

Six Reasons Why So Many Businesses Fail.

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Starting a new business can be a highly rewarding endeavour and almost everyone who embarks on such a venture has high hopes of enjoying financial success, and the lifestyle that goes with that... why though do so many business ventures end in disappointment and frustration? The purpose of this document is to give the reader an all-important 'reality check' and try to dispel any romantic, unrealistic notion that might exist in the mind of any 'wannabee' entrepreneur, namely; that starting a business is *easy* and that only a *minimum of effort* is required to become financially independent. I would like to focus on the difference that really makes a difference... In other words what are the PITFALLS that MUST be avoided?

I have written this paper for the benefit of individuals who, like you, are looking to start their own energy saving business, regardless of the products or supplier with whom you ultimately choose to be associated with. It may also prove to be a valuable resource for an established organisation looking to diversify into this rapidly burgeoning industry. There are many facets to the energy saving business, thereby creating many diverse business opportunities. This document however is focussing on the distribution of energy saving solutions and products to the end user, so... the 'business' referred to is that of purchasing products from a manufacturer or wholesaler and reselling them to the customer in response to their needs.

I am certainly not intending to give comprehensive details of all the present offerings in the marketplace as these are constantly changing; rather, the objective is to provide insight into what are the most important aspects one needs to consider **before** embarking on this new endeavour; factors that are both constant and universal. In other words... what are the critical success factors for starting a new business, especially an energy saving business?

Hopefully you already appreciate that an important key to success in business is to *build meaningful client relationships*. In it's purest form winning new customers is a

process of establishing the needs of the client and providing the solution that not only satisfies their needs but exceeds expectation, so the customer will be ready and willing to keep buying from you again and again and at the same time recommend others to do the same. So... By helping people solve their problems you in effect can continue to Profit With Integrity long into the future.

So, Is There Really Long-term Potential?

This is a very important question to be able answer! There is an undoubtedly huge potential profit available within this business. At the moment it is hard to imagine any other business opportunity with as much untapped potential. Just consider some of the following statements from leading authorities.

The UK Trade & Industry Secretary, having held detailed discussions on climate change with his political counterparts across the globe has described it as: ***“The greatest business opportunity of our age”***

Tim Bond, the Head of a leading Investment Bank, Barclays Capital, released a report predicting that Climate change will boost the global economy and dominate financial markets over the next 25 years. He added: ***“If ever the time were ripe for such an energy revolution, it is now”***

And Bill Gross, a man who proved his ability to spot future profit potential in global markets has stated: ***“Reinventing energy is a multi-trillion-dollar opportunity. It dwarfs any business opportunity in history.”***

One of the signs of a truly great business opportunity is that it fills a need that everybody has. The following statements reveal that energy saving is a must for companies large and small:

‘Anywhere companies have pursued energy efficiency, they have ended up making money, even if money wasn’t their initial goal’ David Goldstein, The End of Oil page 225

‘Reducing the amount of the energy you use is one of the fastest, most effective ways to save your business money.’ Carbon Trust, UK

‘Climate solutions are *not costly but profitable*, because saving (energy) costs less than buying (energy).’ Amory B. Lovins, CEO, Rocky Mountain Institute

‘To survive, companies of every size must be aggressive in the conservation of energy’. Charles Brown, Senior VP of Kodak

You can be certain of one thing... because of the current economic climate, increasing pressure from governments and growing awareness from the media; The Energy Saving Business is here to stay! It is set to be high on the international agenda for many years to come.

So... What Are The Critical Success Factors, And The Pitfalls To Be Avoided?

There are of course lots of books you can read on business development and most of them provide helpful information. However, rather than provide a glib ‘text-book’ answer to the above vital question I have taken the time to carefully observe the phenomena – so to speak and analyse the key issues that people face when starting their own energy saving business. While I have seen many enjoy high levels of success, I have seen at least an equal number fail miserably...WHY?

