



Choosing Your Inspiration and Influence

By Donna L. Ward

I know nothing here is perfect—but, this is a grand start, that works.

I have always been impressed how inspiring people go against tough odds, keep going when the going gets tougher, and never give up. It is not enough to keep on going though... they are also very wise, very open-minded individuals.

Recognizing and wanting is part of the adventure. Transforming desires into focus, movement, and clear action steps towards your vision is why you will be on the path towards your success.

It is important to remember that the outcome of your life is not set in stone. You are free to create your business exactly the way you want.

Here's what to ask yourself:

1. Who am I when I'm doing my greatest work?
2. Who benefits the most from my work when I'm doing my greatest work? (hint: this will point you towards an ideal client)

3. What are the Amazing Results people get when they experience my greatest work?

As you really look inside, you may discover something about yourself that makes you sit up and take note. For some of you, that may be all you need.

"We possess innumerable forces that lie hidden within ourselves, though it would be easy to lead them, as the waters of a canal are conducted, to make them serve for the conquest of good, spiritual as well as corporeal...It is wise to direct these efforts to a practical end." The great philosopher believed that the spirit of the individual continuously exerts influence, even as the flower also exerts influence by spreading its fragrance in the air. But just as the blossom cannot tell whether its fragrance spreads, so none of us can say how far our influence may

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Have you ever thought about what to wear?

By Justin Lurie

What Does Business Casual Really Mean?

There are many different versions of business casual, and it may vary depending on your office's style. There are some common factors which can be identified and make it easy for you to dress appropriately.

In many businesses and industries it is no longer necessary to wear a full business suit with formal shirt and tie every day. Some businesses reserve that look for formal meetings with clients or upper executives and some accept or encourage a permanent dress-down appearance. Employees should know what is acceptable and preferred in their own offices and industries.

Regardless of how formal or informal an outfit, clothes should be clean, fit well, and

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Strategy...Growth...Exit

About Compass Point

Compass Point is a business strategy consulting firm that works with family and closely-held businesses with revenues between \$2MM and \$200MM. We are experts in the area of strategy development, improving execution, succession planning, and exit strategies. We help family businesses deal with the issues that arise from love, power, and money.



The Compass Point Process

Primary Services:

- Strategic Planning
- Succession Planning
- Ownership Planning™
- Exit Strategies
- Project Implementation
- Family Business Consulting
- Outsourcing



The Way I See It...

BY TOM GARRITY

Putting Your Goals Within Reach

As a business owner, you may have a wide range of life goals that you want to work toward, while also running your business. These goals may include sending a child to college, caring for aging parents, giving back to your community and planning for your own retirement. In many cases, the key to achieving these goals is how well you manage the equity in your business, as well as your ability to develop investments outside your business that match your long-term objectives.

If you manage a successful enterprise, your business probably represents your largest individual financial asset. Understanding the value of your business, taking steps to protect that value and incorporating your equity from business ownership into your broader financial plan are essential to achieving your personal financial goals. To achieve your vision of the future, your business needs to be viewed as an integral part of your investment portfolio.

In other words, the only reason to get into business is to get out! This doesn't necessarily mean 'flip it'. It means your primary goal as an owner should always be building a business that you can step away from on your terms (when you want to, to whom you want to transition the ownership, and the conversion of value to cash). It's not as easy as it sounds. Many owners find getting out of their business is a lot harder than it was to get into!

At Compass Point, we specialize in helping Middle Market business owners understand the role of business ownership in their long-term, personal financial plans. We can help you measure the value of your business, increase the value over time and create a playbook for eventually leaving your business on your own terms and schedule. Teaming alongside our professional partner, Trinity Financial Partners, we take a more holistic approach to personal wealth management, helping business owners reduce financial risk over time and be better prepared for the future.

