

## The entrepreneurial seizure

**In Michael Gerber's book *The E-Myth—Why Most Businesses Don't Work and What to Do About It*, he suggests that it's a myth to even suggest that most businesses are started by entrepreneurs. Instead, he says, "...most businesses are started by a person suffering from an entrepreneurial seizure".**

Think about how true that is. The hairdresser who's working in a salon gets fed up working for a boss and opens a hairdressing salon and, in doing so, she creates a worse job for herself.

Where in the past, she used to go home on a Friday and enjoy the weekend, now she's doing the books, thinking about the new advertising campaign, paying wages, getting involved with

employee issues, worrying about what her prices should be, and about the fact that a new salon just opened across the street.

This scenario doesn't just relate to hairdressers.

**...it's a myth to even suggest that most businesses are started by entrepreneurs...**

Instead of creating a business that works independently of us, we've created a business that is us—one we can't walk away from; one we have to go to each day; one where we have a sigh

of relief when someone finally buys it from us at a price nothing like it could have been worth if we'd approached things a little differently.

By taking the time to think about what you hope to achieve from your business—by working ON it, as well as IN it—you can create a business that enhances your life and that of those around you, replacing stress and worry with order and success.

## Dr Feelgood

**Have you ever been on the receiving end of a call that says, "I just called to say thanks for... Felt pretty good, didn't it? And you'd be amazed how much this kind of thing means to your customers as well.**

In fact, it can make such an impression, that not only will that customer be more loyal, they'll freely sing your praises to all those who'll listen.

And you can do much more than just thank a customer for their

business once a year. You'll find if you really listen, customers will tell you exactly how to delight them.

Take the story of a lady who arrived at her hotel in a less than cheerful mood. The receptionist asked her what was wrong. Her answer told of delayed flights, cancelled appointments—and a completely non-productive day.

10 minutes later, when she arrived in her room, she discovered a box of chocolates and a

little note, "Sorry you had such a rotten day. We hope this cheers you up." It did.

By listening for these little subtleties, you can really make a difference in delighting your customers—while you create advocates for your business.

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## Managing worry through effective listening

**Part of being an effective business leader and manager is learning how to manage your own stress levels. This can also extend to guiding members of your team who may be suffering from workplace stress.**

Often, just having a chance to talk something through can be an immense relief to your team members. When one of your team next has a worry they need guidance with, try these simple tips:

- Pay full attention to the speaker—Don't try to perform

other tasks such as answering the phone or filing papers. Listen carefully to what is being said.

- Use body language to show your concern—a person under stress wants to be heard on all levels. Make eye contact with and lean toward the speaker. Nod your head to show you understand. Use facial expressions to indicate feelings.
- Respond every now and then with a verbal acknowledgment such as, "I understand,"

or "I see what's happening."

- Restate the speaker's point in your own words to make sure you understand what they are trying to convey.
- Comment only on what the speaker is describing. Don't try to solve the problem; just try to understand it.
- Acknowledge the feelings behind the words. You can even identify them by saying, "It sounds as though you're feeling very hurt (or angry or frustrated)."

**"If you can imagine it, you can achieve it.  
If you can dream it, you can become it."**

**William Arthur Ward**

## Is your desk making you sick?

from *Priority Management International*

**Those piles of paper, stacks of folders, and last week's coffee cup collection on your office desk mean one thing: You're likely to get sick.**

A recent study was conducted on NEC-Mitsubishi employees in Japan in order to determine specific ways employees could improve their work areas. The study established a link between cluttered workspaces and poor health, and also found the opposite was true—that employees with tidy workspaces were often healthier.

The researchers warned that symptoms resulting from cluttered workspaces could escalate

very quickly and significantly impact a person's productivity and quality of life in a range of ways.

Working long hours and sitting with poor posture often compound the problem.

What can you do before it's too late?

"The 2 essentials for less stressful, more productive desk management are: Don't endure, act today; and do it yourself—don't wait for someone else to fix it for you," says the report's authors.

**Setting Up:** Pay more attention to the way you set up your desk to reduce stress and health risks.

**Sitting Pretty:** Adjust the way you sit to improve back posture.

**Take Five:** Take a few minutes to stretch to reduce injury from routine activity.

**Change of Scene:** Take regular breaks away from your desk to improve your concentration, overall health, and colleague interaction.

**Express Yourself:** Give your desk individuality to remind you of life outside work.

**Keep Cool:** Prevent dehydration and overheating at work to promote higher energy levels.

**De-clutter:** Organize your desk to reduce stress levels and increase productivity.

Getting your desk organized will save you time, lower your stress levels and make you more effective.



## Delegating that sticks

from Harvard ManageMentor

**One of the purposes of delegation is to help your team members develop professionally. Here are a few tips to hone their problem solving skills once you've delegated work:**

### 1. Make yourself let go

Approach your team from a leadership perspective and encourage in them a sense of ownership and accountability so you're more comfortable in delegating tasks.

