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A Powerful Beginning Begins with a Solid Foundation

15 Actions that Support a Sustainable and Profitable Business

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The most powerful and important beginning for your business is to lay a foundation for *sustainable* success and financial freedom. I've known too many network marketers and direct sellers who get off to a fast start courtesy of their company's incentives but cannot sustain (nor duplicate) that level of action or results. And while achieving those fast start goals is wonderful, laying a solid foundation for *sustainable* action and results is much more important.

After all, if you were building a house, would you pour the cement for the foundation and start putting up the frames and walls before the cement set?

Of course not!

**Which is why the most powerful
beginning for your business is to lay**

the foundation AND give it time to “set”.

Here are 15 actions – what I’ll call “bricks” - that you can put in place to give you a foundation for a powerful beginning AND a powerful *continuing*!

Brick #1: Open a business checking account for your business.

Whether you plan to do it part-time or full-time, this is the first step for treating your business like the successful and profitable business you want it to be. No excuses. No exceptions. The owners of your local McDonald’s don’t put the money they make each day in their personal checking account and neither should you.

Brick #2: Buy yourself a 12-month accordion file or file box with a folder/section for each month of the year.

From the beginning, develop the habit of immediately putting all of your expense receipts plus commission stubs and sales receipts in your file box. You don’t need a complicated or extensive file system – especially in the beginning. What you DO need is one that is simple, that you can and WILL use and that will make taxes a breeze at the end of the year.

Brick #3: Begin using a SIMPLE system for tracking your monthly business income and expenses, i.e., your profit, as well as your mileage.

Since you will be putting all of your receipts in your 12-month file box, one way to do this and make it as simple as possible is to download the FREE monthly Income & Expense Tracking Sheet I’ve created for network marketers and direct sellers. ([You’ll find it here.](#)) You can then keep this sheet - one per month - in your file folder/box and add to it each time you file your receipts.

Brick #4: Determine the number of hours you can and will devote to your business each week and still have time for family, self-care and your most important priorities.

Whether you plan to do it part-time or full-time, you need to schedule your hours so that your business doesn’t become a “no time” business or an “all the time” business. In determining how much time you will allocate to your business each week, keep in mind that you can’t start building a successful business ON TOP OF what you are already doing. You need to make choices. So make sure you have time for THE most important things in your life, like family and self-care, and limit or eliminate other, non-essential things so you have the time and energy you’ll need to grow your business.

Brick #5: Create a work schedule for each week. Better yet, determine your business hours at least two weeks in advance. The schedule itself may change each week – but not the time you spend on your business.

Post a copy of your weekly schedule on your refrigerator, office door and in your calendar. Then stick to it.

Go to work in your business when you say you will and, equally as important, STOP working at the pre-determined time.

This creates predictability for you and your family. They will be better able to respect your work time if you work as scheduled – especially when you finish as planned. It's also the key to making sure your business doesn't take over your life – which is important when it comes to recruiting. (After all, how many people are going to want to join your business if they see you working ALL the time and not having a balanced life?)

Brick #6: Never work your business (other than when you're at parties, shows or expos) for more than two hours straight without taking at least a 15-minute break.

Not only do you need the break to keep your energy flowing and focused, your family needs it as well. If they know you'll be taking a break in two hours or less, it will minimize or eliminate their need to interrupt you while you are working. (But, of course, this means you really need to take the break!)

Brick #7: Speaking of making sure family doesn't interrupt you while you're working, train them – from the beginning – to honor your office hours with the “blood/fire/flood” rule.

Give your kids and/or spouse a 15-minute warning before going into your office – to see if they need anything from you. Then tell them when you will be coming out of your office next. THEN tell them that you do not want to be interrupted unless “someone's really bleeding, there's a fire or there's a flood”. And if any of them try to interrupt you while you're working, ask them if there's blood, fire or flood. If there's not, tell them you will deal with them/it when you take your break or finish working. Then go back to work.

Brick #8: Take at least one COMPLETE day off from working your business each week.

You need the break so you can come back to your business refreshed. When you don't do this, you'll start to resent your business. If you can't experience balance in your life (including a complete day off) while building your business, any success you have will be limited and non-sustainable. Besides, it's not a good model for attracting others to your business.

Brick #9: Now that you have your office hours scheduled and you and your family are prepared to respect them, the most important habit for you to develop is that of taking THREE ACTIONS each day that are “profitable”.

By “profitable”, I mean they are actions that have the potential to generate immediate or near-term income for you AND that “profit” others as well.

I realize that there's probably a lot you want and need to learn about your products, company, business opportunity. There's a myriad of training opportunities available to you. And, as with all businesses, there's paperwork (which you've simplified with Bricks #2 and #3). And while all of those things are important and essential, the most important habit for you to develop is that of taking profit-generating action.

Calling someone to ask if they would like to host a party would be one example – especially if your commitment is to “profit” them whether they do so or not.

Remember, you can “profit” another person simply by treating them with respect, listening to them, showing genuine interest in them or even by wishing them a great day. If he/she happens to agree to host a party or order some products, that just adds to the profits – for him/her and for you!

