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Entrepreneurs! Bucket Half Full or Half Empty?

Entrepreneurship and the Bucket List.

You are a goal-achiever. You have dreams and goals, and you plan to realize them. You've got a well-thought-out business plan that is working, and your business is booming.

Isn't a "bucket list" for those who want to conjure up notions of heart-racing activities: climbing Mount Kilimanjaro, windsurfing in Hawaii or taking six months off to backpack around Asia?

Not necessarily. A bucket list is simply your own personal collection of dreams and goals, an account of what you would like to do in your lifetime –including, perhaps, owning a business. The items in your metaphorical bucket can be big or small, important or silly. If *you* want to accomplish it, it belongs on your bucket list.

Regrets or Joy?

When you come to the end of your days, do you want to look back with sorrow or regret at what you've never tried? Probably not. That's where the bucket list comes in.

It's easy to get caught up in the daily rat race. You're an entrepreneur; everything is urgent! But it means that so many other important things are gathering dust. Not just in your business life, but in other areas, like relationships, travel, and fun.

Inertia, fear, daily tasks or living someone else's dreams all make it hard to get around to those things you've always wanted to try. If you compose a list of things you want to do in your life, you stand a much better chance of actually doing them.

If you are much too busy for anything but working on your business, how about creating an “Entrepreneurial Bucket List”, with a twist?

Entrepreneurial Bucket List

“Entrepreneurship is living a few years of your life like most people won’t, so that you can spend the rest of your life like most people can’t.” - Unknown

Although your “Entrepreneurial Bucket List” may look different than a traditional bucket list, you should experience rushes of adrenaline and emotions with the “opening day” of your new store, similar to those you would get with the purchase of your first home.

Start your list with a brainstorming session. Write ideas down as they come to you. Don’t let any item become one of the jumbled mass of transient “want-tos.” Keep your list updated with new aspirations.

Create a “bucket list” for your business. List those items that may never have been on your original business plan or part of your balance sheet. Stuck for ideas? Here are some items suggested by other entrepreneurs:

- Improve public speaking skills
- Take one day a month off to focus on yourself, no phone or email
- Identify your role model, someone so powerful and extraordinary, and meet him/her
- Move to a new office in downtown
- Take your company to the world
- Pay back the bank loan in full
- Write a book about “Entrepreneurship”
- Mentor young entrepreneurs
- Franchise your business
- Sell the business and start a new one

While you are writing down your thoughts, add to the list all those things you have always wanted to do, whether or not they are business-related. Give voice to your personal desires. Aspirations. Passions. **And all things that make you who you are today.**

Think of the most inspiring people you have met. Approach a situation as they would. In life, we sometimes meet some of the worst people, and then there are the mediocre. Learn to tell them apart. You know your best. Your worst. And mediocre. Once you start asking yourself questions, and really listening to the answers, your list will grow. And grow.

When you've got a good start on your list, pick one to five goals. Set a deadline for them, preferably less than a year. Pick ONE of them and take the first step. NOW.

“There are SEVEN days in the week, and SOMEDAY isn't one of them.” - Unknown

Chunk it down. Break down the steps into micro-actions. No more excuses. Just start!

The Fear Factor

There are many reasons a person doesn't get started on her dreams. Fear is one of the most common and most debilitating. It can be fear of looking silly. Fear of rejection. Fear of hearing “no.” Fear of success. Fear of height. Fear of being laughed at. Fear of flying. The list goes on.

Don't let one fear become an inhibition to overcoming other fears. Accept each fear that may arise, and make a decision to do something about it. **Confront and destroy your fears.** Conquer them one by one. Be prepared for failure. Try again. And again, until you succeed and the fear no longer affects you.

Richard Branson, one of the most inspiring and successful contemporary entrepreneurs, dreamed about going into a business for which no one thought success would be possible. Despite Mr. Branson's disadvantage of having dyslexia, he built his empire, Virgin Group, which now comprises more than 400 companies. Mr. Branson decided to confront his dyslexia; he turned a disadvantage into an advantage by adapting his management style to conquer fears and obstacles. Not only did he confront his fears, he “destroyed” them!

Some of the items on your list might take some **physical courage**, especially if you want to rappel down a mountainside, or jump out of a plane. Some might also take **emotional courage**, like writing a book about your entrepreneurial successes or failures.

This is where the bucket list really shines. It forces you to face the fact that you have a vast amount of ideas, and only very limited time on Earth to realize them. With this in mind, it is easier to gather your courage and motivation, and take the first step.

Don't Need to Go it Alone, Join others

Traditional bucket lists are popular. Think about a time when you will no longer have business-related activities that require your attention. While you are still working on your entrepreneurial bucket list, start adding items that you can also enjoy with your spouse, partners, and family members. Look for activities that everyone can take part in.

There are several online sites that let you store and prioritize your goals. You can share them with others to stay motivated, and pick up ideas if you're stuck for the next step.

Here's a look at three:

Bucketlist.org: This site lets you create goals, and helps you achieve them by tracking your progress, giving you advice, and offering access to thousands of other bucket listers and their ideas. It's free.

DayZeroProject.com: This site calls itself the largest community of goal-setters in the world. It helps you choose a goal, set up a list and accomplish the steps. There is both a free and paid membership.

Bucketlist.net: This free site lets you create lists and share them, as well as get help from other members.

Leave this life with a smile on your face and a huge store of joyful memories! Start your own bucket list today. **Make your bucket full--or at least half full!**

"Never tell me the sky's the limit when there are footprints on the moon." - Unknown

