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## 26 Entrepreneurs Give Their Best Business Tips

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No matter how you look at it, starting a business is hard. One of the hardest things you may ever have to do. There's the business plan to think over, a name, government policies to consider, how it will affect your family, finances and the list rolls on from there. Some hardened entrepreneurs suggest spending a long time thinking about if that's really the path you want to take. If so, there is plenty of advice floating around to help you with the grueling journey. Entrepreneurs are always willing to lend their words to the younger generation of business seekers and give them assistance when the time comes. Below we have asked entrepreneurs for their best business advice.

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### 1) Help Others Win

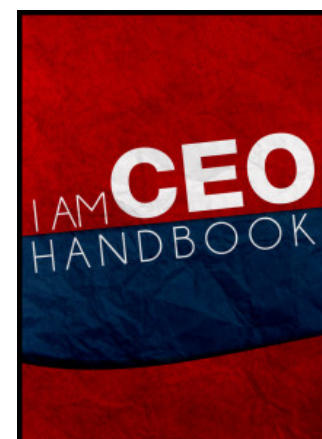
I've been lucky enough to have some amazing interactions with Sir Richard Branson over the past year. In everything he does, he makes it obvious that he believes in using his businesses as a force for good. I agree that we can make choices in life to use our abilities and gifts for good. I believe in helping others become successful. I think we as a society are always competing...on the playground, in the classroom or the playing field, grades, where we go to college, our careers and overall achievements. We are wired to compete, and that often leads to a mindset of "one-upping." But smart leaders and overachievers help

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others win. In my business, I want my job seekers to be hired and thrive and the employers to find the right person to help their team excel. Helping others is how I developed my business."

Thanks to Tonya Lanthier, [DentalPost!](#)

## 2) Embrace Fear

My best advice for fellow entrepreneurs is to remember that everything you want for your business is on the other side of fear. So, embrace fear! Determine where your comfort zone lies and figure out how to feel stable in a risky venture. Channel your fear into preparation and action.

Thanks to Kim Ramirez, [Sixty Vocab!](#)

## 3) Social Media

As an entrepreneur and owner of a computer service with 5 locations along the East Coast. I've realized social media and online marketing is an integral portion of the modern business. At LaptopMD we've decided to use it to achieve a dual-purpose: to ingratiate ourselves to our customers and show our expertise. This is a vital mission for any new business. Presenting ourselves as friendly, accessible, and knowledgeable on social media shows our clients we aren't all about monetizing, we're there for them. Potential customers will be able to tell a lot about your business' true devotion to them by the way your website or social media pages look. You don't want to be the business with a barren page full of outdated material and prices. We want our customers to appreciate us. For instance, we like for customers to contact us on Facebook or Twitter with computer issues. If it's something they can repair or fix themselves, we'll help them online, they don't have to come in or pay a thing. Social media gives us the opportunity to not just be a regular business, which people only think about when it's time for service. If you provide content and communicate people will visit your page just because, and that's only good for business.

Thanks to Arthur Zimmerman, [LaptopMD!](#)

## 4) Try Something Out

The best way to build a company is to actually try something out – so many entrepreneurs get stuck in planning or unimportant minutiae – you could wait years for a patent to come through or months to get the legal structure perfected. I have seen founders spend all their day setting up bank accounts and talking to lawyers instead of creating their product or service. If you have an idea, just go build something, do it, do it now! If you don't know how, ask – there are tons of rapid prototyping tools out there. Talk to potential customers and find out what they want. Once you have an idea of what you want to sell, figure out who is going to buy it and then iterate your prototype to fit your target buyer. Finally, remember that marketing is not your product – don't get hung up on marketing a product that doesn't exist yet.

Thanks to Dan Rubins, [Agnito Labs!](#)

## 5) Build a Great Team

In order to be successful and build a strong business and brand, investment in people is a must. A strong team is priceless to an organization. I built strong eCommerce teams for retailers such as The Limited Brands, QVC, and Lowe's. These eCommerce teams grew 100-200% just in a few years.. Now, I'm focused on building a team from the ground up with start-up online business, My Kid's Threads. A happy team = a happier workplace (and customers!)

Thanks to Lisa Batra, [My Kid's Threads, LLC!](#)

## 6) Trust Your Gut

You know more than you think. More often than not, you know better than anyone else what's best for you. Yes, seek advice of those older, younger and outside of your industry on a regular basis but evaluate their insight and mold it into what works for you. If it feels right it's right for you. If it doesn't, find another solution. Sometimes the solution is to walk away. Sometimes you must go through a process of elimination. The bottom line is always how it makes you feel. You'll know what is right when you feel lighter, excited, relieved, calm or assured. Even if it scares you, if you feel it's right, it's right for you. If you can't listen to yourself, who will?