That’s what I want to share with you... it is not a matter of me giving you my ‘opinion’, what I am about to share with you are simply the inescapable facts. When I see spectacular success I have always been eager to accurately determine why? Equally important is ‘dissecting’ the ***real underlying reasons*** why people fail. I use the word ‘dissect’ because the reasons that people give for their failures (or for that matter what they personally believe is the reason), is almost always completely different than reality.

Ironically... The critical success factors and the pitfalls to be avoided are exactly the same issues, it’s simply a matter of whether you DO them or NOT!

Here are the common denominators that differentiate those who enjoy success from those who don't.

- 1 Developing The Entrepreneur Mindset
- 2 Preparing The 'Elusive' Business Plan
- 3 Stickability
- 4 Pro-Active Sales And Marketing
- 5 Harnessing Technical Resources
- 6 Closing the Gap Between Knowing And Doing

1 Developing The Entrepreneur Mindset:

Without doubt, people are the primary determinant in the success of almost every business. That means the single biggest contributing factor to the success of your new business will be YOU!

Furthermore, I believe that if you look after your people your people will look after your business. It is therefore essential that you are an inspirational leader; you have to be able to turn your hand to just about any aspect of your business and set the standard for others to follow. It is imperative that you are thoroughly trained and equipped and confident so as to be able to meet the exciting challenges ahead as you strive to Profit With Integrity.

Your business will depend on both what you do yourself – and what you motivate others to do within your organisation.

All Business Opportunities require the partner or distributor to be an entrepreneur. If you do a Wikipedia search on the word “entrepreneur” it will say the following: - “An **entrepreneur** is a person who has possession over a new enterprise or venture and assumes full accountability for the inherent risks and the outcome”.

Some Useful Questions to Ask Yourself Before You Start Your Own Business Are:

Am I willing to accept responsibility for the success and/or failure of my business?
Or, will I be quick to blame others when my expectations are not met?

Do I appreciate that a significant number of people who start their own businesses give up, for a multiplicity of reasons, before they have the opportunity to recoup their initial investment?

Am I willing to embrace new ideas and suggestions and work hard to develop the necessary knowledge and expertise required? Or, do I have a proud attitude and think I already know everything?

Do I really have the all important grit, persistence and sheer determination to make my business successful? Or, do I have a track record of starting projects and quickly giving up when things become difficult?

Given that starting any new business is a high-risk venture – can I afford to make the investment? If for whatever reason I have to quit prematurely, can I afford to lose the investment in both time and money? You should never risk money you can't afford to lose.

Have I used due diligence in assessing the business potential within my area and where necessary taken professional advice on all matters including legal, technical and commercial? You need to carefully consider every aspect of the business.

Am I being realistic about my abilities and experience?

Do I have the full backing of my partner, wife and/or family? And are they willing to make adjustments as and when needed to accommodate my change in circumstances?

Will I be able to attract quality people to work for me in my new business? You must appreciate that while there may be no need for you to be able to market, sell or install products personally, nevertheless this is what the business is all about... namely, buying products from a wholesaler, selling them to the end users and installing and commissioning them for your new customers... if you don't intend to do it yourself then you must be able and willing to build a professional team who can care for these essential elements for you.

Do I understand all of the contractual and legal obligations between my supplier - ME as the contractor - and my customers? Have I taken care to read all of the 'small print' in any of the terms and conditions that may be applicable? Am I familiar with any specific laws and regulations that are relevant to the area in which I intend to operate my business?

2 Preparing The Elusive Business Plan

Almost every book you will read on starting your own business or developing an existing business will have something (probably a lot) to say about the need for a meaningful business plan. We all know the value of this and we have probably all read statistics like... "Only three out of a hundred new business people ever have a clear plan of where they want to be and only one of those three ever commit it to paper" – yet over 90% of those with a written plan actually achieve it". Ever read something similar? Then why is it, based on the laws of probability, most people reading this paper will not yet have completed a business plan – and probably never will?

