



RUN YOUR BUSINESS LIKE AN ENTREPRENEUR Series

“Coach” Bob Manasier is managing partner of *Diamond Point Advisory Group* in Saratoga Springs. As an entrepreneur with a suite of firms focused on supporting their clients’ needs from finance to branding, with start-ups a special passion, he brings a networked culture of “doing” to the discussion—from idea to action.

The New York business culture and its “entrepreneurial governor” have begun the rethinking/retooling of what is needed to jump-start the economy and our state’s business climate. But the culture of Upstate and infrastructure needed are not there yet. Fear and paralysis have settled in, especially with the economy not picking up and no tangible signs of improving in the near future. Now, fear as an entrepreneur or business owner is a good survival reaction in moderate doses, but paralysis is never a good reaction because it only leads to failure. Companies need to keep learning, exploring, and reaching out both internally and externally to stay relevant and engaged in their clients’/customers’/staff’s lives and financial dealings. So, let us examine some methods in the entrepreneur’s playbook to benefit all our business efforts.

Here is a good list to start any discussion about business start-up, growth or change:

Don’t get bogged down in detailed, large, overriding business planning. Start with an outline of what you want to do, how you want to do it, and what you will need. A team approach is critical within your organization or with the assistance of outside resources, especially in the marketing and financial aspects.

Be honest. Know what you want to do, what you love to do, what you do best, and what you have little or no skill/interest/passion for. This point is key as we later

decide how to fill the holes in your business swing (as a side warning: this is a baseball reference—you may run into a number of them throughout this series. Can’t help being a coach).

Capital or access to it is key. Be aware of costs, needed expertise, and what you have to work with. You need a fiscally conservative money manager on your team. Any talent can be bought or found if you have a clear and direct plan of attack that has some funding available in a transparent model of capital use. Quick actionable steps to get real time results to test your ideas and fine-tune as needed also limits capital outlay.

Know or learn who your target market is. What value do you bring to this market? You need clear and direct communication in the voice of your audience; not jargon, sales, or biz speak. You also need to understand how to engage your target audience. Relevance and honest dialogue create loyalty. (We spend a lot of time with our clients refining the messaging and outreach to make it a unique experience for their targets.)

Don’t be afraid to “field a free agent” team. Very few can do it all in business; you must possess the internal resources to properly “field” a complete solution. Here is where vendors, affiliates, consultants, and other companies can complete your roster. This can be a hazardous journey to find the right fits, but well worth the discovery in new ideas, methods, and connections. Hire slow and fire fast.

To sum up: Business is a MARATHON made of SPRINTS. Business is a marathon to a defined end point set by you (retirement, buyout, IPO, whatever you delineate as the goal of the company). This business marathon must be structured as a series of sprints—short, actionable programs with a defined and

measured result (the accelerator model of business start-up) to keep the energy and focus up and the possible costs down. We will explore the sprint test method in more detail later in this series. Whatever your business need—hiring, new marketing, business development, increased sales activity—structure a two- to four- week plan to accomplish some measurable activity (new candidates, more sales outreach, more networking—we will discuss this in depth in a later article); designate a lead on the activity and get it done. From this exercise, define the good, the bad, and the waste of time and structure a calendar of business sprint exercises for all your activities. Try to make it fun, add prizes if needed, and create a self-refining dialogue-creating environment for your teams.

Having spent my life starting companies and consulting to companies, it is a good time to explore the local scene for business and entrepreneurs. In this series we will focus on actionable steps and real world examples of ongoing consults and market builds to guarantee we give real time direction and “no-box” ways to look at a problem that might be plaguing your company and your sleepless nights.

Our goal here and in our suite of firms is to start or grow companies with conservative fiscal planning, to make a more sustainable job environment, to be more active in our communities, and to balance work/play/life (if there is such a thing). We like to see all of our efforts as a mosaic—no defined walls in an entrepreneur’s thinking.

We will be visiting some of our clients as well as start-ups throughout this series (names will be withheld to protect the “errors” which will always happen). If you have questions or comments, email me at robertm@infocusbrands.com. Enjoy the month.