

FORT NEWS

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THE MIND OF A BUSINESS OWNER

*By Francois Damian
Aristhomene Martinez*



CVO & Founder
FORT International

Many of us walk through life wishing to become our own bosses, some jumping into the ocean of self-reliance a bit too soon, without the proper decision making experience necessary to sustain the first few years, and others with a bit more life experience, but also more external responsibilities, who just patiently wait for the perfect time to make that leap, never grasping the concept that the perfect time really doesn't exist, as there will always be risk involved.

So what are the characteristics successful and established business owners share in common? From my experience; Vision, discipline, and unyielding Optimism while remaining earthbound to reality.

A close friend recently asked me if at inception, back in 2004, I had envisioned the trajectory my company would take over the years to be where it is today. My answer was... absolutely not!

When I decided to go on my own, I did it with what I called the "necessary naivety" to believe that if I did A and B, I would eventually get to Z. What I did have crystal clear was what "Z" looked like for me back then, and I assure you it was nothing extravagant. I literally just wanted to double my income and do so on my own time. I did a thorough analysis of what it would take to achieve my goal, which included, labor, resources, and risk, and carved a financial strategic plan on how to get there; gave myself a deadline before risking losing all my savings, as I figured that if I wasn't making a profit by day 90, I would have to reevaluate my entire process and make a decision then.

With the approach laid out, I had no choice but to act on it; Make room for discipline! My hard earned money was on the table,

as I did this with no loans or external cash injections, being that my credit was that of a college dropout who chased his dreams of playing professional soccer abroad. Time was and is still not on my side. The hardest part of any business is the generation of revenue through sales, just ask Nikola Tesla. You can be the smartest guy in the room, but if you can't sell, you are done. I knew I could sell anything to anyone and that is how I backed my A,B, Z plan. However, I only purchased what I knew I could sell immediately because of the demand (trash Liners), kept my operational expenses ridiculously low, and structured my day according to my tasks; A) My home served as both office and Distribution center = \$0 add-on expenses. B) Time management: Sales in the morning, 7 am- 12 noon sharp, customer service and accounting 1:30-4:30pm, Shipping and logistics 6pm until done! Literally, sometimes "done" meant naps through the night until the morning. I taught myself Quickbooks home and business and asked a million questions to anyone and everyone, which led me to my last point; unyielding optimism.

I had the blessing of being born to very humble conditions in one of the poorest countries in the world, Nicaragua. My father is from another extremely underdeveloped country, Haiti, so for me to attend High School in Miami Beach and play soccer at Lagrange College, after being



a very capable but uninterested student, made me realize I was already winning, and really had nothing to lose.

Both of my parents came from ridiculous challenging circumstances and changed the landscape of their respective families, so why couldn't I. So I focused on minimizing risk as much as possible and believed 100% on my plan, and 1000% in God.

There is a proverb that reads, "All hard work yields a profit", what it doesn't tell you is just how long that profit will last. The more consistent you are with your work, the longer you'll reap the benefits of said profits, which will translate into more opportunities.

Business ownership is not for everyone. It is very lonely, emotionally and physically demanding, and you need a lot of luck at the right time.

You generate that luck through consistency and an unwavering "I can do anything attitude". As I like to say, your household is the first business you run, as you yourself are a business. How do you manage your money? Are you capable of trimming your expenses to the bare minimum and avoid all unnecessary expenses? Can you isolate yourself from anyone who doesn't need you and set boundaries on your time? These questions should open up an internal discussion with yourself before you take that leap of faith, because at least for me, without my faith I wouldn't be where I am today. Someone had to sign off on any "success" I've ever had. The reward you envision is certainly not guaranteed, but the journey and the steps you take are what makes this crazy business life worth exploring.



Sales: Can anyone Say Welcome Kits?



Is your Healthcare Facility looking to **improve HCAHPS** scores, or perhaps searching for a unique way to engage with your patients? Our custom Welcome Kits offer tremendous marketing visibility, all while letting your patients know you care about them and their incidental needs at their most vulnerable time.

With aggressive and friendly price points, we can set up customs with as little as 250 units/ month and deliver to your door within 24hrs once a program is in place. If you can think of it, we can make it. Please reach out to our Sales team at Sales@fortinternational.com for more information. *We are here to help!*

You Have Spent Time, Resources and Money Implementing Processes Across Your Organization, But Is it Working?

*By: Elizabeth Castillo
- Chief of Staff*



Creating and implementing processes and procedures is great, however, are they truly being performed, and most importantly are they working?

During my professional career, I have encountered and fallen to the “we need a process for that” syndrome. Everything needs a process, yes; but what is a process if it's not working as intended?

Moreover, how can you hold anyone accountable if you have nothing in place to refer to?

The truth of the matter is that creating something is gratifying and looks great on paper, but again is it working?

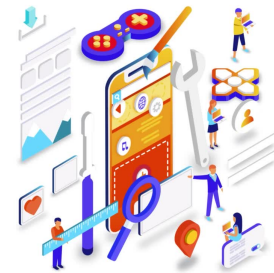
Companies need procedures for an array of reasons, but the top 3 in my opinion are; employee fraud, accountability and order.

