

5 Tips To Free Up Time, Work More 'On' Your Business How To Get Some Quality Time That Will Bring More Success

by Michael E. Rohan

When was the last time you worked "ON" your business? Being busy every day, putting out "fires" and not getting to do this part of your job can be a huge frustration.

If you are like most business owners, it's been a while since you set aside daily tasks and focused your full attention on the direction, health and outlook of your business.

Why Work "ON" The Business?

The top person in the business—owner, president, etc.—has the responsibility to decide what happens next. He or she guides the daily business—but also must make decisions about change and the future. He or she must make time to work "ON" the business to be proactive about change, opportunities, threats, options and decide what is best for the business.

What Exactly Are We Talking About?

You are working "IN" your business if you are doing the daily details of running a business; involved in routine activities such as sales, customer management, finance, employees, quality, etc. This work is typically based on technical expertise, experience and is familiar ground.

You are working "ON" your business if you are thinking beyond daily business routine; making high-potential decisions for your business about growth, market changes, processes and people. It requires data-crunching, pattern identification, decision-making and shut-the-door think time. This work is creative, the "big picture" and is unfamiliar ground.

It's About Time!

"Every Monday, we all start with 168 hours a week. The trick is how you are going to use those hours," observes Bob Gatesh. He is an experienced counselor who advises clients at SCORE (Service Corps of Retired Executives). SCORE helps and educates small businesses on planning and growth. (Gatesh is also a registered representative for World Financial Group and an investment advisor representative for Investment Advisors International, affiliated financial services firms.) Gatesh believes, "owners must recognize they are more than just another employee—they have responsibility to make the business succeed."

Focus, Trust And Accountability

Victor Mattison, president of Access US, a St. Louis-based Internet service provider to business and residential customers, offers some insights, too. Finding time to work "ON" your business is always a challenge because of the "tyranny of the urgent," Victor said. He recommends that "you must be focused on things that really matter to your business." He believes business owners should regularly check on the business, and themselves, by asking questions such as:

1. Am I working on things that other employees should be doing and for which they already have responsibility?
2. At the end of the day, am I making the business better? Am I enriching our business by increasing the value of what we do for customers?
3. Are we doing things merely because we've always done it that way, or because it's the right way?
4. Who can help me be more accountable? And help me by holding me to goals I set,



Getting Started: What It Takes To Start Working "ON" Your Business

1. **Try.** Think about the ideas in this article to begin start working "ON" your business.
2. **Time.** Schedule think time. Begin with one hour a week.
3. **Trust.** Trust yourself—and trust others. Pick and choose what to get involved in every day.
4. **Talk.** Get outside help. Contact SCORE at www.stlscore.org. Or contact an outside resource to be there to guide the process.
5. **Team.** Find an accountability partner you can trust. Meet regularly to help hold you accountable for setting and meeting high-potential business decisions.

which must be written down?

Always Thinking “ON”

Steve Fehr, president of Musketeer Group, a custom software development firm headquartered in St. Louis, knows it is hard to work “ON” his business, because he is in a service business. Some customers want Fehr to be involved in their issues. “So I pick and choose what I get involved in each day. But I think about my business and how to improve it constantly,” he said.

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