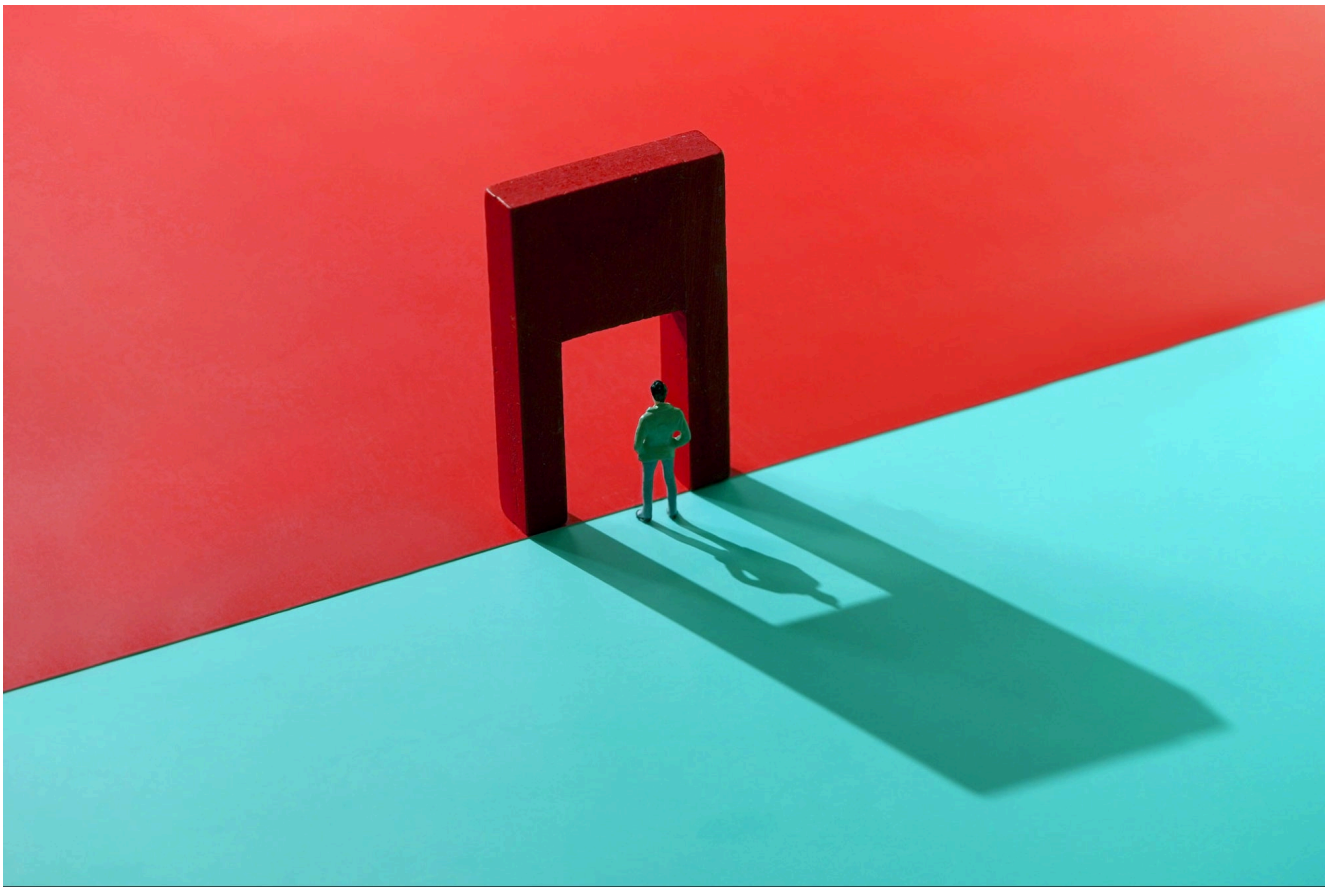
Your Comfort Zone is a Paradox — Here are 5 Ways to Push Your Limits and Ditch the Comfort Zone



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Launching a business is exciting for entrepreneurs. It's kinetic, it's consuming, but it is also downright exhausting. So it just makes sense that once the company experiences a certain level of success and things are clipping along nicely, business owners often opt for an extended stay in *the comfort zone*.

