

Avoid the Most Deadly Mistake Most Business Owners Often Make

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**Avoid the Most Deadly Mistake Most Business Owners Often Make**

**By Tatiana Velitchkov**

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By Tatiana Velitchkov © 2002

You're a business owner, and of course you'll do ANYTHING to make your business succeed.

After all, you don't just believe your idea/product/service will work — you also know you're the ONLY PERSON in the world who can make it work, because you're simply PASSIONATE about it.

But sometimes — sometimes — this business owner's passion and conviction turn out to be the very same things that can bring about failure.

All because of a common mistake that too many well-intentioned business owners often make...

**What IS This Mistake?**

....And how do you avoid it?

Before we get to these questions, let me ask you to think about a few people first:

Dentists. Doctors. Teachers. Parents.

What do these people have in common? What do you remember most about them when you were a child?

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Most likely you started out hating these people, because they always seemed to be making you do things you didn't like. Horrible stuff like root canals, flu shots, research papers, and eating leafy green vegetables.

But as you grew older you probably looked back on your relationship with them, and you realized you had more reason to love them than anyone else. Because during those times when they told you those horrible things were "for your own good" — they were actually telling the truth!

Now, we think we're all grown up and we know all about that.

But there is ONE IMPORTANT LESSON that we mature business owners can learn from this juvenile mistake:

No matter how old you get, you still can't always recognize the things you REALLY NEED.

### **My Head Hurts... I Should Buy A Car!**

This is a hard truth, and we all need to learn it.

Although we like to think we're in total control of every aspect of ourselves & our business, there WILL be times when it's best to consult the experts.

Let's take "marketing," for instance.

Marketing gurus have always advised you to put yourself in the mindset of your customer. And at first glance, this seems too easy. After all, no one knows your product better than you.

But then you watch your marketing efforts flop over & over again, and you start blaming the ezine & website owners (where you place your ads) or your ad distributors (for not doing their jobs).

You overlook the part where you probably made your first mistake: When you failed to REALLY put yourself in your client's shoes.

And it's not really surprising, or anything to be ashamed of. Simply because you are NOT your client.

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You're the business owner, the product developer, the service provider. You know too much, have gone too far, and it's really hard for you to teach the concept of a simple star to a first grader when your mind is already filled with relativity and nuclear propulsion.

So what DO you do to succeed? How DO you reach the imagination of a "first grader," when you're already a Doctorate Degree holder?

Simple: You ask for the help of a first grade teacher!

### **Ask The Experts, And DO What They Say!**

Again this sounds so simple, but many floundering businesses today prove it is not.

Branding expert Rob Frankel even laments that there are 2 kinds of business owners that are beyond anyone's help:

- The first kind believes in his own style of marketing so much, he doesn't think he'll ever need the advice of a marketing specialist.
- The second kind acknowledges his need for a marketing specialist, but after spending time & money to engage the services of one, he lets office politics, pride, or his own preconceived notions take over... in the end simply dismissing the specialist's suggestions.

(Of course there's the third kind -- the business owner who brings in the specialist and actually acts on his suggestions -- but these types are too few to mention, as evidenced by the too-few outstanding brands on the Internet today.)

### **But Maybe You're The Fourth Type...**

That is, you KNOW you need a specialist for many of your important business functions, but you just can't afford them right now. What can you do in the meantime?

You can do as I do, and try these 3 simple steps:

## **ASK!**

Sooner or later you'll be needing services outside of your expertise. And once you accept these services, you'll be opening yourself up to new opportunities!

For instance, you can maximize your interaction with your service providers by making them your sort-of consultants as well. They're bound to be authorities in their field, after all, and you're already in a business relationship together.

Ask them questions (no matter how stupid they sound), and seek their guidance (no matter how stupid you'll seem to look).

As long as you make it clear that you just want help in deciding what's best for you, and as long as they're sincere about helping their clients (like you!) succeed, then they shouldn't mind your requests.

Truth is, I personally WISH that more clients would ask more questions about the packages I offer at [Guaranteed-Hits.Com](http://Guaranteed-Hits.Com).

Although I already give them easy-to-choose-from packages on my site, I could help clients so much more if they would just ASK me questions. If they told me EXACTLY what they needed, then I could more easily SOLVE all the non-traffic problems they have.

After all, the guaranteed hits service may have a price -- but consultation with me is always FREE.

(And now that you know that, remember to ask me your questions via email at [TatianaV@chello.nl](mailto:TatianaV@chello.nl))

=)

Next...

## **LISTEN!**

Remember: there will always be times when the advice you hear won't SEEM like such good advice at all (like root canals and broccoli soup).

## Avoid the Most Deadly Mistake Most Business Owners Often Make

But if they truly come from the experts (and will ideally be supported by others in the field) then the best thing you can do is to believe them and TRY.

### **LEARN!**

Finally, keep in mind that all of life (and all of business) is a learning process.

Everyday we keep trying things, and we observe whether they create positive or negative effects.

Then we either do them again (if the effect was positive) or change strategies (if the effect was negative).

Either way, we always need to re-assess where we are at each point in our lives, and then take the necessary steps to move forward.

