

Work smarter not harder: Taking your startup to the next level faster

Getting your new business off the ground is as rewarding as it is challenging. You'll spend long nights completing necessary documents and scheduling social media posts to increase your brand awareness and bring new customers to your business.

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However, as an entrepreneur, it's easy to miss the woods for the trees and forget about the basics of operational efficiency and sustainable growth. This can lead to inflated costs, unsustainable work patterns, and promises that you can't deliver.

To avoid this, you must work smarter, not harder. A little planning and preparation go a long way to ensure that you can take your new startup to the next level with operational efficiency and sustainable growth in mind.

Streamlining your work day

As an entrepreneur, you are the captain of your own ship. This responsibility can be freeing in the early days of your startup, but it won't be long until you realise there are never enough hours in the day.

You can increase your operational efficiency and grow your business faster by streamlining your work day. As a business leader, what you get done in a day can make a huge difference to the future of your company.

If your work day is inefficient yet laborious, you're unlikely to spot opportunities for growth or upcoming challenges.

Start streamlining your day by ranking each task in terms of its importance. Then, decide exactly how many tasks you must complete every day. Evaluate this list of essential tasks, and see if any can be made more efficient and less time-consuming.

For example, if you run your own social media channels, you may want to prioritise some platforms over others. You can *choose the right social channels for your business* by assessing your target audience and their typical behaviour. If you're looking to connect with a younger audience, you may want to start with TikTok and Snapchat. Younger folks can be swayed by influencer marketing and brand partnerships. As a result, you'll spend more time posting to these channels and less time posting to less relevant platforms.

Sustainable overhead costs

If your workday is streamlined but you still feel as though you're burning the candle at both ends, then it may be time to start growing your business and bringing employees and technology in to help you run more efficiently.

Before you hire a fleet of workers, you must recognise that overhead costs are a catch-22. On the one hand, employing more people and improving your business will make your operations more efficient. On the other, unsustainable overhead costs can cripple your cash flow if you expand too quickly.

You can grow sustainably by *minimising your overheads* during growth. You can achieve this by hiring remote workers and automating where you can. This will keep your overheads low as you won't need to pay for

expensive offices or more employees than you need.

If some of your employees do require a physical space to work, consider giving them access to a coworking space. Coworking spaces are great for startups and entrepreneurs, as a seat in a luxury coworking space costs a fraction of the cost of an office. They are also more flexible, so you can make a change without incurring hefty fines or sales fees.

You may even want to work in a coworking space yourself, as they're great venues for networking and finding like-minded, entrepreneurial business leaders.

Networking and outsourcing

Networking effectively and outsourcing your tasks can help you survive as an entrepreneur. *Outsourcing as a startup* can help you free up time for more important tasks. Paying someone else to run recruiting campaigns or your HR department can also reduce your costs in the long run.

If you're returning to school for an MBA, you can network effectively by leaning on alumni connections and attending networking events that make the most sense for your business. However, there's no point in attending every networking event your university holds if they aren't relevant to your industry or company.

When networking, remember that you're playing the long game. Even if a connection you make can't help you today, they may be able to help in the future when your business has grown and you have more clout behind you.

Maintaining a work-life balance

It's easy to ignore your health and well-being when you're growing your

business. However, ignoring your well-being for too long will only lead to sickness, burnout, and poor decision-making in the future. As the leader of your small startup, try to set a good example by *maintaining a work-life balance*.

Start by setting aside some time for social connection. It's easy to become isolated while you're growing your business, but maintaining a healthy social life can protect you from illness and help you burn off some stress.

Some *doctors even prescribe social time*, as building a strong community can improve your resilience and help you think clearly during your work day. As Dr. James Woodall, professor at the UK's Leeds Beckett University, explains, "Health is determined by people, environment and social circumstances." So, instead of isolating yourself, reach out to friends and join community organisations that take your mind off work and allow you to recharge your batteries.

Conclusion

Working smarter can help your startup go to the next level faster. Growing sustainably will also ensure that you maintain a healthy work-life balance and keep your overheads low. Start by streamlining your own workday. When you feel there's too much for you to get done alone, consider bringing in some talented employees who buy into your vision and help you achieve the growth you're looking for.