The Magic That Happens When You Ask Yourself “Why Not?”

Opinions expressed by Entrepreneur contributors are their own.

Can two words change the trajectory of a small business? To this and many other business questions, the owner of Starbright Floral in New York City, Nic Faitos, says, “Why not?”

This seemingly simple question opened his business up to limitless possibilities. He learned every venture might not be successful, but every experiment is worth the effort.

“Not every opportunity is gonna work out. Not every creative challenge is going to be a hit,” Nic said. “But you try things, and then you evaluate them. How do I improve it? How did it go? Do I like it? Am I in a good place with it? And then you build from there.”

By taking risks and learning from the results, Nic has built Starbright Floral from a small delivery startup to a staple of New York City over the last 30 years. Whereas the shop might have had a dozen total orders a day when it opened, Starbright’s reputation and willingness to try new things have boosted the demand to dozens of orders an hour.

By asking “why not?”, Starbright has now become the go-to florist for large corporate events and weddings, teaches classes, provides on-site plant care, and has even created a subscription plan for weekly floral deliveries—effectively opening several new streams of revenue.

While generating innovative ideas can carve a niche for your business and attract customers, the ideas are only as good as

the degree to which customers are satisfied with their experience. Because of this, Nic is equally concerned with customer satisfaction, which can be tricky in a business built on the perception of beauty, showcasing products that are as easily damaged as flowers.

When a customer does have a complaint, Nic doesn't get defensive. He uses each instance as an opportunity to wow them in their time of need, even if it means providing a refund or an entirely new arrangement.

"If I'm sending out a hypothetical 1,000 orders in any given period, and of that 1,000 orders, two orders result in those kinds of interactions, I'm gonna look at those two interactions and say, it's the cost of doing business. It's the cost of my reputation. And I'm not gonna let go of that until I know that it's come full circle and the customer has been fully satisfied."

Nic firmly believes that cultural attitudes and expectations flow through his entire team, and it starts with him.

"Whether it's the way you dress, the way you talk to customers, the product that you deliver, a driver who has his final eyeballs on a product and says, 'No, I'm not gonna deliver this. It does not look right. I'm gonna take it back to the store, fix it again, and bring it back out,' that's all part of the inner workings of the organization, and that's where we become a well-oiled machine."

This level of attention to detail humanizes the business, as does Starbright's approach to designers' interactions with customers. Many of Starbright's florists have regular customers who ask for them specifically—a strategy that's entirely by design, and according to Nic, one of the secrets to his success.

"I want a customer who walks through the front door to be able to pick a designer they like. I want them to develop a

relationship. That's their 'bartender.' I want them to be able to walk up to that designer, stand next to them, and create their arrangement together. I want it to be an experience," he said. "So the customer is going to take 15, 20 more minutes of our time. So what? That's when we're building a relationship. That's when we get to know one another."

And, like Nic, the Starbright florists treat every order with the same respect, whether it's a single arrangement or a six-figure project.

"We don't look at the volume that a customer brings us, or the potential growth volume. That all takes care of itself. We really do live by a philosophy that if you take care of your customer without having dollar signs in your eyes, the world is gonna be a magnificent place for you, and it's gonna come back to you one way or another. And we do live by that."

There are a number of other lessons Nic shared in the episode that helped him turn his business into a local treasure, including:

- **Make your business personal, to a point.** Nic still answers phones and takes orders so he stays close to the business. However, he's built a great team that doesn't need to be micromanaged, allowing him to step away for his own personal time.
- **Low employee turnover happens when your employees feel empowered.** Nic gives every designer their own space and encourages them to use their own style and develop their own rapport with customers, resulting in extremely low turnover.
- **Build relationships.** Post pandemic, customer habits have changed. Many want familiar experiences and faces when they're ready to make a purchase. Reaching out and preemptively making connections can help encourage repeat business.

Listen to the episode below to hear Nic’s full conversation with Emily, and subscribe to *Behind the Review* for more from new business owners and reviewers every Thursday.

Available on: Spotify, Apple Podcasts, Google Podcasts, Stitcher, and Soundcloud.

https://www.entrepreneur.com/growing-a-business/the-magic-that-happens-when-you-ask-yourself-why-not/455789