

# Overcoming Barriers in Your Short Supply Chain Business

Challenges are **always** opportunities in disguise. When you look for the silver lining (cliché as it is) the cloud becomes a vessel for blessings you wouldn't otherwise have received. Very few people seek out challenges in order to grow, and yet growth is essential to achieve our goals and dreams – more often than not we dream of running a business and living a life different to what we are currently, but that requires us to **be** different people. Life hands us challenges to help us level up so that we can become the people we need to be to grow our businesses, and live the life we dream of living.

Mindset is as fundamental to business success as the product or service we provide; if it's not high-quality and fully-functioning it's not going to fly. You could have the most profitable business idea and all the money and tools to make it happen, but if your mindset isn't strong and you don't feel capable of dealing with the challenges that come your way, it'd be a struggle to even get off the ground.

A.C.T.T. is an acronym that can help you work through your challenges in a rational and proactive way, that also takes some of the pressure off you to know everything and be super-human (which NONE of us do, nor are!). No one can predict the future; all we can do is work with what we have.

A.C.T.T. stands for:

A: Acknowledge the challenge.

Call it by name and look it right in the eyes – the only power a problem has over you is the fear you allow it to generate. Don't avoid it (which we ALL prefer to do!). A great way to reduce the fear created by a challenging situation is first ask yourself what the WORST-case scenario is – and then ask if you would survive it. Chances are, the answer would be a yes. Then ask what the BEST-case scenario is – and how it would affect you and your business. Most of the time we land somewhere in the middle, maybe leaning a little more towards the best-case scenario if we're lucky.

But you are far more likely to land closer to the best-case scenario if you are actively looking for the learning opportunities hiding within the challenge. For instance, if you're having real trouble with a supplier and struggling to find another one, you automatically begin to define what you do – and DON'T – want, which is valuable wisdom only gained from experience. You can be sure you'll be way more savvy next time round and likely find a supplier that fits your business' needs much better, enabling you to provide a better product or service, which leads to happy, repeat customers who talk highly of your enterprise. And we all know that word of mouth is King.

Finally, ask yourself what is the **number 1** small action you can take in the next 24 hours to begin to overcome your challenge? It could be as simple as a google search, or a phone call to someone who may be able to help you out. Or perhaps it's simply to take a break...? Which leads us to:

C: Centre yourself.

Most small business owners are functioning on limited energy – mental and physical! You cannot make good decisions or come up with creative solutions when your mental energy is scattered in a million directions and

you're physically drained. It becomes a catch-22 situation – you feel like if you take any time out to re-charge, you'll have more work to do to catch up, so you don't take a break and power-through instead.

But it's a vicious cycle; the more tired you are, the harder you have to work (and the less efficient you are at it) to do what you need to do to keep your business running properly, which wears you down more and more.

And the only way to deal with that is to take a break. Because when you are refreshed, even a little bit, you work smarter and faster, so the time you perceive you've lost is quickly made up by higher mental and physical energy levels. Ideally, you'd need to take some time out each day, preferably in the morning, to gather your thoughts and find your focus for the day. 15-20 minutes meditation is invaluable if you're so inclined (and easy to learn if you aren't already). When you begin your day with a clear and centred mind you are so much more likely to achieve what you need to than if you're scatter-brained.

And if you never get an actual day off (we hear you!) then you need to *take* one.

Your business won't collapse if you take a day off. If you have employees, simply pick someone you trust to hold the reins for a day and only call you if there's a genuine emergency. We often think no one could do what we do as efficiently, and it's true! But they CAN do it well enough to keep things going while you take a break and get your mojo back. If you don't have employees and it all comes down to you, remember that ultimately without you being in top-form your business will suffer either way. Taking a day off might lose you a day's pay, but what would the long-term cost be otherwise? Is there anyone you know who could help you out in exchange for a discount on your services, or a freebie?

Believe us when we say we have to constantly remind ourselves of this too! Because it is counter-intuitive, and relaxing when you have a to-do list as long as your arm and leg put together is really hard. But it's a must for a sustainable business.

