

Powerful small businesses -- big impact

Being the best we can be

“If you think small things don’t make a difference, try going to bed with a mosquito” Anita Roddick, founder Body Shop International.

This series of articles is looking at how we get the biggest impact from our small businesses.

Whether we employ 2 people, 20 people, 200 people or even 2 thousand people we need to be concerned with the same issues. We need to plan and prioritise, we need goals, we need to make things or provide services that people want at a price they can afford, we need to work with others, Whatever our business size we all want the same things – we want to make a profit to fund the things that are important to us.

Firstly, we must start thinking big – be bold and courageous – visualise yourself running your business in five years’ time and what it could be like. Share ideas with friends; brainstorm together; imagine what the future could look like. Make sure you write everything down, draw pictures, be creative, dare to dream.

Don’t worry about what other people say – think positive and do your best to eliminate negative thoughts.

“You have brains in your head. You have feet in your shoes. You can steer yourself any direction you choose. You’re on your own. And you know what you know. And YOU are the one who’ll decide where to go...” — Dr. Seuss, Oh, The Places You’ll Go!

Watch out for the dream takers – people who for their own reasons don’t want your dreams to come true.

Surround yourself with positive people – focus on what you can do, not on what you

can’t. Avoid the temptation to complain and moan – our time is far too precious to waste it on complaints and criticisms that are likely to get nowhere. Look around you for local success stories – take pleasure in the achievements of others – be happy for them!!

Set up a positive thinking group with other small business owners – get excited by talking about what is possible. Explore ideas, use the internet, seek inspiration, challenge your own limitations, draw pictures and have fun doing it! The more fun you have, the more your body will relax, the more your mind will be open to considering other possibilities and the more you will attract other like-minded people. Then the ideas will flow and the money is more likely to follow closely behind.

“You’re off to Great Places! Today is your day! Your mountain is waiting, So... get on your way!” — Dr. Seuss, Oh, The Places You’ll Go!

If we want to make a big impact then we have to plan to do so – we can’t leave things to chance.

If we want to climb our mountain we must have the right equipment and training, the right skills, the right companions, the right attitude and the right conditions.

Over the coming weeks I will explore what we need to do to make a big impact with our small businesses from planning to managing the money; from recruiting the right people to building the team; from solving problems to thinking creatively; from selling locally to exporting; from networking to collaborating with others.

Small businesses have the potential to make a big difference but this will not happen by accident. We must plan for

impact; we must prepare for impact; we must keep learning.

If you have examples of small businesses making a big impact then I would love to hear them – email me some brief details and I'll get back in touch with you.

There are thousands of small businesses operating all over the Pacific – by celebrating success we will encourage more people to climb their mountains – by sharing stories of success we will all learn and grow and realise what a difference we can make – just like the mosquito!

Chris Elphick is Partner in Breadfruit Consulting, supporting the development of a range of businesses and organisations in Melanesia and other parts of the Pacific. He is an experienced trainer, coach and business mentor and has years of experience of working with Small & Medium Enterprises. He and his partner Hazel Kirkham live in Vanuatu and are involved with tourism operators and their businesses in several Pacific countries.

Breadfruit Consulting have partnered with Fiji Entrepreneur to develop mentoring services for new and young entrepreneurs.

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