Protection against employee fraud is something that no one likes to discuss but bad seeds do exist. It could be a disgruntled employee or simply someone with malicious intentions. The list can go on and on as to why someone would commit fraud, so having your T's crossed and I's dotted is not only crucial but also vital to the survival and growth of a company.

Accountability; Making someone accountable for their actions actually teaches them to value their own work, while instilling pride in their output when done right. It positively affects organizational performance. It's also key to be able to go to an individual and have productive discussions about what may or maynot be working for them, their team, and the company.

Order is needed in any business regardless of size. One misconception is that small businesses don't need processes or procedures. I would actually go as far as saying small businesses need them just as much if not more.

If you don't have order, things will easily fall through the cracks and may not even surface until it's late in the game, cleanup mode kicks in, and you are spending way much more time on cleaning up a mess then doing what needs to be done, running the business and generating revenue.



So, how do we know they are working?

Each process or procedure should have controls linked to a particular owner. I cannot stress the importance of that piece. Controls are needed and are the backbone of any organization and must always have one owner.

Owners perform the task at hand. You need their feedback to understand if said control really is being performed as intended, which actually mitigates the possible risk at hand.

Transitioning to New Roles

By Daniel DeLeon - Operations

Whether you're looking to push yourself professionally, or you've fallen out of love with your job, there comes a moment in every career when you start to wonder: where do I go next?

If you love the company you work for, an internal job transfer just might be a way to venture into new territory without completely changing scenery.

This is not an uncommon feeling. You love the people. You love the benefits. You love being part of a team, but you no longer love the current role.

Statistically, 1 in 5 workers are in the wrong job, leaving them feeling unmotivated, disengaged, and unproductive.

A role transition, whether a promotion, a move to a new department, or a new challenge in your existing job, can be a huge boost at a chance to grow and thrive.

The advantage of working for an SBE (Small Business Enterprise), is that opportunities grow as the team grows. It's a good way to explore other roles you might be perfect for.

The key is to stay open to opportunities and not limit yourself from a whole range of possibilities.

Applying for a new internal role can be tricky and successfully transitioning requires some careful navigation.

Reach Out to Your Manager

You might feel nervous talking to your manager about potentially looking into a new path for yourself, but this step is crucial. Be transparent with your employer and see where you can bring in the most value and how it will benefit the company.

Educate Yourself

It's easy to look at other open roles in your company with a "grass is always greener on the side" mindset. But jumping into a career transition without doing in-depth research is a recipe for failure.

Do your best to learn as much as possible about the potential role you're looking to move into. Speak to people who are currently in said role, take notes, and ask questions so you can be better prepared for your new opportunity.



"A role transition, whether a promotion, a move to a new department, or a new challenge in your existing job, can be a huge boost at a chance to grow and thrive."

Trying new things is scary, especially because you're not always proficient at them right away. If you don't instantly succeed, don't give up. Repetition is key and with repetition comes mastery.

Commit to it and don't look back after you make that leap.

OUR MONTH IN A FEW WORDS

JULY HAS BEEN A MONTH OF MANY CHANGES

1 Back To School / Off to College.

The end of summer and the beginning of heavy morning traffic is upon us, therefore make sure you budget your drive times and make room for a few delays. Utilize those additional minutes to listen to a good audiobook or podcast, or if you are taking kids to school, use that time to chat and bond. College departures are also on the cards, so take note of all the deals available to minimize the financial hit. As Fall arrives, temperatures begin to drop, so boost your immunity with exercise and healthy foods to keep a balanced life.

Book Recommendations: *"Greenlights"* by Matthew McConaughey

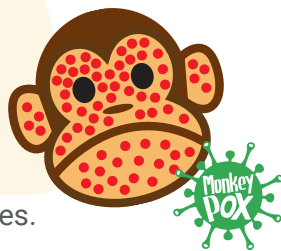


2 MonkeyPox.

While another glooming pandemic is on the horizon, it's important to educate ourselves as much as possible and understand where we fall on the risk spectrum.

According to the CDC, more than 99% of patients can expect to survive, however we must monitor the virus to prevent spread as much as possible. Symptoms include;

- fever
- headache
- tiredness
- sore throat
- muscle ache
- swollen lymph nodes.



If you're experiencing the tell-tale symptoms, here are some tips from the WHO:

- Avoid scratching your skin
- Keep the skin dry and uncovered
- Clean the skin with sterilized water or antiseptics
- Take a warm bath with baking soda or Epsom salts for lesions on the body
- For lesions in the mouth, use a saltwater rinse like you would for canker sore

3 International Youth Day.

On August 12th we celebrate our youth with the "International Youth Day". Pegged with Sustainable development goal #4, it tries to shine light on the importance of diverse educational opportunities for our youth, as well as accountability for the efforts of countries and their respective governments throughout the world. Let's celebrate and empower our youth as they are surely the leaders of tomorrow.





Half the month away!

VIRGO + LIBRA

As we welcome Fall, the attributes of Virgos and Libras are in full display. The creative juices are flowing, and organizers are planning and structuring what's next to come. Flipside; Don't be so lasered-focus and miss other important areas and details of life, which assist with personal and professional balance.

This time of year presents a unique time for self-reflection and goal setting, so take advantage of it by allocating time to yourself with no distractions. Productivity will increase and results will be stellar.

The Social Fort

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