



Five steps to take your business to the next level *Nicole Attias* *Wondering what steps you need to take to grow your business?*

You have probably heard the saying, “Do what you have always done, and get what you have always gotten.” This statement is true in all areas of life, including business. Whether you are a more mature business, of say 5-7 years, or a new business, you will be facing new challenges before you enjoy the fruits of your labour. You have probably overcome some major challenges of staying focused and breaking through serious roadblocks when those close to you have questioned your goals. If you've been accustomed to running your business solo and are looking to move to the next level, you need to re-structure your thinking. Some tips and suggestions include: more....

1. Update your business plan

Make sure you know where you are going so you don't get lost or side-tracked. Are you looking to hire full-time employees? If so, how many? How much will they get paid? What will their jobs look like? What do you expect your company to make in six, 12 and 18 months from now? How will you measure the results to assess whether you are on the right track? Visualise where you want to be at a particular point in time. Record everything in print.

2. Change your habits

One of the hardest things to do is to change what you're used to doing. Why? Because this is human nature. As an entrepreneur, you've been accustomed to doing everything yourself. Letting go of certain responsibilities and delegating tasks is one thing. Knowing who will perform effectively is another. This is one of the challenges of moving to the next level, but it can be done. Others have done it. So can you. One of the pluses is to get others to do what you've always disliked. Your business will become more effective as a result.

3. Motivating your staff

If you have become so used to relying on yourself to get to a certain level of success, teach your staff the value of self-motivation. You should also praise them for their hard work, dedication, creativity and enthusiasm. This will serve everyone well over time. Learn to trust yourself and the decisions you make when hiring certain individuals. At first, your judgment might be poor. As time passes, you will learn from your mistakes and assess people more effectively. Always get your staff to open up and tell you their concerns and challenges. Never assume all is well when it might not be. You were once the doer. Become the observer.

4. Maintaining your focus

Whenever you hit unfamiliar territory things can appear quite scary. There is no way out of this. In order to move ahead you must apply what you have learned to date. As an entrepreneur you have maintained your focus to accomplish a certain level of success. As a business owner you can do the same thing by developing others. Take time to train your individual staff members and monitor their progress



regularly. Your focus has changed, but you are still, if not more responsible to maintain it.

5. Defining and re-defining your values

Ask yourself: why are you in business for yourself? Continue to keep asking yourself that same question over time. If you want to build a team of strong leaders who share the same mission and vision as you, you need to know exactly what that is. As you grow, your values might change. Make sure your team is in-tune with them.

The best way to grow is at a slow, steady pace. Ever heard of people winning the lottery and then losing everything just as fast as they received it?

If you are to sustain anything, you must first learn to make room for it. Expand your mind and prepare for change before it happens. You won't know exactly what it will look like but at least you'll be able to handle it when it comes.