3 Reasons Entrepreneurs Struggle When Building Business Systems

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Most business owners likely have heard the argument for systems thinking. Yet, most small business owners struggle with this concept. They still want to handle every problem as a one-time issue.

They see symptoms of root causes and immediately search for a way to relieve the discomfort. They never realize that those root causes are often recurring. Problems shift around but the reason for the issues remains. Fixing the symptom leaves the problem to surface again in the future.

By taking control of the systems, we gain control of the business.

It is easy to explain the benefits of this approach. But just understanding the benefits doesn’t mean that one will be able to take the necessary steps to build their business system. Here are a few reasons why the motivation to use systems to build a business doesn’t always connect to a systematic approach.

They are the expert

Most small business owners understand the ins and outs of the business better than anyone. With this great knowledge, they don’t see the value in creating systems. They assume they will be able to make the right decisions as they face them.

They use their in-depth knowledge to navigate the market and push their product or service to their customers. But this has limitations. This is often why a small business plateaus at a certain point.

The owner becomes the limiting factor. They can’t hire and delegate responsibility when there isn’t a system managing the business. Instead, they want to hire someone they can train to think as they do. But that training rarely works because their expertise is not transferrable.

Often, these small business owners end up owning their job. They can’t seem to hire someone with the right work ethic. They can’t find someone who cares enough about the job to do it right.

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They don’t have time

Running a business takes an enormous amount of time. Keeping the wheels turning is often more than a full-time job.

Business owners get wrapped up working in the business to make sure that it continues to make money. But they need to be able to work on the business as well. Working on the business means taking a step back and thinking about the various systems and processes the business utilizes.

This takes time. Because of the additional time it requires, it becomes easier to ignore the systems and keep making the widgets or selling services. Business owners must stop looking at this as a cost for the business and look at it as an investment.

Systems take time to develop, but then they save time later.

They don’t know how to create systems

Creating systems and processes to run the business sounds easy. But have you ever sat down to create one? It can be daunting.

Creating the structure for a business takes focus. We need to understand how to look at things methodically when they often resemble chaos.

The expert baker that started a bakery knows how to make and sell baked goods. This doesn’t mean they are an expert at business operations or business process improvement.

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Learning a new skill

Luckily, taking a step back from the day-to-day minutia of the business to see the structures can be learned. With a little effort, you can transform the business from reactive chaos to organized value.

We need to stop being the sole expert and start looking at how to take us out of the equation. How can we make sure the quality is high when we hire someone else to take over this process? How do we make sure we have consistency when we have 3 different salespeople?

The answer to both questions is to focus on building business systems. What does an optimal system look like? What are the factors that must be present? What are the decision trees?

One of the best places to find examples of this is from the franchise world. Franchises are experts at creating successful business systems.

Take a franchise restaurant. They aren't selling the famous chef. They are selling a branded restaurant experience. They do that by creating the systems necessary to provide a great eating experience. Then, the franchisee implements those systems in a new market.

The franchise cleaning company has the systems in place. It only needs someone who can put their own time and money into it. The franchisee gets a system that works in most markets. The franchisor gets to leverage successful business systems.

But business systems are not only found in franchises. They are found in every successful business. Even with a passionate, smart, hard-working CEO, the business needs the right systems to succeed.

What about your business? What are the key things someone would have to do to replicate your company's success? Start there. Then, begin seeing everything in your business as a series of interacting systems driving the company forward.

As you do, you will sharpen your ability to create and manage systems. You will start to understand how to change and improve the systems. You will become wise in system development. This translates to business growth.

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