



7 Power Tips for Woman Starting a Small Business

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Dear Friend,

Congratulations on taking the big leap! You've downloaded 7 Power Tips for Woman Starting a Small Business because 1) you're interested in starting your own home business, or 2) you've already started one and you're serious about creating the life you want. This concise ebook offers my top seven tips on being a satisfied and successful woman in business.

It's been proven that women are better multi-taskers than men which means we're pretty good at taking on numerous roles or even numerous businesses all at once. But we're often working just as hard for our husbands, our partners, our children, our communities -- and some days it's all a bit much, isn't it?

We also have a tendency to take all of this on by ourselves, often inclined towards martyrdom ("Look at everything I have to do around here. They'd better appreciate me!"). Which is just fine because we all need to mope and fume once in a while.

But we also need support. We need communication. We need to know we're doing a good job, that we're respected and well liked. And that we're getting what we need on multiple levels.

With that, I give you 7 Power Tips for Woman Starting a Small Business.

To your outrageous success!

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1. Find other women.

Woman starting a small business need to make powerful connections with other women. Those relationships will strengthen the foundation of your business.

Starting a business from home can be a lonely endeavor. On the one hand you may be grateful to be on your own, not having to answer to anyone, being completely autonomous and making it all up as you go along -- and it's all for you, it's YOUR business!

But I find it very comforting to know there are all kinds of women out there, doing exactly what I'm doing, getting their home businesses started, making connections, learning how to market themselves, facing the challenges, weathering the pitfalls. I get this kind of interaction through women's networking groups.

Through networking with other women, I get wisdom and insight from seasoned business owners. I get introduced to people who can help me. I have had women tactfully tell me how my 30-second elevator speech could be improved and I have had women compliment me on my business acumen, making me feel like I actually know what I'm doing and that I will succeed.

I have found, for the most part, women business owners are eager to support each other. Many women seem to share my same passion, which is for helping other women get started having their own businesses and helping them get what they want out of it.

So start now. Find out what kinds of local women's networking groups are in your area. Look for your local chapter of www.ewomennetwork.com or www.nawbo.org. See if the Chamber has a professional women's organization. Search online for entrepreneurial women's groups or start one yourself if you're in an area that's lacking.

The bottom line is women need other women. We sustain one another and we are our best cheerleaders. Get in good with your cheerleading squad. It'll help you every step of the way with your business.



2. Give freely.

A woman starting a small business will gain wisdom and insight from other women business owners. In the spirit of reciprocity, give of what you know that may help another.

I can't tell you how many networking functions I've been to where women visibly tensed up and pulled away from other women. I observed what was going on, recognizing their discomfort as some sort of fear -- fear that someone wanted something from them, fear they didn't measure up to the conversation, fear that giving of themselves would somehow make them "lose" something.

I have seen it repeatedly and it saddens me because I know I used to do it myself. I have withheld -- whether it was information or encouragement -- for fear that someone else could get ahead of me somehow.

Ladies, there is no such thing as getting ahead! We are where we are and we are exactly where we're supposed to be.

If I see a successful woman, I know that I too am a successful woman (she may well be watching me as I am watching her!) -- and I have a huge contribution to make to the world, as does she.

So it serves neither of us if I withhold praise or resources or empowerment of other women. By helping them succeed in their businesses, by sharing what and whom I know, freely, without expectation, I become even more powerful and successful.

Really! That's how it works!

So give what you have and whom you know. Make it your mission to help other women get what they want in life. Thereby you'll get exactly what you want as well.0



3. Ask for what you need.

A woman starting a small business may find herself overwhelmed very quickly by the constant demands of work and home. Learn to speak up and make bold requests.

This is a tough one. I mean really, I can't even ask my husband for what I need half the time because I'll feel too guilty, like I'm imposing on him and I should be able to do it all by myself because just look at all the women who have no partners to help out and blah-dee-blah-dee-blah-blah.

I NEED HELP! Lots of it! All the time. But I actually have to learn how to delegate in my mind those tasks that are actually "helpable" and then turn around and ask for the help.

As they say, you gotta A-S-K to G-E-T. Sometimes it's that ridiculously simple. So if you're facing a small business challenge, regardless of what it is (need a certain type of customer, need a loan, need someone to take your kids because you need a day off, need a new computer but can't afford it), go to your NETWORK (another great reason to have and build one).

Let the world know exactly what you need. Give it up to the Universe and actually allow yourself to be helped. Keep the conversation alive in your interactions until you get what you want.

Mind you, this is not a recommendation that you complain. No one wants to hear that kind of noise. But asking for what you need goes something like this:

- I need a day off. Would you please watch my kids from 9 to 4 next Friday?
- I need a small short-term loan. Would you please lend me \$500 and I'll pay you back by _____ with 4% interest.
- I'm looking for a female customer 35-55 who is XYZ and might be interested in a product like mine. Would you introduce me to women in your network?

See the difference between complaining and asking? And just ask without a lot of reasons and excuses built in. There, now breathe!



4. Take a break.

A woman starting a small business may work 7 days a week as the lines between leisure and business become blurred. It is essential to allot a full day off now and again to restore sanity and serenity.

This may be the very hardest one of all. As I write this I'm on a train from Philadelphia to Atlantic City, forcing myself, yes FORCING, because I had a whole conversation in my head telling me I should probably just stay home and work today.

