BUSINESS BUILDING BLOCKS

SPEECH FOR

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(**SLIDE 1**) Hello everyone and welcome! Today we’re here to learn and share the techniques, tips and tools it takes to build a successful business. Building anything-whether it’s a structure or a business takes time, patience, information and process, and today we’ll discuss how the process used in constructing a building is something that can support you in visualizing how to effectively build a successful business.

(**SLIDE 2**) We are all functioning and doing business in a new economy. We have access to more tools and more information than ever before, and information travels fast. At the same time, economic upswings and downturns are happening at an epic pace. We live in exciting times and all of the information and media we can now access has taught us to think outside the box in new and different ways. Today I invite you to think “inside” the new box. I’d like to compare the process of building a business to that of building a house.

(**SLIDE 3**) Some of the major steps in building anything are:

* **Create**-The beginning of any process is the initial thought. “I want to build a house!” What will that house look like? How big is it? Where will I place it? What do I want to make sure is included in the house? These same questions can easily be applied to building a business as well, and we will see the similarities as we go on.
* **Question**- Begin the thought process, “What do I need to build an efficient, useful house? What information do I need to build a successful and thriving business? What are the details needed? What is it that people don’t tell you about building a house (or a business) that really needs to be known? How do I anticipate the ‘what if’s?’”
* **Construct**-As you build the building (or business), what is required? What are the rules and regulations needed to complete the structure of either a building or a business? Who are the professionals you need to contact for advice, inspections, and record keeping? What are the tools needed to successfully build a structure?
* **Confidence**-We build for the assurance of a secure future, a source of protection, a context of security and possibility. Have we done all that is required to create a stable, resilient, habitable structure that is able to serve our needs now and into the future? Have we done all that we can to create and establish a business that will enable us to perform efficiently and successfully? Will that business perform an essential function and serve its clients and employees/shareholders? Are you offering a quality product? Have you built the best structure possible and are you proud of your creation?
* **Complete**-As you complete the actual structure-the building, or “context”-the business, keep in mind the fun is just beginning! The stage of completion is really only the completion of the foundation. Now you have to prepare to live and function in the structure, or conduct a successful business based on what has been assembled.

Let’s take a deeper look at these steps and let’s work together to discover even more depth and details for each step. Building a business, like building a structure, requires resources, ingenuity, resilience and awareness.

When someone comes up with the idea to build something, first the germ of the idea presents itself and then the questions begin. With regard to a house, we have to think of our needs, our preferences, and what will ultimately serve us best. Do I want a sprawling ranch? …Or a 3-story brownstone? Have I situated the house to maximize my resources? Have I positioned my business with consideration to my colleagues and competition in my chosen marketplace? When creating a business, what is the best context to consider to most effectively support the functioning and success of the enterprise? (**SLIDE 4**) Have you made plans or considerations to accommodate the sustainability of your business as you would when building a house in this day and age? That is really something to think about as well. Think of business plans as your blueprints. What is your mission statement? What are your goals? What are your budgets? Have you anticipated and included all of the line items needed for all phases of development and fabrication of your vision? All of these essential processes are part of the blueprint for the construction of your business. Use all of these blueprints to familiarize yourself with your product, your mission, and your end goals.

As one begins to fabricate a structure or a home, the details can translate to the fabrication of a business as well. As I said, we are all doing business in a new economy and as such, it is a critical part of success to conduct the proper surveys, as you would when building a house, to make sure you have the resources, tools and context in which to build a strong foundation. The purpose of a construction survey is to assess and determine the reference points and measurements needed in order to establish the most effective physical placement of the structure. It would be wise to do the same with regard to establishing business parameters as well. (**SLIDE 5**) Survey the market. Do your research. See what is needed and wanted and work to fill the void and present viable and valuable products or services.

(**SLIDE 6**) Once you’ve done your research and surveyed the environment for optimal placement, it’s time to build a strong foundation. Whether in home building or in business building, you must make sure that the foundation is strong and can endure the “storm.” Can you see any cracks in your foundation? If so, it would be wise to fix them before proceeding further. Without a solid foundation, the health of your home and your business venture will be compromised. Think seriously of the components for a solid foundation on which to build your business:

* Know your market
* Know your product
* Make sure you have the resources and reserves to keep your venture going.
* You **will** go over budget. Make sure you are credit worthy and have a plan and the means to sustain your business in the face of a market crisis or unexpected challenges.
* If you manufacture a product, make sure your vendors are reliable and able to fulfill your orders. If you provide a service, make sure your pricing structure and services meet and hopefully exceed the demands and expectations of the market.

(**SLIDE 7**) Once the foundation is in place, think about the four basic walls of your business as the four walls of virtue:

* **STRONG WORK ETHIC**: Someone once said, “Many of the great achievements of the world were accomplished by tired people who kept on working.” It is essential to have a tireless devotion to any worthwhile project. If you’re building a house, you know the importance of staying on purpose, on time and on budget, and of course, this is true of creating and running a business as well. This is **YOURS**. You cannot expect someone else to be responsible. Ultimately, you are accountable for all the results produced within the context of your business. As the leader of the organization, people will look to you for guidance. If you want devoted workers, vendors and colleagues, show them how it’s done.
* **ATTITIUDE**: Once again, you wouldn’t want to work with an arrogant contractor or vendor. It is up to you to build a strong and worthwhile context by demonstrating alacrity, enthusiasm, professionalism and compassion.
* **COMMUNICATION**: There will be times when things will go wrong, even though you were sure everyone understood what you requested. An essential part of building a strong foundation and maintaining a strong and resilient context is to make sure you and all around you are responsible for the communication each one of you gives and receives. Take notes. Document requests. Be responsible for what you say and if there is a response that is not clear, be responsible for getting the information you require to fully understand the situation. Learn from those around you and you will build an effective and essential business based on clarity and understanding.
* **EMPOWERMENT**: The famous English poet John Donne taught us, “No man is an island. Every man is a piece of the continent, a part of the main.” In other words, none of us can go it alone. It takes a crew to complete construction and it takes a staff to run and guide a business. Hire the best people you can get for each job, use the best vendors you can find for each project and make sure everyone is treated with respect and has a clear place and value in your business “home.” Valued employees are precious building blocks to any company or venture. Appreciate them as you would want to be appreciated.

(**SLIDE 8**) Finally, I invite you to consider the roof or your business as the representation of your mind. Think from the top down. Think globally. Empathize. Consider the entire picture-not just your point of view, when negotiating deals or navigating your way through the business process. Seek advice when needed. Leave your pride at the front door, roll your sleeves up and do whatever is needed and wanted to strengthen your business and all those involved with and affected by it. Find the tools, resilience and courage to keep placing one foot in front of the other as you navigate the course of owning a business. I wish all of you the best of luck and I look forward to hearing about all of the wonderful inspiring businesses you construct!

Thank you all!