Thanks to Tami Belt, [Blue Cube Marketing Solutions!](#)



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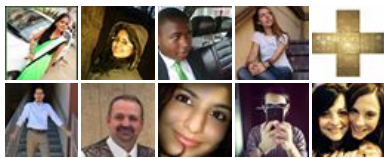


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## 7) Build an Awesome Core Team Early On

Trust is essential when you're starting out so you need to have the team that trusts each other, trusts the vision and will do anything to make it happen. When you've got the right team at the right time, nothing can get in your way. You need to realize that you can't do everything yourself. If you build an A team early on they'll take the a lot of the heat off and get stuff done. If you're building your A team they're smarter than you in their respective areas and they'll attract other A people when you need them, enabling you to grow your company a helluva lot faster. One bad apple can really spoil the whole bunch so make sure you pick them wisely!

Thanks to John Hingley, [Dasheroo!](#)

## 8) 4 Tips

1) Sometimes fast nickels are better than slow dimes. Originally it was meant to convey that quick cash deals are better than waiting for whales to land. As time went on in my career I adapted it as a great way for startups or new product teams to get quick consumer feedback so they could apply the key learnings to their new business or product roadmaps. 2) Hire slow and fire fast. When you are in growth mode and short handed it is easy to add bodies instead of brains or people that do not fit your leadership values or company culture. This is a huge pitfall for entrepreneurs. Additionally, if your gut thinks you have made the wrong hire and it's not going to work out, get out fast. Long term damage from a bad hire can be detrimental to growth. 3) The hunter that chases two rabbits goes hungry. Stay focused. Just because you can expand doesn't mean you should. You're more likely to do a bad job at both focuses. 4) All deals take 6 months. My closest advisor and long term entrepreneur taught me this. This can apply to raising capital, financing through banks, or straight business dealings. Young or new entrepreneurs think they can fast forward deals or make them happen over night and that is simply not the way most will go. Plan for 6 months and have contingency plans.

Thanks to David Salinas, [Digital Surgeons!](#)

## 9) Outsource, Outsource, Outsource

If your billing rate is higher per hour when you work, you should outsource busy tasks you aren't being paid for. For example, say you can bill out \$100 per hour, but you're spending 2 hours per day on accounting, hire a bookkeeper to help you stay up to date. If you pay them \$45 per hour, you're still earning \$65 more dollars than if you were doing those tasks yourself. Getting help will help you save you time, allows you to earn more money and allows you to focus on what you're in business for."

Thanks to Karla Amador, [Thrive Financial & Bookkeeping Services!](#)

## 10) Pass Your Success Forward

First and foremost, consider your business or products, extensions of yourself. Your values, likes, dislikes and passions in life. I began Nohi Kids in 2010 because of my love of design and children. Seeing a child smile while wearing the Nohi Kids brand is the ultimate, "Yes, I did it," moment. However, I went a step further in giving back to kids less fortunate. Take your success and pass it forward- in your own community or across the world. Involve your customers and clients- by doing so, they feel like a part of your business family. Yes, making money is the goal, but the satisfaction of charitable acts of kindness, will set you apart from the so-called "norm."

Thanks to Janel Andersen, [Nohi Kids!](#)

## 11) Flexibility






Lots of entrepreneurs are too rigid when trying to make their dream business a reality. It is so easy to map the journey from idea to viable business, but from my experience the journey is much less predictable. My business has evolved considerably over the last 12 months – being receptive to the views of others and responding to changes in the market is essential to create a popular product. You have to embrace the ideas and attitudes of your whole team and remain as dynamic as possible to achieve changes quickly and effectively.

Thanks to Andrew Gardiner, [Property Moose!](#)

## 12) Be Bold, Be Opinionated, Otherwise Just Don't Bother

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Your opinions and beliefs are just as important as, if not more important than any experience or knowledge and it's fine for executives to share opinions as long as they let people know that's what they are. You can't be wrong when you are stating an opinion. You only open yourself up for others to disagree with you if they feel like it, and it is important to be OK with that. There was much said about Barack Obama's presidential election and what it was about him that made him so likeable to the public. Years on, much of that same character is still there, although shades have been influenced by the practical day to day realities of his tenure. But ultimately, it was his openness and willingness to be vulnerable that helped people to relate to him and see him as a trusted leader in way that others had failed to do. He was prepared to be bold and opinionated and ruffle the feathers of others to stand up for what he believed was right. It is this kind of boldness that will carry others towards their successes, if they are willing to embrace it.