To achieve your personal goals you may need to make small or even large changes in how you currently manage your personal portfolio, including the equity in your business. Wherever you find yourself on the continuum of reaching your personal goals, we believe there are positive steps you can take to turn your vision of the future into reality. It's never too soon—or too late—to begin planning for the life you imagine for yourself and your family.

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be appropriate to the occasion. It never hurts to have the outfit, regardless of how dress down, made of obviously good material. It is always safer to be a little dressier than less so. Many people take their cue from their supervisor or dress for the position they want. In many work locations and cities there is a compromise between the formal business suit and the total dress down jean appearance. That is often referred to as "business casual."

Business casual can be just below the full formal business attire. This could include a well made but casual pair of pants with a sport coat or sweater and shirt. A tie may or may not be a part of the outfit. Often this type of business casual is the classic navy blue jacket with gray pants and a striped or patterned shirt or turtleneck. Classic brown or camel hair jackets may also be paired with different colored pants.

Someone who is buying their first jacket, or is only planning on buying one jacket, may want to stay with the traditional navy. However, charcoal, dark brown or camel's hair are also good choices. A solid or very subtle pattern would be best if this jacket is going to be part of a limited busi-

ness casual wardrobe. The pants may be in a different color but the same hue. This leaves a lot of choices for various shirts that can be used to dress up an outfit or dress it down. Or just be used to extend the wardrobe and give the illusion of many outfits.

Another option that may be acceptable in many work places or on casual Friday is the more informal business casual. This is usually some form of trouser and sport shirt or more formal shirt without tie. Pants can be a good wool or a cotton khaki or anywhere in between. Shirts can be the traditional button down the front with collar, turtle neck, open v-neck, sweater, or some combination. Textured shirt or one with a design can make the outfit more interesting or memorable. Dress down business casual is a good opportunity to show some individuality at work.



WORDS OF WISDOM

"A business that makes nothing but money is a poor business."

- Henry Ford

Creating customer loyalty

How to make relationship marketing work for your business

It's a truism that loyal customers will buy more of your products more regularly and the chances are that they will probably recommend your business to others. So if you want your clients to come back again and again, it's essential to build long-term relationships with them and with other people key to your business.

One way you can do this is through relationship marketing. This means knowing as much as you can about your customers, engaging in two-way communication with them and identifying those potential and existing customers that are likely to provide a long-term, profitable relationship.

But be wary of the 'busy fool' syndrome. If you take on new relationships, figure out what these clients will bring to you. In the early days, it may not be easy to turn down business, but avoid situations where you are overstretching yourself for limited gain.

Take potential and existing customers' characteristics into account when you are considering whether relationship marketing can work for you. Some customers may only be looking for the cheapest product and the quickest way of getting it, and will have no interest in high levels of service or loyalty schemes, for example.

"You can't always deliver a Rolls-Royce service to all your clients, but the more you know about them, the more you can differentiate between service levels. But ensure your staff can do this too," advises Nick Hood, senior partner at corporate recovery firm Begbies Traynor.

How to make relationship marketing work for your business:

Trust between both parties is crucial.

Communication is also vital – don't allow issues to build up in the background.

Set standards and stick to them.

Find out what your customers' expectations are and monitor them. It can be all too easy to keep providing the same service, but you must be aware of your customers' changing needs.

Learn to stand your ground. Don't dilute your brand or your product with potential customers who are going to make small or one-off purchases.

Be prepared to sacrifice the price, but never compromise the service.

SOURCENOTE: BusinessGO

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reach.

How do you get started? You need to first understand by answering the questions I posed for you earlier. Then, go out and explore, get your name, brand out there - learn and share. These are some of the key moves:

Join forums that inspire you and your work.

Read books that help you with affirmative visions for you and your business.

Get a mentor that helps you keep focused.

Join a group that is working on something that you would like to learn and grow in.

Explore new insights by fellow business leaders.

Keep writing and submitting your articles - find your voice.

