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# 7 Growth Strategies Sure to Spur Fresh Success

BY MERILEE KERN

**G**rowth. All businesses and professionals should desire it and most certainly need it. But achieving and sustaining growth in today's uber-complex environment — whether corporate, entrepreneurial or personal career growth — takes multifaceted vision, ingenuity and agility. Indeed, a lack of growth in business speaks volumes.

But, even as businesses at large strive to thrive, so, too, must the individual professionals that drive them. At the end of the day, a business' success, or lack thereof, is a direct reflection of the people therein — from ownership and management to frontline and support staff, and everyone between.

For some insight-oriented motivation, here's a glimpse at how some business owners and professionals are growing their businesses and capitalizing on opportunities in their respective industries.

## #1 - Embrace Your Uniqueness

Whether with respect to a company's offerings, approach or image — or to staffers themselves — uniqueness and authenticity can be key in attracting and entrenching customers. Sure, it's easy to play it safe, but to fully achieve breakthrough goals and hit seemingly impossible targets requires taking risks.

Harvard-trained lawyer Chinwe Esimai, the first African to secure a global executive role at one of the world's largest banks, encourages individuals to embrace “shining in their own lanes.” By not downplaying her efforts or her Nigerian-born immigrant background and by staying true to her uniqueness, Esimai achieved extraordinary success with a banking industry leader.

## #2 - Increase the Value of Your Brand

For companies, your brand isn't your brand until you've legally maximized all of your resources. This is according to patent lawyer JiNan Glasgow George, who underscores that,

for multibillion-dollar companies such as Apple or Nike, their trademark, logo and patent is what they focus on to drive value. George explains that intellectual properties provide protection against other companies from “borrowing” your ideas while also solidifying the uniqueness of your brand.

When it comes to one's personal trademark, Karen Tiber Leland, author of “The Brand Mapping Strategy: Design, Build, and Accelerate Your Brand,” suggests developing your brand by design, not default. “Know precisely where you are so you can discern where you need to go,” she says.

## #3 - Double Down on Failure

Many in business are understandably discouraged after taking a loss, let alone experiencing a series of losses or rejections. However, with a fresh point-of-view on failure, you just might be able to turn those setbacks into growth. In fact, in his book, “WTF?! (Willing to Fail): How Failure Can Be Your Key to Success”, Brian Scudamore, founder and CEO of 1-800-GOT-JUNK?, explores the notion of “failing upward” and, in the process, “using setbacks to change your business for the better.”

Speaker and business guru Anthony Russo was able to wrangle his fear and rejection worries to an extent that he built a seven-figure business in less than 18 months.

Russo achieved this remarkable revenue benchmark by “doubling down” that, as he puts it, “is the art of leveraging failure to accelerate success.” By this, he means absorbing everything he passively learned from each prior failure and proactively learned about each situation by seeking and researching new tactics and trying again.

## #4 - Fractionalize Unforeseen Problems

Unanticipated problems or events are always spontaneously occurring, and that unpredictability can wreak havoc on the most well-conceived plans, sabotage timelines and send expenses soaring. This is why many companies invest so largely in prevention development teams, which try to solve

problems before and after they happen to keep the momentum and productivity flowing. Franchise and small business expert, Brian Clark, owner of Service Team of Professionals (STOP) franchises, uses a simple method to avoid unforeseen obstacles from overtaking his businesses. According to Clark, “Every problem can be solved by asking the right questions and breaking down the problem. Fracturing each challenge to small, accomplishable tasks will not only be less intimidating, but also easier to maneuver.”

## #5 - Work Smarter, Play Harder

Productivity is a key priority in the labor supply-and-demand chain. It's easy to focus on profits and products, dismissing the “how” it all gets done. Many businesses and professionals have been taught strategies to “work smarter not harder.” But well-respected business adviser and company CEO, Richard Polak, subscribes to “work smarter, play harder.” He's advised the world's largest companies, including the likes of General Electric, to focus on time and output. To invest in the well-being of its staff, as well as invest in technologies that boost its efficiency and capacity, thus maximizing work time and morale to boost bottom lines.

## #6 - Embrace Value System-Driven Victory

Pak Hou Chau, the tech entrepreneur who operates in various sectors, such as social networking, e-commerce and esports, did the unthinkable. As a value-driven entrepreneur, Chau had undertaken a successful Initial Coin Offering (ICO) to raise nearly \$2.5-\$3 million for his esports platform. But, subsequent to raising these funds, he had an epiphany. Chau returned the money from investors and told his team they were going to start raising sales-driven capital from scratch. Why? As months passed after the ICO, Chau harbored an ominous feeling. “Deep down in my heart,” he recalls, “I felt that something was wrong.” One reason for that was the newly-established investors from the ICO. “They were offering advice that did not resonate well with me or my team, and it was starting to obviously impact the company culture,” Chau laments. He believed he could build

Embracing your uniqueness, rather than trying to blend in, is a surefire growth strategy.

his new business directly with the customer, in this case, as a community-based marketplace. So, Chau pressed ahead without the ICO-driven funds and ultimately launched his community-based solution. Chau feels that, at the end of the day, it's really about the conscience of the entrepreneur. He personifies this notion and walks the walk . . . all the way to the bank.



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## #7 - Control What You Can

While cliché, they are undeniable truths: Perception is reality and “image is everything,” as painfully vain as these maxims sound. From one's physical appearance to how one behaves, people tend to judge first and reason later. The same holds true for a business facility. Whether an office lobby, a retail display window, a website home page or even the body condition of fleet vehicles, aesthetics play a mission-critical role in overcoming the litany of obstacles and objections that are initially present with a new engagement.

Epitomizing these philosophies is former Ms. Olympia 50+ Sheryl Grant, who, after leaving a corporate career, discovered that transforming her body began with a shift of what she could control: her mindset. She developed what she now calls the “F.I.T. for Business” model based on principles of faith, intuition and tenacity and went on to win Ms. Olympia her first time competing at age 55. Today, Grant teaches entrepreneurs and executives that, while they can't always control their external surroundings, they can determine how they respond to situations. She imparts that their perspective and beliefs often drive success, or lack thereof, and play a big role in shaping their future.

As the old adage goes, there's more than one way to skin a cat . . . and there's certainly more than one way to spur growth for your business or career trajectory. The seven strategies above, particularly when employed in multiplicity, can catapult your professional endeavors to new heights. It's never too late, and there's no better time than now. **C&IT**



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As the executive editor and producer of “The Luxe List,” Merilee Kern is an internationally regarded brand analyst, strategist and futurist. As a branding and marketplace trends pundit, Kern spotlights industry innovators, change makers, movers and shakers. Experts, brands, products, services, destinations and events are spotlighted in her cross-media platform that reaches millions monthly through syndication channels in print and online publications, as well as broadcast TV and terrestrial radio. Connect with her at TheLuxeList.com, or on Instagram at LuxeListReviews, on Twitter at LuxeListEditor, on Facebook at TheLuxeList and LinkedIn at MerileeKern.