Thanks to Mindy Gibbins-Klein, [MGK Consulting!](#)

## 13) Work Yourself Out of A Job

The best piece of career advice I have ever been given is to strive every day to work yourself out of a job. Improve your processes, empower others, and streamline your day-to-day work. A business that depends on your physical presence will be one from which you can never take a vacation or retire. Start by documenting your processes in writing. Make sure you aren't the only one who can perform certain tasks or functions. Additionally, don't neglect important habits such as managing your time and organizing your information. Keep a comprehensive list of your active to-dos and projects. Don't allow paper to stack up or email to get backlogged. Disorganization keeps you busy – you want to be productive.

Thanks to Melissa Gratias, [MBG Organizing!](#)

## 14) Engage with Online Users

Always engage with online users through social media. Even if your company or brand is scheduling posts, you must engage. At Buddytruk, we engage with our following/online users. So, that means we comment, favorite, like, retweet with our social following. By doing this, it increases your presence in the search algorithms, allows you to do market research, and cut advertising costs. Engagement is also a VERY easy way for consumers to see that your business is an active member of the social community. Branding wise, that is spectacular. We found that consumers respect businesses that they can actually engage with.

Thanks to CJ Johnson, [Buddytruk!](#)

## 15) Passion

Be passionate about your company's culture and your mission. Remain positive because it inspires others. Plus, you're company's culture is the single thing that you can control. The life of an entrepreneur and building a company is not easy. You want to surround yourself with people that share your mission and that you can mutually encourage to be more together than you possibly could be alone.

Thanks to Kurt Uhlir, [Sideqik!](#)

## 16) Listen & No Rules

My number one suggestion when it comes to addressing multiple generations and employees would be to listen and try not to create an overly hierarchical organization. Stay close to the people. Take them out for a beer. You will be surprised what people tell you outside of the office. This is, however, a slippery slope. If you listen and say you are going to do something, you have to do it, and know those you spoke with will hold you to your word. My second suggestion would be to stop thinking that money and rules will solve the issues within your organization. We have found the opposite to be true—creating almost no rules has helped our company tremendously (i.e. unlimited vacation policy, flexible hours, etc). These were scary for us at first, but we will never look back on making these changes.

Thanks to Beau Hale, [Adboom Group, Inc.!](#)

## 17) Be Productive

What did you really accomplish last week? If you can't remember doing anything that matters amid all the email and other busywork, it's time to power up your productivity habits. Here are some tips to help you regain your time and get more done. 1) Fight email overload. Set up a secondary email account for things like newsletters and promotional mail. Use a Gmail account and set up an automatic forward of anything you actually want, like travel confirmations, while still protecting your "real" email account. It's like having a personal assistant for your email. Also, use a great spam/newsletter filter like Spamdmin. 2) Centralize your To-Do list. Do you have to check two different email accounts, the Post-it notes on your computer, your

calendar and your voicemail to figure out what you need to do? Get your to-dos all in one place. 3) Tweak your environment. Declutter. Talk to me all you want about messiness and creativity, but in my work I've seen over and over that clutter = stress. Your clutter sends the message (to yourself and others) that you're overwhelmed and not in control, and that there may be things buried in the clutter that need your attention.

Thanks to Maura Thomas, [Regain Your Time!](#)

## 18) Energy Level & Mental Attitude

Your energy level and mental attitude is your greatest asset or your greatest liability so give them your full attention. The greatest impact on your productivity is not the ability to block out time and set boundaries. Those activities are important but if you set time to complete a task and you can't focus on that task, you've wasted your efforts and that time. Take good care of yourself – physically, mentally, emotionally and spiritually. Eat well, exercise regularly (even if you think you don't have time – you do), get the amount of sleep your body wants, improve your relationships in all areas of your life, surround yourself with positive and ambitious people, read books that inspire an enlighten you and take time to meditate every day, even if it's for 5 minutes. When you're operating at optimal you'll find the pieces of your business and it's growth seem to fall into place.

Thanks to Jodi Flynn, [Luma Coaching!](#)

## 19) Have Killer Customer Service

Follow through on your brand's promises, and remember that in today's marketplace, if you don't give your client killer customer service, someone else will. Since I started 1-800-GOT-JUNK? in 1989, I have had a hyper-focus on customer service – my junk haulers would sweep for clients, free of charge. You Move Me promises to "move people, not just their boxes" with unexpected service touches and consistent standards. What are you doing to keep your customers engaged?

