

## 5 traits needed for working in your business

In light of some recent movement towards freelancing or contracting in our local IT and Tech scene, I thought I'd twist the popular topic "5 traits you need to work from home" into "5 traits you need to work in your own business, at home"

Everyone has to start somewhere, and it is a reasonably safe assertion that most people will kick their businesses off from a room in their own home, even if just for a month. It is also reasonable to suggest that most will experience similar feelings and situations, which means the traits below will be valuable in helping many through the startup phase of business.

Here are five traits that I think are top of the list in the early stages of setting up or running a business. Some of these lessons were recognised while looking back, but some are just pieces of good advice that it would be rude not to share.

### 1. Discipline.

This is in all that you do, be it turning up to work on time or ensuring that your work/business processes are completed to the same level every time. Some people like to dress up in a suit, walk around the outside of the house and head in the back door to start their work day. This isn't for everyone, and in some ways is counter to the idea that working from home creates flexibility in your schedule. However, if that is what you need to do to ensure you don't eye up the pile of papers on your desk and instead opt for a cuppa and a console game, then you jolly well do it.

On your business, discipline covers many facets, the one thing they all have in common is your customers' experience. Make it amazing for them. All the time.

### 2. A brave face

It's tough, let's not kid ourselves. You'll try to please your clients all the time, and yet there will be a time where you feel like packing it all in for a cushy pool-boy job in Bora Bora. Money might be tight in the early stages (or at any stage). You need that brave face, not just for false bravado, but to continue to say "the client is right" or to change your focus and go drum up some more work. Which leads me to the next point...

### 3. It's not about the money - change your focus

Well, it is, but...

It is very normal to be concerned about cash flow, especially early on. You will have a comprehensive business plan with forecasts that we like to call 'realistically optimistic', but there is a bigger picture issue here:

If you focus on doing what you do well, with all the good and the uncomfortable things that come with that, cash flow will take care of itself. Trust that you are that good (see point 5). Simple.

### 4. Savvy

This is probably the most common trait you'll see in articles like this. Let's go a little further into it. You need to be:

- o **IT savvy**

Self explanatory really. You need to know how to run what you have. This means making sure you

opt for the right packages before you open the doors. You'll be responsible for the printer malfunction at 3am, just hours before your deadline. This, in my opinion, is where a lot of people come unstuck. Every tool you buy, every piece of software you install needs to work in a way that you understand, right down to your smartphone and flavour of Calendar

- **People savvy**

Let's face it, if you have made the leap into running your own business, you've probably got this one covered. Just remember point 2, you'll mostly have it in the bag if you are doing the right thing, juggling expectations and personalities. But you will be surprised by someone, some time. If you have this savvy in spades, you'll carry on like nothing happened, if you don't, you'll feel like you've been sucker punched in the guts. Next time you'll have more though, accumulating this skill will see you through pretty much anything that your future clients/partners/colleagues can throw at you.

- **Where-the-hell-do-I-get-one-of-those-from savvy**

'WTHDIGOOTF savvy' can also be called 'Who-the-hell-does-that? savvy'. One of our most favorite clients shared a story the other day that highlights this beautifully:

Someone thought that while they were sound proofing their 3D printer, they might as well check it for emissions at the same time(?).

Check [seek.co.nz](http://seek.co.nz) for a 3D printer emissions tester, a pretty rare role I'd guess. Anyway, you need to know everything that will impact your productivity and where to go to mitigate any stoppages/slow down/breaks in the chain of productivity..

- **I-need-help savvy**

'INH savvy' might be the best one. This is an elusive cultivar of savvy in the new business owners head. You need to be able to spot when you need help (hopefully early in the piece) AND have the intestinal fortitude to ask for it. On top of this, you need to be able to ask for the right type and calibre of help, and this will entirely depend on how honest you are being with yourself

## 5. Confidence

Confidence to say:

- I can adapt what I am doing to meet the demands and criticisms of others
- I have the requisite skill and knowledge
- I've done enough for today!
- I can do this

In essence, you just need to trust that the process you went through to establish your new business, was balanced and based on sound thinking. It's easy to forget that you might be peerless in your field, or that you have a distinct competitive advantage, or even that you just want to do a great job on your own terms.

### Wrap up

There are so many more points we can talk about here, these traits are the ones that seem to pop up the most when I'm talking to others about their ventures

If you take one thing from reading this, I would encourage you to focus on point 3, you'll never look back!