



Business Tip #1 Getting Started With a Product-Based Business

Start out with a simple idea and be original. Oh sure, there are lots of similar products in stores but your idea needs to have something different about it which makes people want to buy it over the next one on the shelf. Be careful though. You don't want to copy someone else's idea or their product name because that can get you into trouble. Legal issues are a whole other topic which I won't write about since I'm not a lawyer. Have an adult help you check those things out before you continue with your idea.

If it's hard to come up with an idea, try to find people to brainstorm with. In my case, both of my parents are very supportive and encourage me to keep going. Teachers, friends, aunts, uncles, cousins, siblings are also good. But here's another thing to be careful about. Make sure you trust the people you're discussing your ideas with. You wouldn't want them to start a business with your idea before you had a chance to.

Start keeping a journal as soon as you start brainstorming. Make sure it has a permanent binding where pages can't be added. Don't use a 3-ring binder with loose paper. Write down every idea you have and everything you do toward starting your business. Keep it organized in chronological order and as complete as possible. You may need to use this journal later one to prove that you had the idea before someone else did. That's why you need a permanent binding so they can tell you didn't add pages in later.

Once you decide on an idea, it's better to start out small. You can always expand your ideas and your business as it goes along. Of course, if you have a lot of money or someone is willing to give or loan you money to get started, then you could start out bigger. But many companies that expand too fast often go out of business for lots of reasons.

Many product ideas can be made at home to start, which will help keep expenses down. Buy small quantities of supplies until you see if your product will sell. Make a small quantity and test it out. Try selling your product to friends, neighbors, or at school to find out if people are willing to spend money to buy it. Decide on what age range your customers will be and what type of person may buy it. That will help you with more things later. *Note: If you're going to try and sell at school, make sure you check with the principal to get permission first.*

Figure out how much your products costs to make before you decide how much to sell it for. You may need help with the financial part if you don't understand costs or profits. One way to get an idea of how much to sell your product for is to check out similar items that are already in stores or on Internet. If you start out too high, customers may not want to buy it. If you start out too low, it's hard to raise your price later on once people are used to that. Here's some advice I got from an adult who owns a large company. "If you set your price too low, people will think it's a cheap [poorly made] product. People often associate quality with price."

Be patient! Don't give up! It takes a lot of hard work but it can be well worth it in the long run. My business hasn't made millions yet, but the experience I've gained and the fun things I've gotten to do since I started are things you'll never learn in school. There will be times when you want to quit. After all, we're still kids. But hopefully, you have parents or some other adults encouraging you and helping you see the long-term benefits.

So go for it! Give it a try. You might be surprised at what you can do. If you just keep taking small steps, one at a time, something big will eventually happen. All you need is an idea and the will to do it.