So I'm taking off anyway. No husband, no children, no laptop, and hopefully nary a phone call. I'm going to visit a friend for all of four hours before heading to a networking event this evening.

But oh how glorious to not have anyone or thing to answer to for an entire day!

Still, it is a discipline to come down and remove ourselves from the busy-ness of our lives. Just think of all the things we could accomplish if we weren't taking a day off!

That's how our minds usually work so it really requires effort to forego that mentality and approach that day off as: "This is probably the best possible use of my time because of the broader rejuvenating effects it will have on my life."

I told my husband this day is non-negotiable (as "sorry" as I felt for even daring to slip away for a day). But the power in this one act is immeasurable. Tomorrow life will look a little different. My work will be a little more enriching. My children and husband will be even more dear to me.

And I will happily mark "Mama's Day Off" on the calendar for next month.



5. Scream like a maniac.

A woman starting a small business tends to take on the world for the sake of having freedom in her life. Yet no one seems particularly aware of just how much we're taking on. When the levy's about to break, go somewhere and yell your head off!

I put this one in because one day I found myself in the car alone, driving through town, bottled with that underlying tension that always seems to be there -- the direct cause of all the rampant, non-productive thoughts in my head, the memory of snapping at my 3 year-old earlier that morning, the incessant demands to keep everybody fed, keep the toilets clean, spend quality time with husband and kids, run a couple of businesses, keep myself reasonably fit and polished -- and just take it all like a woman.

So yeah, I just started screaming my head off in the car, screaming in that primal, deep down in my gut giving birth kind of way until my esophagus was raw and I was side-glancing at other drivers to see if they could hear the rage of a woman who does it all.

My friends, allow yourself and your body the cathartic release of a primal scream. Go somewhere in solitude and explore what it feels like to bellow and howl and get every last ounce of aggravation out of your being. Momentarily, of course. Because as soon as you walk back through the door it all begins again.

But by now, hopefully you'll have regained your composure enough to weather the assault with a thicker skin and a small dose of generosity towards your kids, your partner, your spouse, or whoever takes up space in your heart and head on a daily basis.



6. Stop saying sorry.

A woman starting a small business should be aware of how her language and posture impacts her business. The word "sorry," while effective in some situations, may be sending a less effective message.

Okay, I'm sorry (ha!) but I just have to dispense this advice for myself. Perhaps you'll recognize it in your own speaking as well. Because I happen to be sorry for everything. I'm sorry when I bump someone. I'm sorry when I missed what you said. I'm sorry when I interrupt. I'm sorry for you, sorry for me. Sorry, sorry, sorry, sorry! I'm so sorry I can't even stand to write this anymore.

Yesterday I stood up in a networking function, realized it wasn't my turn to stand up, said sorry for that, interrupted a woman at the same time, turned and apologized for that one as well, then on my way down to sitting position once again, nearly groaned at the tediousness of hearing myself say "sorry" yet again, seemingly to the entire group of women for my interruptions and utterances.

Has this ever happened to you? I mean really. This is what women do. We apologize for everything. And then we tell ourselves we're just being polite. But politeness that's apologetic lacks power and that is sooo not where I want to be.

I mean, I can be powerful yet pleasant. Courteous yet courageous. Soothing yet strong.

So here's what you can do to stop saying sorry. Enroll a couple of friends in your plan to eliminate the excessive apologies from your language as well as your demeanor. They may want to play your game as well. For every time that any one of you says sorry, point it out if it's a sorry that lacks power and purpose.

By the way, I make no apology for writing this. So drop the sorry subject and step into your power, girls!



7. Express yourself.

A woman starting a small business needs to communicate powerfully and effectively to succeed. Observe what happens when communication never leaves one's head.

I always thought I was pretty communicative. I said what was on my mind. I let people know how I felt. I could be direct when I needed to clear something up. I considered myself "outspoken."

What I discovered, however, is that I often have all kinds of dialogue going on in my head that never gets expressed. Sure, it's not necessary to verbally vomit all over people with every thought in our heads. But more often than not, there's a conversation going on in there that could impact the way your day, your relationship, your life is going -- if you had the courage to bring it to the surface and share it with the person you're having it with.

Here's an exercise for you: Next time you catch yourself having a conversation in your head with someone (usually around some negative trivia in our lives), take note of how often that conversation comes up in your mind. For example, your best friend is always late and it is really inconvenient and annoying for you. Sure, she's always late and she "should" be punctual and respect your time. But chances are, you haven't really told her how it makes you feel when you have to wait, and what happens to your opinion of her when she's late. You haven't taken responsibility for your own lack of communication about what's important to you in the friendship.

Or maybe you have a running dialogue in your head about your boss. She keeps piling work on you with unrealistic deadlines and then expects you to stay late and do even more. But have you accepted responsibility for the fact you haven't given her a realistic picture of what you can do? Maybe she sees you as super efficient so she assumes it's a breeze. What have you done to make a difference in the relationship?

The first step is expressing yourself -- what's important to you and why, how you feel about certain things, what you like and appreciate about others, and what would work best for you and your life. If you don't speak the truth about what's in your head, how can anyone be listening?

For today, notice when your internal conversations start occupying your mind. Practice redirecting them by giving voice to them or turning them off completely.