Brick #10: Trust in the “enoughness” of a small quantity of action taken consistently over time.

I know you may think that taking only THREE profit-generating actions (above) is “not enough”. I realize you may be tempted to take more than three. But one of the biggest mistakes I've observed network marketers and direct sellers make is to start out too fast.

Growing a sustainable, successful and profitable business is a lot like running a marathon. If you start out too fast, you won't be able to keep up the pace. You'll "hit the wall" and won't be able to finish, i.e., you won't reach your goal.

**Trust me, building the habit of taking
THREE profitable actions each day
you work your business will support
you more than you realize –
especially as you learn and grow
more effective with your actions.**

Consider, again, the example of making THREE booking calls or follow-up calls with potential new customers or recruits. If you schedule yourself to work your business for four days each week (even if it's only an hour each day), you will make 156 calls in your first year. And that's more than most network marketers EVER make.

And those 156 calls (made at a pace of three per day) will (1) help you develop the skills you need to learn and practice in order to succeed, (2) support you to experience balance in your life, and (3) generate new customers or recruits so you make MONEY!

Brick #11: Pay attention to your profit!

Speaking of making money, ALL money you make in your business (from sales, shows, and commissions) must be deposited in your business checking account and recorded on your Income/Expense Tracking Sheet (see Brick #3).

Then, at the end of each month, total your business expenses and subtract them from your business income for the month to determine your monthly profit. While you may not have a profit your first month or two, you do not want that trend to continue. And paying attention to your profit in this way will help you become profitable much sooner than if you didn't maintain this clarity. If you're not profitable early on, then that means you're spending too much money trying to be successful and/or you're not consistently taking the most "profitable" actions you can take. (See Brick #10.)

Brick #12: Develop the habit of paying yourself from your business.

As soon as you have a profit in any given month, whether it's \$5 or \$500, pay yourself 30-50% of that profit. And I mean that – literally! ***Write a check from your business account made payable to you and deposit in your personal***

or household checking account. (If you're a sole proprietor, this is considered an "owner draw".) From the beginning, it's important that YOUR BUSINESS PAYS YOU and that you get in the habit of running your business so that it DOES pay you. After all, that's the whole point of being in business, isn't it?

Brick #13: Build a reserve for your business.

I recommend you pay yourself 30-50% of the profit your business generates so you can build a "cash reserve" for your business. This reserve will carry you through the "down" months you will experience, it will help you pay for training expenses like going to your company conference and it will ensure you will have the money you need for any income taxes you will owe.

Once you have built your reserve to \$500 - \$2000 or more (you decide) AND you are clear you have the money you need for taxes, you can increase the percentage of profit you pay yourself each month. But NEVER pay yourself 100% of the profit. You want to build the habit of saving money for the future needs of your business.

Brick #14: Making a profit and paying yourself is your FIRST goal.

Speaking of making money and paying yourself, the most important goal you can set for yourself in the beginning is to create \$300 - \$600 of monthly profit on a consistent basis. This is what all of your actions and efforts must be directed toward at first.

When you do, you will be able to pay yourself \$150 - \$300 each month. This is a HUGE confidence booster because you will KNOW that you are making money. And that will have a HUGE impact on your confidence in offering the business opportunity to others – because you will KNOW that they can make money too.

Brick #15: Use the first \$200-\$300 you pay yourself to create financial freedom.

This final brick is the key to you experiencing financial freedom – no matter how much money you make in your business or where you wind up in your company's compensation plan.

If you currently have debt of any kind (especially credit card), use the first \$200-\$300 you pay yourself from your business to become debt-free. (Note: It's important that you learn a systematic approach for doing so, like what I teach in my "Disappearing Debt" program, so you get the most "bang for the buck" so to speak.) Just to give you a sense of the impact this money could have for you, consider this scenario -

If you have a \$130,000 30-year mortgage and roughly \$24,000 in other debt, you could be completely debt-free (mortgage and all) in approximately seven years if you simply use the first \$300 you pay yourself in a systematic way to become debt-free. In the process, you would save \$80,000 to \$100,000 in interest.

Imagine that! Imagine the financial freedom you would experience if you had NO debt payments!

If you don't have any debt (even a mortgage), then invest your first \$200-\$300 for your future. Investing as little as \$300 a month at a rate of 8% will result in more than \$100,000 in 15 years. More importantly, that includes more than \$50,000 of interest income, i.e., money your money (not your time and energy) made for you!

When you begin by laying a solid foundation for your business with the 15 bricks I have described, you will better be able to build a business that is successful and sustainable. And even if you never reach the top of your compensation plan or make thousands of dollars each month in your business, you can become financially free a result of your business AND the powerful foundation you built. Best of all, you'll be able to enjoy your life and your business in the process!



Teresa Romain is the President and Founder of Access Abundance!™ - an organization she founded in 1996 to support people to access and experience greater levels of freedom, fulfillment, well-being and abundance in their lives. One of Teresa's greatest gifts is her ability to look at things differently and to create openings for people to bypass and breakthrough the expectations, beliefs and patterns that limit their growth and their ability to prosper and thrive – personally, professionally and financially.

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