### 2. Ask, don't tell

Skilled delegators know to ask questions, rather than dictate orders. This teaches people to come up with proposed solu-

tions next time they come to you with a problem.

### 3. Match tasks to people

Delegate in ways that enable people to stretch, and treat mistakes as growth opportunities. Explain your assessment of their capabilities so they understand why you're handing certain tasks to them.

### 4. Cultivate independent thinking

The more your team members think independently and have a sense of ownership in their role, the better they'll be to deal with issues themselves as they arise. Set clear guidelines as to responsibilities, the level of knowl-

edge they should have, and how much authority they have to make decisions.

### 5. Link people with resources

Linking people with the resources they need to solve problems can be valuable. For instance, you may direct them to an information source, other people, tools or resources that can help them resolve issues on their own.

**“Our job is to give the client what he never dreamed he wanted.”**  
**Dewys Lasdon**

## Should your ad stand out—or should it be outstanding?

**You can look as big as your competitors by buying a bigger ad in the newspaper or yellow pages, but what if your budget doesn't stretch that far?**

Aside from which, all the other ads around yours will probably be taking the same approach in jostling for prospects' attention. So the question is: how do you make your ads truly outstanding.

There are a number of ways you can make your ad stand out and catch the readers eye. But your ad must not only catch and hold your readers' eyes, it must rapidly telegraph a message that interests them enough to have them pick up the phone and dial

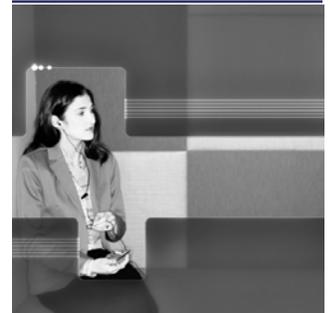
your number.

There are four absolutely critical things to get right to make your advertising effective:

1. Target your customers—never try to appeal to everyone. Focus specifically on those people you know will benefit from your product/service. How you word your headline will be the primary factor in accurately targeting your offer.
2. Make your offer compelling and relevant to the market you target. Don't be cute or clever. Say it exactly as it is.
3. Graphics and layout will make your ad readable and noticeable. Don't try to make your ad

look like an ad. Make it look like something worth reading.

4. Write your copy in terms that your readers can clearly understand. It must be specific and believable. If you have a clearly defined target market, and your offer is compelling and well stated, your copy can be poor, and you'll still get a good response. But good copy writing won't sell a poor concept/offer.



## Perspectives on pricing

**It's important to understand how pricing functions relate not only to customer behavior, but also to your profits. For instance, a difference of just 1-2% in pricing can have a significant impact.**

As an example, if your business runs at a 20% margin and you decreased your prices by 2%, to maintain current profits, you'd need to increase your sales by 11%. Increase your prices by 2%, and you could afford for your sales volume to drop by 9% before it would start to impact profits.

On the same 20% margin, a price reduction of 18% would demand a massive 900% increase in sales just to maintain profits. Whereas for an 18% increase, your sales would have to drop by as much as 47% before your profits were affected.

### Finding balance

What price level gives you an advantage over the competition but still maximizes profitability? Factors include the real value of your position over your competition's position and customer perceptions of your product's benefits.

If your product has no benefits over your competitors', a price increase could result in a serious loss of market share. However, if you can convince your customers that your product is better or that you provide better service and support, then a price increase may be acceptable.

To the extent you can emphasize

**A difference of just 1-2% in pricing can have a significant impact.**

the importance of issues other than pricing as part of your market strategy, simple price pressure by itself will not determine what you should charge.

### The 'Pocket Price'

You need to determine what base price, discounts and adjustments to offer your customers. To do this, you need to understand the full range of price components, the way your customers compare prices and price variations, and how to

communicate pricing information to them.

The most important thing you need to know is the difference between list price and 'pocket price' i.e., how much each sale ultimately puts in your pocket.

Each product has a list price, but many discounts are available, including volume discounts, competitive price discounts and so on. The list price minus these discounts is the invoice price.

If your customers look primarily at the invoice price, and you plan to offer discounts after the invoice is issued, consider moving some of these later discounts to the invoice itself. It doesn't change the final cost, but may improve the customer's perception of pricing.

## About our consulting services

**We're not your average advisory firm. Far from it.**

Our membership in the Principal Alliance means you have access to the collective knowledge and expertise of an international network made up of hundreds of professionals who specialize in consulting to small and medium-sized businesses, just like yours.

When you add to that our experience, support and guidance, you can be confident you'll have all the help you need to make your business truly extraordinary.

**We can and will do so much more for you than just 'keep the score'.**

Our goal is to help you build a

stronger, more profitable business, so you can enjoy greater financial freedom and a higher quality of life as a result.

Contact us today to discuss how we can help you build a business that delivers on its promise—to you, your team, and your customers.



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