Success and failure, after all, are not definitions for this person or that. They are simply places we all visit from time to time, giving us the endless choice of where we really want to stay.

P.S.

"But wait a minute!" you say, "You haven't told me the biggest-mistake-I'm-supposed-to-avoid yet!"

Well actually, I already HAVE.

The mistake is "not asking." Because not asking means "not listening," and not listening means "not learning" — and ultimately never finding out what's best for you and your business.

I hope you listened and learned from that.

And by the way, thank you for asking. =)

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## **FOR WOMEN ONLY: AVOID MEETING MISTAKES**

**By Beverly Tillman**

### **FOR WOMEN ONLY: AVOID MEETING MISTAKES**

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Women tend to be super-stars in the work place, but sometimes we make mistakes that could have been avoided for meetings. Read on to see if you make any of these mistakes at meetings. Then learn how to avoid them. What I advise is easy and makes common sense.

1. **DEADLY MISTAKE #1:** Arriving late for the meeting when you are either the facilitator or an attendee. This is very disruptive and often contributes to meetings going over time. **HOW TO AVOID LATENESS:** First of all be sure you leave plenty of time to stop your previous task so you can get to the meeting on time. Many times women arrive late to morning meetings, because they have to take their children to school or sitter. Be sure you leave in plenty of time to drop them off early. Many women also consider it rude to end a previous meeting advising that they have another meeting to go to. The best thing to do in this case is to advise the person(s) you are meeting with ahead of time that you must leave at a certain time to get to your next meeting. Also you might want to have your secretary buzz you on your cell or the land phone notifying you that you have another meeting. This will bring heightened attention that you have something else planned that is also just as important even if it is just getting back to your work.

2. **DEADLY MISTAKE #2:** Arriving without a "written" agenda and especially if you are the facilitator. Even if you are not the facilitator it is still a good idea to have your own "written" agenda planned with your possible questions, but be sure your agenda is consistent with the main agenda items. Agendas should always have a timeframe associated with each item. This keeps participants focused on not only the agenda item, but also the time. **HOW TO AVOID HAVING NO AGENDA:** The only way to avoid this one is to write an agenda "prior" to the meeting. Do not under any circumstances start writing the agenda at the meeting. When this is done, you look unprepared and unprofessional. Also if you are the boss you send the wrong message to your employees: I am unprepared. Professional women should appear totally prepared for meetings at all times unless there is a major catastrophic event involving you...prior to your arrival!

3. **DEADLY MISTAKE #3:** Speaking about "things" (and that is exactly what they become "things" when they are non-agenda items) that are not on the planned agenda. Sometimes it is appropriate to add items to the agenda, but request permission of the group to discuss the additional item. This statement also applies to the meeting facilitator. **HOW TO AVOID SPEAKING ABOUT NON AGENDA ITEMS:** As the facilitator and also as a participant you always have the right to request tabling discussion of non agenda items until the group meets again or to direct the group to hold an off line or ad hoc meeting to discuss other topics.

4. **DEADLY MISTAKE #4:** Assuming other people will arrive prepared. Most of us have been to meetings where we are prepared but others are not. This contributes to all kind of confusion! **HOW TO AVOID OTHERS SHOWING UP FOR THE MEETING UNPREPARED.** There are a couple of things

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you can do here. First send the agenda to all participants "prior" to the meeting. Next you can personally contact or have your assistant contact other principle participants of the meeting to remind

them of specific agenda items. Additionally, it is often a good idea to send an email ahead of time asking the participants for their input. "Of course you might not need their input", but they will actually be in preparation for your meeting.

5. DEADLY MISTAKE #5: Allowing an outsider who has nothing at all to do with your meeting interrupt the meeting. Believe it or not, most of the time interruptions are not necessary. Often women allow it, because the interrupter is the boss or some one else we highly favor for some reason or another. But if the person is not a formal participant of your meeting any interruption other than an emergency should not be put up with! Note that most interruptions are not emergencies. If there is an emergency ask one of the participants to step out of the meeting to take care of the emergency. Or if you as the facilitator of the meeting have to step out, ask another person in the meeting to take over until you return. **HOW TO AVOID INTERRUPTIONS FROM OUTSIDERS WHO HAVE NOTHING TO DO WITH THE MEETING.** This actually is easy to do. Just tell the person you will be with them at the stated time of the end of the meeting or at the break time. I have also found that if a high level person interrupts, they usually gain more respect for you when you tell them you will get right back to them "immediately" as soon as you finish the meeting. Telling them "immediately" puts their needs at a very high level and maintains respect for their position. One of the problems that women often have is standing up to authority. Authority often respects a woman more, when she respectfully takes her authority!

**SUMMARY** Avoid mistakes especially now that you know the common ones. Also take the lead and even be in charge at making meetings run smoothly even if you have not called the meeting. Also let me know what you thought about this article.

Dr. Beverly Tillman, author and speaker, teaches business and professional women how to gain more independence and become "outrageously" successful in their business. She is the transformational and energetic Speaker and Work Shop leader all women groups should invite to speak. Look for her new book in late November: **FOR WOMEN ONLY: How to Become "Outrageously" Successful in Business.**

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