



Robert Ciccone

Want to succeed? Try the Marketing Mindset

An overlooked trait in entrepreneurs

If I were to ask you to define the common traits of a successful entrepreneur, what would your answer be? Let me guess. Did you say that they need to be leaders, innovators, self-confident, organized risk-takers and competitive? Well, that's the typical definition, and those are all good answers.

But in my experience, there's one key trait that is often overlooked when people think of a "successful entrepreneur". It's a trait that I call the Marketing Mindset.

The Marketing Mindset is a philosophy where you, the business owner, understand that you are not in the business of doing whatever it is you do, i.e., consultant, painter, computer technician, clothing retailer or widget maker. You are first and foremost in the business of marketing and selling what you do.

This subtle distinction in philosophy is the difference between success and failure. The number one reason a business succeeds is because of high sales, and the number one reason a business fails is due to low sales. The fact is: if you are in business, you are in sales. The Marketing Mindset says that "Nothing happens until a sale is made." Until you embrace sales and marketing, your business will struggle. Peter Drucker, consultant and author, says it well: "Because the ultimate purpose of a business is to create a customer, the only true functions of a business are innovation and marketing. Everything else is a cost."

Let's take Jeanne as a case study. I worked with Jeanne after she had been struggling to start a new business that delivered some very innovative training programs to other businesses. When I met Jeanne, I could see that she had nearly all of the entrepreneurial qualities, and Jeanne believed very strongly in her business. She knew that these programs could transform her clients' companies – if only she could ever get any clients. A full year had passed since she had started her business and she still had not enrolled enough clients to make ends meet. Now, \$15,000 in the hole for licensing fees and initial expenses, her savings dwindling and no sales imminent, she had a tough decision to make: either pull the plug and cut her

losses, or give it one last try.

Jeanne was struggling because she believed she was in the business of providing training services. She did not see that she was really in the business of marketing training services.

Jeanne was good at what she did and was happily honing the skills necessary to deliver her product (innovating), but sales and marketing just weren't high enough on her radar. Entrepreneurs are always excited by innovation. But in the Marketing Mindset, that excitement about innovation is coupled with an equal enthusiasm for making a sale. Jeanne was excited by her product but hadn't learned to get just as excited about sales. Her problem was nothing more than a need for a shift in her perspective of who she was as an entrepreneur.

What I helped Jeanne to understand was that the Marketing Mindset is a trait, just like leadership, organization, or creativity. And it's a trait anyone can develop. With this new mindset, Jeanne worked on her business in a whole new way, and held her business and her identity as an entrepreneur in a whole new light. Marketing and sales became the driving force of her company. This shift in perspective opened her eyes to more opportunities to find clients. And before she knew it, her business was flourishing.

If you want more proof that the Marketing Mindset is a core trait of entrepreneurship, do some research. Check out the Forbes lists of the top CEOs and most successful businesspeople in the world, and you'll start to notice something. Yes, they are all visionary. They all have drive. They're all leaders. But, as you delve further, you'll find that at the core, the majority of these individuals have some sort of sales background. They share an understanding and focus on what it takes to create and keep a customer, and have an underlying respect for what it takes to make a sale. This is the true essence of an entrepreneur and the Marketing Mindset.

Robert Ciccone is the president and founder of Success Unlimited Sales and Marketing Group (www.susmg.com), a full-service marketing consulting firm that helps companies increase their sales and profits. He can be reached at 604-688-7733 or rob@susmg.com.

Unmatched Quality Unbelievable Value

OKI®
PRINTING SOLUTIONS



The all-new OKI ES3640 business workstation offers outstanding colour image quality, unmatched reliability and impressive return on investment.

Colour copies only 5¢ per page.



- Network printing capable.
- Integrated Fiery.
- Full colour printing at 36 CPM.
- Scanning feature allows creation of electronic files.
- Single pass printer handles card stock (up to 150 lb.).
- Full finishing, including booklet, folding, 3-hole punch & stapling.
- Can print on sheets up to 12.9" wide by 47" long (full bleed).
- Total support from authorized provider.
- Toll-free technical assistance 24/7/365.
- 5¢ per page based on 8.5" x 11" standard coverage per colour.

Available at Vancouver's best office values:

OFFICEWISE SOLUTIONS

14 W. 7th Avenue (at Ontario). Vancouver, BC.

604-681-4800

More than 10,000 sq. ft. of new and used desks, chairs, file cabinets, boardroom tables, panel systems, bookcases, whiteboards, personnel lockers, storage cabinets and folding-leg tables. Also copiers, faxes, printers with full service contracts. We sell, rent or lease.