

Do I have what it takes to own/manage a small business?

Ä **“The starting point of all great achievements is desire.” – Napoleon Hill**

You will be your own most important asset, so an objective appraisal of your strengths and weaknesses is essential. To determine if you have what it takes, YOU need to answer some questions about yourself:

Am I a self-starter?

How well do I get along with a variety of personalities?

How good am I at making decisions?

Do I have the physical and emotional stamina to run a business?

How well do I plan and organize?

Are my attitudes and drive strong enough to maintain motivation?

How to Beat Business Burnout

Burnout -- and the boredom that results -- constitutes the No. 1 reason small business owners pack it in and either sell out or shut down. According to market research published in *Family Business*, burnout is the primary motivator in 50 percent of all business divestitures.

It makes sense. Successful business owners don't just commit themselves to their companies...they become consumed by the quest. Many put in long hours. They neglect their health, families and outside activities; then end up physically ill, emotionally depressed, even divorced. Ironically, a major cause of burnout is success, achieving a single goal long sought. That's why many owners get restless, discontented, bored.

Fortunately, it doesn't have to be that way. **To beat burnout:**

1. **Separate work and play**...and be sure to take time to play. Make it a household rule not to discuss

business after 7:00 P.M. Or make the kitchen or family room and, most definitely, the bedroom a "No Business" zone.

2. **Get adequate sleep**...no less than six hours a night. Long-term sleep deprivation can distort thinking and reduce productivity. But adequate sleep can enhance stamina and clear-headedness.
3. **Devote time to mental regeneration** every day. Some business owners meditate, others read the Bible or review inspirational books.
4. **Exercise** daily, even if its only half an hour of walking while working out a business problem.
5. **Have a mission**...a sense of purpose. This goes beyond mere objectives. A mission describes (1) what you want to achieve and (2) *why* you want to achieve it.
6. **Believe in what you're doing**. There's nothing more exciting or challenging than being a business owner. What you do benefits your customers, your employees and, most of all, your family. Don't lose sight of that.
7. **Be organized**. Maintain clear objectives and activity plans for the year, quarter, month, week and day.
8. **Work smarter**...not just harder. An hour of planning can save ten times that in increased productivity. Follow the carpenters rule: Measure twice, cut once.
9. **Don't settle into success**. Repetition of a successful process or activity can lead to mind-numbing boredom. Take at least one calculated risk each year.
10. **Maintain your priorities**. Business is important...but not at the expense of health and

happiness. Also, remember that it is relationships that give true meaning to what you do.

Dr. James A. McCain is a Management Consultant in Rexford, New York and may be reached at Business Works, 518-383-3337, or through his web site at www.bizdrsolution.com.