While taking their foot off the gas can feel earned, cozy and safe, make no mistake, the comfort zone is an incredibly dangerous place for a business owner and the long-term

survival of the organization.

Comfort zones tend to instill in us a false sense of security, one that comes at a very high cost. Success can be a two-sided coin – a strong but steady influx of cash combined with a little bit of hubris can ultimately keep us both insulated and stagnant. Our sense of comfort and security can stunt growth, thwart risk-taking, and dash any reasonable expectation of innovation, growth and scalability.

Comfort zones prevent us from thinking bigger, brighter and bolder. In her Academy Award acceptance speech a few years ago, film actress Regina King said it best when she powerfully proclaimed, “Comfort zones are where dreams go to die.” If that doesn’t move you, I don’t know what will.

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Are you idling in your comfort zone?

If you are a business owner who struggles to balance the comforts of the status quo with the unlimited opportunities for innovation, ask yourself these key questions:

1. What lies within your comfort zone, and what exists beyond it?
2. Do you find yourself predominantly idling within this zone?
3. How frequently do you venture to its periphery or step outside it?
4. Can you recall a recent instance when you moved beyond your comfort zone?
5. How did it feel, and what lessons did you glean from the experience?

As a business owner, the sense of success, accomplishment and

self-satisfaction you enjoy within your comfort zone is, in fact, well-earned. Nobody wants to take that away from you. But there is an inherent danger in the passive acceptance of doing just good enough.

Creative stagnancy leaves businesses vulnerable to their more dynamic competitors, who are quantifiably better poised for long-term success. This is particularly true for small and medium-sized businesses (SMBs) due to their inherently smaller footprint and more limited resources. But for any business, stepping outside the comfort zone should be less about money and more about mindset.

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Five ways to ditch your comfort zone

Before you start strategizing your departure from the comfort zone, make sure to give yourself a solid pat on the back for everything you and your business have achieved thus far. You must have experienced some genuine success to make it to this point, so kudos to you.

But now it is time to leave the comfort zone paradox behind. No more stunting the future success of your business due to the satisfaction you feel from your past successes.

Here’s how to get started innovating, energizing and igniting your business for bigger and better long-term results:

1. Identify your fears

Inertia is usually at least partially rooted in fear and uncertainty. Do a little soul-searching and determine what might be dampening your desire for innovation and growth.

Common culprits include fear of failure, anxiety about the

economy or market trends, questions about cost or cash flow and concerns about your current team’s capabilities. Dig deep, then list out those devils on your shoulder.

2. Educate yourself

Knowledge is power. Research current market dynamics, emerging trends and even innovative outliers in your industry. Learn all you can about what your competitors are up to, technological advances you may be able to adopt, and other influences that can inspire action and growth. Make sure to leverage multiple informational resources and commit yourself to lifelong learning.

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3. Leverage your team

I promise you that your people have some great ideas. Some might be massive game-changers, while others are perhaps a little more niche, but they are all arguably worthy of acknowledgment and consideration. Doing so empowers your team as strong contributors to the success of the business and infuses your organization with informed, fresh and diverse perspectives. Your people are truly aces up your innovative sleeve.

4. Dream big

You would have never launched your business if you were a small thinker. So dream big and supercharge your personal and business visions with an expansive mindset. Convince yourself that nothing is beyond your reach. Remember, Jeff Bezos was once a bookseller with a bigger dream.

5. Know there’s not a finish line

Complacency has a way of sneaking up on us when we’re not paying attention. Without a deliberate commitment to growth and innovation, comfort zones are almost an inevitable side effect of success. Your role as an innovator in your business is endless. There is no goalpost. Sustained success requires a long-term strategy and infinite commitment to creativity and improvement.

As you push the limits of your comfort zone, amazing things will almost certainly come to pass. Your vision and mission will take on greater meaning. Your team will be more inspired, productive and aligned. Your position in the marketplace will be elevated. And all thanks to refusing to accept the comfort and confines of the status quo.

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