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TEN WAYS TO REALLY SCREW UP A SMALL BUSINESS STARTUP

If you really want your small business to fail, here are 10 surefire ways to do it:

1. Look at the world the way you want it to be, the way you think it ought to be, or the way the media (or your schoolteachers) told you it would be - not the way it really is. Believe people when they tell you your idea is terrific because "everybody needs this". Don't be "cynical" because nobody likes cynical people.
2. Don't be too aggressive in pursuing your business goals - allow things like your personal life to take large chunks of your available time, and be so nice to your competitors and your customers that they walk all over you. Being pushy and demanding (especially of yourself) is not normal, and people will think you are crazy or, even worse, "ruthless". Worry a lot about what other people think about you.
3. Choose a business because of its intellectual content; you are an educated person and must use that education to be successful, or else you are a failure. Never mind that many successful people in business never finished high school (or in some cases grade school). Given the choice between an interesting business and a lucrative one, choose the former.
4. Don't bother to learn anything about accounting or financial management; you can hire accountants to do this for you, and success in business doesn't really depend upon the numbers anyway.
5. Go it alone; because it is your business you must do everything yourself. Do not bother even getting started in business until you are comfortable you can be your own lawyer, accountant, engineer (or designer), marketing and financial expert. Try to be both a visionary and a detail person.
6. Give away lots of stock in your business to everyone you know - it doesn't cost anything, and isn't it better that lots of people have a piece of the action?
7. If you learn something about your business that will give you a competitive advantage, tell the world about it, especially at an industry conference or "networking" session.
8. Choose a business that requires skills, money, other resources or a personality that you do not currently have. You can always get these from other people. Besides, isn't that half the fun of small business - doing the impossible?
9. Confuse your business and your personal lives - don't bother distinguishing the two because you are simply too busy.
10. Forget what it was that made you want to start a small business in the first place - in the long run it doesn't matter what success means to you as long as you're successful.