Since I have your attention, I will play your business coach (mentor) and give you the points above as an assignment to start with immediately. You will work really hard and also have some unexpected blessings along the way. You'll learn from many different mentors, collaborate with others, and apply your own talents and experiences to build your business. You'll take chances, make many mistakes and learn a lot of lessons along the way.

Be diligent in reading and learning what steps you need to take to move forward successfully.

Learn to connect with your target audience in meaningful ways, earning their trust and building your business all at the same time.

Understand what your target audience wants and respond in a real way - "Seek FIRST to under-

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Factor both intuition and analysis into group decisions

Decision-making has both intuitive and analytic sides. Both are important to a good decision, but it can be difficult to integrate them, especially when you're coordinating input from several members of your group. For example, imagine that you and your group are hearing a talk or a series of presentations about various options for deciding a complex issue, such as a new software system or customer service procedure. Try the following three steps to make the most of the group's responses:

1. Divide the group into two teams of notetakers. The analytical team records the main points and key details from the talk as objectively as they can. The intuitive group, however, listens intently and records only

the questions, ideas, and impressions that come to mind.

2. Organize the notes. After the presentation, one person from each team organizes the team's notes into an easy-to-read summary. Distribute copies of both summaries to everyone on both teams. Allow the group a few days to study the notes before meeting to discuss them.

3. Discuss the notes. Meet again as a group to consider the teams' findings. For example, you might start with the list of questions and insights, drawing on the more objective information to provide answers that will help you make your decision. ■

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stand". Stephen Covey

Then you will be building trusting relationships, requiring that you demonstrate an authentic desire to listen and to interact with your audiences.

I want you to succeed with your business; whether it is on-line, off-line, or both. The best way to do this is to take the action steps to move you forward daily. And, learning what is behind the action steps, the why you are doing this, and then being able to tell others this, will help you outperform yourself! That after all is part of your journey in building your business.

It will be pretty awesome when you can wake up in the morning knowing that you have a business that is bringing money in and helping others.

-- A major action step to take on a daily basis is to make marketing a daily commitment; it has to be a priority for your long-term success. Taking care of the assignment that I gave above, is getting to know your business and your potential clients and it is marketing.

-- Organize your day to succeed. This means that you make sure you are doing what must be done as efficiently as possible. So make a list and follow that list. This includes writing (which is a huge part of your marketing plan) - writing blogs, articles, posting in forums, comment on others' blogs and researching your competitors. All of this also keeps you up on what is happening in your business world.

Continue to grow and be successful.

So let's get started on those important action steps - why not?



Brainstorming Computer comfort

Sitting at a computer for hours can create physical discomfort. To avoid problems:

Avoid bending your wrists. Take a break every 30 minutes. Avoid using a laptop as your main machine—they're not designed for extended use. Position the screen 20 inches from your eyes at a 15-degree angle. Avoid bright lights in the room. Blink regularly. Do eye exercises when working extended periods. Example: Trace a figure eight with your eyes, first in one direction and then the other.

Worried bosses state the facts

EMPLOYERS are so concerned about being sued over references that many are scared to state more than basic facts, say recruitment experts.

Employers are increasingly at risk of being sued for damages if inaccurate, defamatory or misleading information is included in a reference for a past employee.

This has left employers vulnerable and many are opting to simply give statements of service rather than a full reference.

Jenny Cainer, founding director of Marketing Professionals UK, a marketing recruitment agency says that this trend is making references worthless:

"We see hundreds of references and most aren't worth the paper they're written on. Employers are so scared of saying the wrong thing that references are given out by personnel, not line managers, and they are only able to confirm employment dates and statistics such as number of sick days. They are not able to comment either way on performance as they were not the direct line manager so 'satisfactory' is as good as it gets.

This information is little use to a future employer as they are often non-the-wiser having read such a reference and it can only be to the detriment of the candidate (and future employer) who anticipates they will get a glowing recommendation from their referee.

The right questions need to be asked in the interview stages to sort the wheat from the chaff. Employers should never solely rely on references to make up their mind about a candidate."

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