to the point where he was satisfied with the plan and was ready to get things rolling. The only problem he could see was a main goal. All his other friends who had started their own businesses had what they called a mission statement for their business. It listed the values he had as a leader, where he wanted his business to go and what he expected of his employees. This way the company had a true guiding light to keep them on course.

## Think and Act with Optimism

Hedgehog was interviewing someone for a position at his company. Once the interview was over, he was asked what the hardest thing about being a leader was in his opinion. Hedgehog thought for a few minutes and then replied, "The hardest part is staying optimistic when everything else is going wrong. You have issues with your products, your workers are agitated, and you don't have enough time for everyone and yourself. It is easy to get upset and down but the hardest part is learning to stay optimistic, because at the end of the day if a leader isn't optimistic the company is going nowhere."

## Fostering a Proud Corporate Culture

Rabbit thoroughly enjoyed being the leader of his company. Not only did he have amazing employees and people he could depend on, but his company as a whole gave him the utmost joy. Sure there were down days and times when he wanted to hand the lead off to someone else. But the reason that he enjoyed being the leader so much was due to the company culture he had been building since day one. He wanted his workers to come to the office feeling like there was truly a reason beyond money they were at this job. They spend so much time at work; they shouldn't have to feel like they were held against their will at a job they didn't like. So Rabbit put all his effort into making sure the culture of his business was the best part of his company.

## Ethical Corporate Culture

Cow had one priority for his company. Typing up a memo to everyone, he made one declaration for how he wanted his business model to be and if people weren't interested in it, they could leave. His most important rule was to build an ethical company culture. He wanted his business and himself to be at the front line of how a business should be run. There would be no backstabbing or ruthlessness as long as he was the CEO. His workers would represent his commitment to ethical business practices when they interacted with customers. Cow knew that by having an ethical business, customers would be a lot more trusting of his company.

## Creating a Platform

Elephant was interviewing some new employees before placing them on the schedule. He liked a lot of what they brought to the table and complimented each of them on their successes. One of the greatest joys of being the CEO of his company was the fact that he knew he could give these young workers a leg up when it came to their experience. Being able to create a platform that showed off their education and teachings would not only help his company, but it would also help their careers down the line. Elephant couldn't think of a better way to use his authority than helping his workers.

## Don't Lie

It was simple. All his life Panda has been taught the basic principles of how to be a good person. His father had impressed upon him the valuable rule of never telling a lie. So when Panda started his own company it seemed like a pretty basic rule – don't lie to customers or your employees. From day one of running the business, Panda made it clear that there was to be no lying. If his business made a mistake, they would apologize and take responsibility for it. If a customer had questions about what his products were made of, he would be absolutely up front about it. In the long run being truthful would save him a lot of trouble down the road.

## Impacting Change

Sloth had been sitting with the co-owner of his business and discussing some financial matters of the day. Each meeting they had, his co-owner would list all the things they needed to do better, and at the end he would celebrate one of the things they were doing correctly. This meeting, his co-owner assured Sloth that for all the hard work they were doing and the sleepless nights...they were also making a difference in the lives of the people who bought their product. And this meant more to Sloth than any other thing he did as a leader...knowing he could make a difference.

## Continue the Conversation Online

*Do you agree or disagree with any of these tips? Do you have an experience? We would love to hear it on our website.*

Be confident, Be fearless (Motivation) - Tip 1

<http://tips.ceoblognation.com/2013/04/08/be-confident-be-fearless/>

Give up some control (Motivation) – Tip 2

<http://tips.ceoblognation.com/2013/04/07/give-up-some-control/>

You are stronger than you believe (Motivation) – Tip 3

<http://tips.ceoblognation.com/2013/04/06/you-are-stronger-than-you-believe/>

Defining immediate plans (Planning) – Tip 4

<http://tips.ceoblognation.com/2013/04/10/defining-immediate-plans/>

Have patience (Customer Service) – Tip 5

<http://tips.ceoblognation.com/2013/04/11/have-patience/>

Take a look at time zones (Customer Service) – Tip 6

<http://tips.ceoblognation.com/2013/04/09/take-a-look-at-time-zones/>

Giving back to employees (Leadership) – Tip 7

<http://tips.ceoblognation.com/2013/04/12/giving-back-to-employees/>

Don't be afraid to raise prices (Marketing) – Tip 8

<http://tips.ceoblognation.com/2013/04/13/dont-be-afraid-to-raise-prices/>

Basic tasks are the way to go (General) – Tip 9

<http://tips.ceoblognation.com/2013/04/14/basic-tasks-are-the-way-to-go/>

Schedule some time to play (Motivation) – Tip 10

<http://tips.ceoblognation.com/2013/04/15/schedule-some-time-to-play/>

Taking a walk at work helps you stay healthy (Health/Motivation) – Tip 11

<http://tips.ceoblognation.com/2013/04/16/taking-a-walk-at-work-helps-you-stay-healthy/>