If you don't have a detailed business plan how will you know when you are successful? The very essence of the meaning 'success' is; "the achievement of something planned or attempted" or " something that turns out as planned or intended". I have seen the average person spend more time planning a two-week vacation than they do their business aims, or even their life for that matter. It is no coincidence that *most* holidaymakers end up arriving at the destination they planned; in the hotel they booked and in the time frame they expected. It is no exception when it comes to planning your business, or your future.

As you go through the process of writing your detailed business plan you will need to give consideration to the mechanics of your new business. As a general principle "if you cannot make it work on paper you have no chance of making it work in reality"... however, in the very process of thinking things through in detail you will have the opportunity to address some of the many important issues you will soon be facing.

Have you really given consideration to the difference between owning a 'business asset' and being 'self-employed'? Many people who are self-employed speak as though they own a business – but they don't. The main difference being... whether you trade "minutes for money"... do you work for the business or does the business work for you? I have a handyman who will happily complete a number of tasks on a payment by hour, or day basis. When he works – he gets paid. However this is little more than an alternative form of employment. If you need to be in the office everyday, you don't have a business asset... YOU HAVE A JOB!

Your objective should be to build a business wherein you can enjoy the benefits of passive income streams without needing to be available 24/7. You will never achieve this without an effective business plan.

It is also essential to ensure that all your goals are complimentary... that is your personal, family and professional goals should be taking you in the same direction. You will need to be truthful with yourself and make an honest assessment of what it is you are trying to achieve for yourself and your family.

Constructing a meaningful cash flow projection as part of your business plan will indicate the level of financial backing you will need to underpin the business as it grows. All too often people run out of money before their business returns a profit. Our financial Manager continually reminds me; "turnover is vanity, profit is sanity and cash is king" – good advice!

In almost all our business endeavors we use a simple four-step principle. The questions we ask ourselves are:

Where am I now?

Where do I want to be?

What are the alternatives open to me?

Which is the best course for me to take right now?

Significantly... this is the exact approach that Enigin partners are encouraged to take with potential customers... in fact if you read the EnergyMaps brochure, these are the four milestones we promote as part of the energy savings programme.

3 Stickability:

Firstly let me say that I have very few regrets about being in business for myself. Indeed I can categorically assure you that there is almost no circumstances under which I would ever accept a 'regular job' working for an employer, to me it 's a form of 'slavery'. I have a number of business interests and I enjoy a 'healthy' income from all of them. It's a comforting thought that I am earning money regardless of what I am doing - you won't get that from an employer. The opportunities and rewards that come from owning your own business vastly outweigh the difficulties you will almost certainly experience. Building your own business is, without doubt, one of the supreme personal challenges. It's one of the best decisions I ever made – but it's not for the faint hearted!

There are scores of people making a success in the energy saving business. Indeed I often find myself reassuring people; "There is success all around you – the only variable is YOU".

Regrettably, my expectation is that many people who start their own business will fail. Why? Because most people simply give up when they realize it's harder than they think to make a business successful. Remember, the only way you, or anyone else for that matter can possibly succeed in business is to PERSIST... to just *keep trying*... Remember the very moment that you decide to throw in the towel you give up any chance of ever being successful. To the businessperson 'persistence' has a similar effect as carbon does on iron ore. Take basic iron ore; add a little carbon and you get mild steel. ***Persistence is undoubtedly one of those essential Critical Success Factors in this business - any business for that matter.***

The reality is that statistically every time someone embarks on the creation of their own business they are almost certain to find the reality much harder than they originally anticipated. This reality is a fact of life in business... and in most - if not all cases - there will be a time when it will seem like there is no way forward (I have been there, many, many times myself). I have built up a number of businesses, many unrelated to energy saving, during my 'career' as an entrepreneur and I have consistently found this to be the case. So it will come as no surprise to me when you inevitably face the same scenario. According to the U.S. Small Business

Administration, *“over 50% of small businesses fail in the first year.”* Nobody said it was going to be easy.

