

Here are the simple tips and smart big ideas for small businesses

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A small business is defined as a private company, partnership or sole ownership with fewer employees and less annual revenue than a corporation or a regular business. A lot of the businesses are small businesses. It can be difficult to strike out in the business world on your own - but that is to be expected. A lack of knowledge is one problem many small business owners face. There is plenty of advice out there which is advice from other CEOs and MBA graduates. For instance, as a boutique business owner, you do not need to read the latest [Medium](#) post about how to scale up your 200-strong start-up.

What you need are smart business concepts specifically tailored to small businesses like yours, and explained concisely and clearly. The fact is that when it comes to business advice there is no one-size-fits-all. Small businesses are facing various concerns, challenges and advantages. This is where the simple tips and the smart big ideas come in. They outline frank tips about the risks and small business opportunities. There are several tips that small businesses can utilise to grow their businesses.

Your business plan should evolve along with your business.

As a small business, your business plan should evolve along with your business. If you are a small business owner, your business plan can be seen as a business map: a chart that develops and evolves with your company. For your small business to succeed you should have a clearly outlined business plan you follow. First, you need to set aside some time to put together your entire team. Get a large sheet of paper and split it into two halves: internal named on one side and external on the other. Use the internal section to draw information about the background, passions, skills and talents of your team. The more of this section you can write, the better. You are after a portrait of your team that is more than just reflecting their professional people.

Next, ask colleagues to list all their past customers. Your team members should drill right down to all clients they have ever served – including those your colleagues met in post-school jobs and volunteer roles. Then ask your team members to list, to the same level of detail, what services they have been paid for. You may be surprised at the overlaps or the synergies that come up. Right there, you will have pointers to potential new markets for your company. First comes a segment outside. Describe your market position here, and evaluate the major competition. If necessary, predict emerging market developments – you have the versatility, as a small company, to ride any developments that match your strengths. Finally, chart recent business developments, including both positive and negative. The last 18 months or so you want to be looking at.

If you have thoroughly followed this blueprint, your end product will be far more than a business plan. It is going to be a unique map of your skills, talents, experiences, strengths, challenges, networks, and more. It will show you what your business – and your company alone – can bring. Ensure you make time during the year to review and update your chart.

Understanding your product's value is crucial to your growth

Too often, small companies do not completely understand what they are doing and what they might have the ability to do in the future. Naturally, this also limits their profits. Think of your small business and probably customers that value it in ways you have not even considered. Ask your customers for daily reviews, to better understand how and why they trust you. This will also help you to generate your insights. Let us take Unipart, a car-parts distributor, as a case study. They did this and got great results. They started offering a distribution service and they supplied mechanics with car parts within an outstandingly fast delivery window. To do this, every day the team had to nail its logistics. Soon they realised this logistics experience was something they could give customers. So Unipart launched a new branch that concentrated on offering logistics workshops to other businesses.

Like Unipart, your company has potentially untapped potential. But how are you going to discover the potential? You have got to get analytical. Think about which skills and services you would be able to provide that you are not currently offering. You could begin by trying to approach the S.P.I.C.K and Span. S.P.I.C.K is an acronym for things that people pay for: services, products, information or info, clients or customers, and know-how. You may be providing services but a S.P.I.C.K and span review can expose the potential of providing more to your customers: data, information or goods. And more competition means more sales!

Defining your revenue model and diversifying it will grow your business

Much like you are on top of your accounts, you need to be on top of your sales plan. And just relying on one income model means selling yourself short. There are all sorts of ways to make money. One of them implies a fee for access. If you are a niche business, there is probably a niche market you can access. Consider charging an access fee to connect other companies to your clientele. Then, an exclusivity charge is in place. Have you ever pitched a customer service or product but asked the customer for more time to think about it? In this scenario, you may in exchange to charge the consumer an exclusivity fee for promising not to take the concept to their rivals.

The third model is based on what is known as a fee for first looks. Suppose your client would like to brainstorm ideas with you before they sign a contract. In this case, it would be a good idea to charge them a first look fee. Essentially, you charge the client for the ideas you are bringing to the table – and you get paid whether or not you are contracted. The fourth income model is a charge for the licence. Say you are a UK small business producing handcrafted ice-cream. You know there's an ice-cream market in the US too, but you don't have the money to grow there. If you send your recipe to a US-based maker, they would make and sell your state-side ice cream-and you would get a good license fee in exchange, of course!

The fifth and final model is a [subscription model](#) that you can use, rather than depending on one-off sales. For example, if you sell organic cosmetics, you could charge a recurring fee to customers and, in return, send a box of eco-friendly makeup right at their door each month. You need to read up on revenue models before you find some that best suit your business.

Your business is only as strong as the team behind it

If you are running a small business, you have probably put a lot of thinking into your team. You combed through summaries, held countless interviews, and allocated tasks thoughtfully – all to get the best group of people to support your business goals. But don't forget – you need to support your team just as much as they need to support you. Studies show happier workers being more productive workers. So how can you keep your workers happy and motivated? You don't set up a company for no reward-neither should your teamwork without reward. And the bonuses go far further than wages. Reward your staff with team-building rewards, such as a weekly workspace or lunch. These motivate the team to stay active and safe.

But what if on a shoestring budget and you are a fledgeling start-up, even for wages you probably have limited funds, let alone for extravagant benefits. Sweeten a lean compensation plan by providing incentives for the staff to invest in sales or stocks, or partner positions. This tactic will ensure they are as much invested as you are in your success and growth. And remember, incentives and rewards for employees don't have to cost the earth. Just arrange a time for everyone to have lunch together, or run professional learning workshops where each employee turns to teach the rest of the community a skill.

Good products can come in small packages – and your small business includes that! The small size of your business can be your biggest advantage in a crowded marketplace, with agility, flexibility and passion on your side. As long as you are transparent about your unique vision of the business and your tale, your ability to communicate with consumers and consumers is boundless. Keep your plot straightforward and there will almost definitely be a happy ending to your small business tale.

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