#### T: Talk

Talk to someone (or many people) you trust and respect about your challenge and see what they have to offer. Talk to your customers if it's something related to what you are offering, or considering – after all they are the ones who will be buying it from you and they might give you the insight you need to help you make a decision. Survey Monkey is free to join and easy to create surveys with if you operate online a lot, or you could just print off slips of paper with a few questions and ask them to give a minute of their time.

No two people on Earth have the same perspectives on any given subject, and sometimes all we really need is a shift in perspective to find the solution we're looking for. You'll probably receive a whole lot of advice that doesn't ring true to you, but chances are it'll get the cogs turning in a different direction that could lead you to the perfect solution. Trust your gut and follow the trail of breadcrumbs that feels right to you.

A great example of this happened recently for us. We have a big veg bed to the side of our polytunnel and we'd been putting off digging it over and planting it for months because we knew it was going to be a lot of hard work for very little return. We don't have the man-power nor the space to grow sufficient quantities of veg to sell for a decent profit, nor do we have enough experience to ensure success.

It was really weighing us down; we knew we had to do something with it, but *that* just didn't feel right.

Then the other day when we were talking about what we could add to the site for kids that would encourage people to stay for a while and have a cuppa, Paul suggested a giant chess-board. Like a lightning bolt, suddenly ideas of an activity field opened up and we've since decided to forego a veg bed completely in favour of creating some kind of activity area – maybe kids' archery or a small putting green etc. But had we not been talking it through between ourselves, and with some of our lovely loyal customers, we'd probably have ended up just doing the veg bed and feeling quite resentful over it – not to mention that it would greatly reduce our potential income which ultimately has to see us through the winter months.

Even if you get 100 ideas from as many people, and 99 of them don't fit, the 1 that does could be a golden ticket to The Best-Case Scenario for you and your business 😊

T: Trust that it will all work out for the best

When you started your business you likely had an idea of what it would be like, but nothing written in stone. You knew it was a risk but the potential rewards were worth it – yes? Not being able to foresee every twist in the road or every barrier we're going to come up against is actually a good thing – otherwise we'd probably never even try! But you had enough faith in yourself and your idea to give it a go, and if you're still going, you're obviously doing something right.

Having faith in yourself and trusting that things always work out for the best is the only way to move through life in a position of true power. Think about it logically – if you're still alive and mostly well, then you've already overcome MANY challenges!

When you believe that you have what it takes to overcome the obstacles you undoubtedly will encounter, and you trust that life will deliver what you need when you need it, you are automatically opening yourself up to those random, serendipitous moments that lead you in the right direction. We have so many examples of this it's hard to narrow it down, but a big one for us was right before our launch event in April. We had nowhere near enough bedding and basket plants and no idea where to get more that didn't involve huge wholesale quantities we couldn't afford, or buying in from abroad which we didn't want to do.

About 3 weeks before the event, Isobel from Horticulture Wales walked in our door with a clipboard in hand (swearing she wasn't a salesperson), and literally handed to us the solution to our problem. A nursery within easy driving distance that specialised in growing bedding and basket plants and had a low minimum quantity threshold. That absolutely saved our event. It would have been a humiliating disaster otherwise! Not to mention that it helped a lot with our short supply chain! Thanks Isobel, for everything 😊

There's no denying that we are very new to running a physical business – we have so much more to learn! But we've been practising being ready for this for a long time now without even realising it, and one of the most valuable things we've done is simply reading books and talking to people. We are so fortunate to have made amazing connections here in Wales, and that the people here are so supportive of local enterprises. But achieving the kind of mindset that enabled us to take the plunge in the first place came from years of preparation we didn't even realise we were doing!

Here are some books and resources we highly recommend:

- ~ The E-myth Revisited by Michael Gerber
- ~ Secrets of the Millionaire Mind by T. Harv Eker
- ~ Feel the Fear and Do It Anyway by Susan Jeffers
- ~ Any and all works by Jim Fortin
- ~ The Code of the Extraordinary Mind by Vishen Lakhiani
- ~ MEEE in a Minute by local author Sid Madge

We hope that this has provided you with even a little bit of something good to take forward in life.

Wishing you every success, now and always.

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