Fundamentally accepting a leadership role in society (Leadership) – Tip 12

<http://tips.ceoblognation.com/2013/04/17/fundamentally-accepting-a-leadership-role-in-society/>

Identify the type of business (Starting out) – Tip 13

<http://tips.ceoblognation.com/2013/04/18/identify-the-type-of-business/>

Do not act like a man (General) – Tip 14

<http://tips.ceoblognation.com/2013/04/19/do-not-act-like-a-man/>

Sophisticated and Simple (Marketing) – Tip 15

<http://tips.ceoblognation.com/2013/04/20/sophisticated-and-simple/>

Freedom to ‘customize’ their job (Leadership) – Tip 16

<http://tips.ceoblognation.com/2013/04/21/freedom-to-customize-their-job/>

When potential clients demand it (Sales) – Tip 17

<http://tips.ceoblognation.com/2013/04/22/when-potential-clients-demand-it/>

Don’t be afraid to be smart (Motivation) – pg, 18

<http://tips.ceoblognation.com/2013/04/23/dont-be-afraid-to-be-smart/>

No cost/ low cost online job boards (HR) – Tip 19

<http://tips.ceoblognation.com/2013/04/24/no-costlow-cost-online-job-boards/>

Give them exactly what they don’t expect (Motivation/Leadership) – Tip 20

<http://tips.ceoblognation.com/2013/04/25/give-them-exactly-what-they-dont-expect/>

Have a strong strategy to go by (Planning) – Tip 21

<http://tips.ceoblognation.com/2013/04/26/have-a-strong-strategy-to-go-by/>

From the very beginning (Planning/Marketing) – Tip 22

<http://tips.ceoblognation.com/2013/04/27/from-the-very-beginning/>

Don’t be fake (Sales) – Tip 23

<http://tips.ceoblognation.com/2013/04/28/dont-be-fake/>

Don’t forget to share the love (Leadership) – Tip 24

<http://tips.ceoblognation.com/2013/04/29/dont-forget-to-share-the-love/>

Answering questions from customers (Customer Service) – Tip 25

<http://tips.ceoblognation.com/2013/04/30/answering-questions-from-customers/>

Consider the industry (Trends) – Tip 26

<http://tips.ceoblognation.com/2013/05/02/consider-the-industry/>

How to romance your customers (Customer Service) – Tip 27

<http://tips.ceoblognation.com/2013/05/03/how-to-romance-your-customers/>

Entrepreneurs are born, not made (Starting out / Motivation) – Tip 28

<http://tips.ceoblognation.com/2013/05/03/entrepreneurs-are-born-not-made/>

A smart way to distribute your company news (Customer Service) – Tip 29

<http://tips.ceoblognation.com/2013/05/04/a-smart-way-to-distribute-your-company-news/>

Face-to-face time in the local communities (Marketing/Planning) – Tip 30

<http://tips.ceoblognation.com/2013/05/05/face-to-face-time-in-the-local-communities/>

Consistently engaging customers (Customer Service) – Tip 31

<http://tips.ceoblognation.com/2013/05/06/consistently-engage-customers/>

Article Marketing to help with leads (Marketing) – Tip 32

<http://tips.ceoblognation.com/2013/05/07/article-marketing-to-help-with-leads/>

The majority of meetings aren't necessary (Leadership) – Tip 33

<http://tips.ceoblognation.com/2013/05/08/the-majority-of-meetings-arent-necessary/>

Showing yourself as an expert in your field (Marketing) – Tip 34

<http://tips.ceoblognation.com/2013/05/09/showing-yourself-as-an-expert-in-your-field/>

Rebel by truly being yourself (Motivation) – Tip 35

<http://tips.ceoblognation.com/2013/05/10/rebel-by-truly-being-yourself/>

Listen to your customers and put their needs first (Customer Service) – Tip 36

<http://tips.ceoblognation.com/2013/05/11/listen-to-your-customers-and-put-their-needs-first/>

Combine old fashioned with new trends (Marketing/Trends) – Tip 37

<http://tips.ceoblognation.com/2013/05/12/combine-old-fashioned-with-new-trends/>

Business will diverge between what is cheaply made to highly personalized (Customer Service/ Leadership) – Tip 38

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