The Need for Speed: How Fast Decision-Making Reduces Risk and Creates Growth



When it comes to decision-making and customer satisfaction, speed is your greatest ally.

Grow Your Business, Not Your Inbox

Stay informed and join our daily newsletter now!

June 17, 2020 5 min read

Opinions expressed by *Entrepreneur* contributors are their own.

Analytical employees spend too much time considering the pros and cons of a business strategy. To the point where no action is taken when rivals are hungering to topple your market

share. A 2010 study found that Americans spend 47 percent of their waking hours thinking instead of focusing on the present activity. In business, non-action is dangerous as bill collectors wait nearby. Street-smart entrepreneurs figure it out as they go.

A survey by Interactive Intelligence a few years ago found that clients valued “a timely response” more than efficiency, professionalism, and other factors for call centers. Another survey by the same group found that customers want “speed of service” more than anything else for customer support.

Here’s how super-fast turnaround can make a company sustainable and defensible.

Speed lowers risk

A swift enterprise is not possible without extreme efficiency and high employee morale. Therefore, rapid procurement forces a business to stay lean and mean, thereby de-risking the common knowledge that Ssnoozers are losers, and you should strive to bury slow rivals.

“We’re faster and easier than 99 percent of competitors,” says Michael Nemeroff in a recent call. He’s the CEO of Rush Order Tees, a Philadelphia-based custom-apparel company that grew sales from $20 million in 2016 to currently $90 million. “We are deadline driven, meaning we understand the importance of hitting due dates. We have that capability unlike most rivals in this business. We always leave capacity open to meet the demand of last-minute customers who need an urgent turnaround. Other print shops don’t normally do this.”

Speed allows businesses to collect payments faster. It increases turnover which allows firms to collect more profits. As the saying goes, perfection is the enemy of growth. A slower competitor may aim to supply the perfect merchandise, but that approach will decrease transaction volume. Speed

allows you to preempt competitors because the faster you do business with customers, the less they purchase from rivals. You'd be obtaining a larger share of limited disposable income that's spent on your category.

Assume customers have ADHD

A 2015 study by Microsoft found that Americans have less attention than a goldfish: 8 seconds. Rapid product delivery or service caters to impatient audiences. It satisfies phone addicts.

Quick procurement is a natural business progression that matches today's frenetic lifestyle.

Solopreneurs still need the appropriate quality based on the price-point you're charging. A catchy logo and informative package also help. However, speed overcomes a size disadvantage. What killed Goliath? David's slingshot. Speed can diminish competition in your area. And it allows a brand to stay fresh in customers' minds. Moreover, quick procurement boosts one's reputation. If you can deliver extremely fast, people assume you're a god in your craft.

"Being in business is an extremely creative process and the most important form of creativity is resourcefulness," says Michael Nemeroff. "You can be resource-constrained and come up with incredibly clever solutions to the problems you face. You can also have a ton of resources and never come up with a solution. Your work ethic, ability to solve problems, and manage people will define the business."

People have higher expectations

The younger crowd likes instant gratification. Long wait times, either at a restaurant, airport, or concierge, frustrate people. Large enterprises, whose CEOs feel

invincible, fall prey to analysis-paralysis and become the slow-moving dinosaurs that bankrupted once-dominant companies. Where's Kodak, Blockbuster, or JCPenney now? Business at the speed of thought means supplying a good or service near the moment consumers expect to grab it.

That's why McDonald's continues to be a top food chain. A starving patron can eat within seconds of entering the Golden Arches. He chooses not to wait for an infinitely more delicious porterhouse steak that takes ages to season and grill. Restaurants give free bread or peanuts to assuage hungry diners. The complementary grub gives the impression of immediate responsiveness.

Mistakes should yield dividends

"Take responsibility and understand that mistakes are a part of the process," says Alex Nemeroff, cofounder of Rush Order Tees. "There's no such thing as perfect, but there is such a thing as persistence. There were thousands of mistakes we've made along the way … None of it really matters as long as you make necessary improvements and make it right with customers."

Finally, swift business restores a solopreneur's mental health whereas delays undermine his sanity. Speed removes self-doubt and restores confidence. It means the business is firing on all cylinders and the cash register is ringing loud and very often. As the saying goes, fortune favors the bold. Not those who indecisively contemplate options inside a conference room when time's already up. Unfortunately, thinkers are celebrated by academics and know-it-all opinionators. Thinkers ponder asking a girl for a date when another gentleman has already asked her hand in marriage.

Slow action is extremely dangerous in a brutally-crowded marketplace. Be like David and leverage that slingshot because a nimble operation has a greater chance of success.

https://www.entrepreneur.com/article/351723