Thanks to Brian Scudamore, [1-800-GOT-JUNK?!](#)

## 20) Sales Comes from Relationships

Sales come from relationships not pitches. I am good at a lot of things but sales is not one of them. I never felt comfortable pitching my wares to people. The first time I attended a networking event the host gave a short speech for us newbies that essentially said you are here to build 2-3 relationships not pitch your business to as many people as possible. This completely shifted my perspective and I've trained all of my team to go forth and build relationships. What's important to have our name at the top of people's minds when they do need a virtual receptionist. I would encourage all networkers and sales people to take a farming approach rather than a hunting approach.

Thank you to Emily LaRusch, [Founding Bettie!](#)

## 21) Diversify & Take Chances

My best business advice is to diversify and take some chances. In 1993, I founded Fortus Healthcare Resources as the first specialty staffing firm recruiting and placing professionals for the dialysis industry. From the beginning, I was consistently exploring different areas of commerce. Fortus now has business units focusing on a variety of healthcare specialties, and we also provide clinical practice and business development services. We expanded our market reach as well with an International Division based in Germany. Adaptability has allowed Fortus to succeed in the ever-changing global healthcare marketplace. I am proud to point out that Fortus Healthcare Resources has been named to the Inc. 5000 the last three years.

Thanks to Michael Maurizio, [Fortus Healthcare Resources!](#)

## 22) Focus

Maintaining focus is not only crucial in photography, but in all business endeavors in my opinion. Focus on what you are doing and avoid the temptation of getting side-tracked by running in too many directions and thus watering down your brand and specialization. 'Jack-of-all-trades and master-of-none' is not a good business motto, and 'opportunities' can easily turn into threats when your effectiveness and efficiency suffer because you are trying to be too many things at once. You should 're-focus' if things are not working out, but this means focusing in a new direction, and not losing focus.

Thanks to Nico Marques, [Photekt!](#)



## 23) Invest In Yourself

As a business leader it is vital that you invest in your personal and leadership development. While leadership can be innate it can also be learned, but all great leaders continue to learn and grow personally. Staying static as a leader, leaves your business static as well. When leaders invest in their personal develop they continue to be innovative, creative, inspiring and visionary.

Thanks to Donna Price, [Compass Rose Consulting!](#)

## 24) 3 Things

The secret to our success is three-fold. Firstly, we aim to surpass customer expectations, which has earned us the highest rating in customer satisfaction in our field. We pride ourselves on our lightening fast response time, answering customer queries within hours (not days); picking up the phone and personally and patiently helping customers. We aim to over-deliver when it comes to delivery and service, which sets us apart from the rest. Secondly, be sure that everyone employed understands the products inside and out. I've learned not to rely on product specifications; in my business not double-checking could cost us serious business. Last but not least, when you own a company you have to be willing to do whatever it takes to make to make your business successful. It's always been my motto: Don't ask an employee to do something you're not willing to do yourself.

Thanks to Larry Chase, [LCI Paper Co.!](#)

## 25) Make a Decision and Stick To It

The #1 most critical thing an entrepreneur needs in place in order to have a successful plan for their business is a DECISION. A decision is not a goal, a want, a desire or a wish – although they are often mistaken as these. Until an entrepreneur makes a committed decision that nothing will stop them or get in the way of accomplishing something, it really is just a goal, a want, a desire or a wish. Entrepreneurial success and growth is not achieved via goals. It is achieved based on decisions.

Thanks to Tina Forsyth, [TinaForsyth.com!](#)

## 26) Look at the Bigger Picture, But Don't Grow Ahead of Yourself

One of the best pieces of advice I can provide from my own personal experience? Always look at the bigger picture, but don't grow ahead of yourself. What do I mean by this? Although it's always great to have a grand plan and look at the future big picture, try not to get ahead of yourself. Growth is both good and bad. Too much growth and you might not be ready to handle the work. Too little growth or fear of risk means you may miss your opportunities. With my firm, I found it best to remain small and focus on quality of client service for a while. There was no sense in jeopardizing important client relationships to grow larger than what we could possibly handle.

Thanks to Michael H. Fienman, [Fienman Defense LLC!](#)

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Gresham Harkless is the Blogger-in-Chief for CEO Blog Nation. CEO Blog Nation is a community of blogs for entrepreneurs and business owners. Started in much the same way as most small businesses, CEO Blog Nation captures the essence of entrepreneurship by allowing entrepreneurs and business owners to have a voice. CEO Blog Nation provides news, information, events and even startup business tips for entrepreneurs, startups and business owners to succeed.



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Jodi Flynn

February 2, 2015 at 1:07 pm

Great tips provided by all!

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Gresham Harkless Jr.

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