10 Secrets of Successful Entrepreneurs

1. **Think success.** To attain the kind of success that you want, you need to dream big. Every success story starts with big dreams. You need to have big dreams for yourself - which you want to be somebody rich, famous or fulfilled. You need to have a clear vision of what you want to achieve. But it doesn't stop in dreaming alone. You should actively visualize success in your mind that you can almost feel it, touch it or it is within your reach. Play this image back at every opportunity. What will your business look like if you achieved the million-dollar mark?

2. **Be passionate with what you do.** You start a business to change any or all part of your life. To attain this change, you need to develop or uncover an intense, personal passion to change the way things are and to live life to the fullest. Success comes easily if you love what you do. Why? Because we are more relentless in our pursuit of goals about things that we love. If you hate your job right now, do you think you will ever be successful at it? Not in a million years! Entrepreneurs who succeed do not mind the fact that they are putting in 15 or 18 hours a day to their business because they absolutely love what they do.

3. **Focus on your strengths.** Let's face it; you cannot be everything to everybody. Each of us has our own strengths and weaknesses. To be effective, you need to identify your strengths and concentrate on it. You will become more successful if you are able to channel your efforts to areas that you do best. In business, for example, if you know you have good marketing instincts, then harness this strength and make full use of it. Seek help or assistance in areas that you may be poor at, such as accounting or bookkeeping. To transform your weakness to strength, consider taking hands-on learning or formal training.

4. **Never accept the possibility of failure.** Ayn Rand, in her novel The Fountainhead, wrote, "It is not in the nature of man - nor of any living entity, to start out by giving up." As an entrepreneur, you need to fully believe in your goals, and that you can do it. Think that what you are doing will contribute to the betterment of your environment and your personal self. You should have a strong faith in your idea, your capabilities and yourself. However, your confidence must be balanced with thorough understanding of the risks that you need to take to achieve greater rewards. Successful entrepreneurs are those who analyze and minimize risk in the pursuit of profit. As they always say, "no guts, no glory."

5. **Plan accordingly.** You have a vision, and you have enough faith in yourself to believe that you can achieve your vision. But do you know how to get to your vision? To achieve your vision, you need to have concrete goals that will provide the stepping-stone towards your ultimate vision. Put your goals in writing; not doing so just makes them as intangible fantasies. You need to plan each day in such a way that each action contributes to the attainment of your vision.
Every successful entrepreneur has a “successful” vision, and they have a plan for how to achieve it.

6. Work hard! Every successful entrepreneur works hard, hard and hard. No one achieves success just by sitting and staring at the wall every single day. Brian Tracy puts it out this way, "You work eight hours per day for survival; everything over eight hours per day is for success." Ask any successful businessperson and they will tell you immediately that they had to work more than 60 hours per week at the start of their businesses. Working hard will be easy if you have a vision, clear goals, and are passionate with what you do.

7. Constantly Look for Ways to Network. In business, you are judged by the company you keep - from your management team, board of directors, and strategic partners. Businesses always need assistance, more so small businesses. Maybe the lady you met in a trade association meeting can help you secure funding, or the gentleman at a conference can provide you with management advise. It is important to form alliances with people who can help you, and whom you can help in return. To succeed in business, you need to possess good networking skills and always be alert to opportunities to expand your contacts.

8. Willingness to Learn. You do not need to be a MBA degree holder or PhD graduate to succeed in your own business. In fact, there are a lot of entrepreneurs who did not even finish High School. Studies show that most self-made millionaires have average intelligence. Nonetheless, these people reached their full potentials and achieved their financial and personal goals in business because they are willing to learn. To succeed, you must be willing to ask questions, remain curious, interested and open to new knowledge. This willingness to learn becomes more crucial given the rapid changes in technologies and ways of doing business.

9. Persevere and have faith. No one said that the road to success is easy. Despite your good intentions and hard work, sometimes you will fail. Some successful entrepreneurs suffered setbacks and resounding defeats, even bankruptcy, yet managed to quickly stand up to make it big in their fields. Courage to persist in the face of adversity and your ability to bounce back after a setback will greatly aid your chances for success. Remember, if you persevere, nothing can stop you.

10. Discipline yourself. Thomas Huxley once said, "Do what you should do, when you should do it, whether you like it or not." And remember another famous quote: "We have met the enemy and he is us". Self-discipline is the key to success. The strength of will to force yourself to pay the price of success - doing what others don't like to do, going the extra mile, fighting and winning the lonely battle with yourself. Discipline is probably the most critical quality possessed by the successful entrepreneur.