Another word of caution however, because the opportunity offered by Enigin PLC has a relatively low investment and a promising high return it sometimes attracts unsuitable candidates who all too often provide misleading information with the intention of deceiving the parent company (and themselves) about the applicants, ability, experience and/or financial position. This has in a number of cases resulted in untimely failure and frustration along with the inevitable blaming of Licensor and everyone else, when the responsibility for failure is almost entirely theirs. Unfortunately sometimes these ‘failures’ can give the Business Opportunity route a bad name, as individuals will rarely if ever accept responsibility for their bad judgement and lack of business acumen, preferring to blame the supplier instead.

4 Pro-Active Sales And Marketing:

The most important aspect of your new business is ‘sales’ – it is the very lifeblood of your new business. You need to be able to generate a steady flow of profitable business. Every entrepreneur needs to constantly ask himself “what am I doing now to contribute towards my next order” How many proven methods am I using to generate initial enquiries? How many appointments, presentations etc have my salespeople made this week?

Once you have spoken to a hundred people face to face you will be in a better position to know the precise needs of the ‘average’ customer in you area and determine how to improve your presentation and in turn close more sales. Only then can you make an informed judgment about the long-term potential of this business.

Remember an important principle... Your success in this business is almost entirely based on the level of focused sales activity in your territory. Success and failure will be determined more than anything else by your attitude toward marketing and sales activity.

I recently commissioned the world-renowned business Guru Warren Greshes to review some of the sales support systems and training materials utilized at Enigin

and he told me he was “extremely impressed”. He has gone on to produce several industry specific audio podcasts to help our partners focus on the critical success factors – the blueprints for success in any business. His experience is based on having worked with thousands of organizations on every continent. If you and I apply these time proved principles we will all have a significantly greater chance of success. If you would like to sample one of these podcasts you can download a copy with my compliments from <http://www.enigin.net/podcast-byob.php>

You will need to constantly focus on the type of activity that will eventually lead to winning more customers. Some people think being ‘busy’ in the office and having ‘great conversations’ with business people is actually working. I guess they believe that if they keep busy maybe the phone is going to ring and someone is going to place a massive order, which they can retire on. Other people with the same mindset also buy lottery tickets or occasionally gamble on the races in the vain hope they might win... all these people place their destiny in the hands of sources outside their control. An interesting phenomenon I heard recently is that apparently high business achievers (the millionaires of this world) almost never buy lottery tickets, they never have and they never will because they have no control over the outcome. In contrast, once you accept responsibility for your own financial and business success you are entirely in control of your destiny - and it’s a great feeling!

5 Harnessing Technical Resources:

It may have become evident to you by now that very little space in this paper is devoted to ‘technical issues’. Why? Could it be that it is unimportant. No! However, it is not the most common reason for failure. Interestingly, getting the technical aspects of your business in place, that is; installing the right products correctly and commissioning them properly is relatively easy to get right once you have been shown how. Paradoxically however, it is also one of the easiest things to get wrong.

When you orchestrate a smooth installation and the customer is delighted with the whole experience it is a pleasure to behold – even though it is only a small (say 10%) portion of the total success story. However when it goes wrong it can be your worst nightmare – it can account for 90% of your on-going problems. It can eventually lead to disaster.

Most entrepreneurs are not technically qualified or even technically minded and as a result they can be inclined to oversimplify the installation process. It is absolutely imperative that you either employ directly, or engage the retained services of a qualified electrical and/or mechanical engineer with practical hands on experience within the market sector you are working in. Always ensure they have the opportunity to trial the installation and commissioning of each new product in a risk free environment before they are allowed on-site. Your customers are not guinea pigs!

You also need to be able to accurately assess suitable applications for your client so as to be able to make recommendations for load side energy saving products that will give an acceptable ROI or pay-back for your customer. Generally speaking you will need to be able to calculate and deliver a payback of less than two years. Make sure your supplier is willing and able to help you with this, or provides you access to the technology/software you will require.

Electricity generation is the largest producer of carbon emissions and it's the one that most people are concerned about. There are a number of solutions available for motor driven facilities, lighting, air-conditioning and refrigeration, which collectively account for almost all of industrial and commercial electricity usage.

You can also look at water conservation, gas & oil boilers and the many emerging technologies that will economically generate alternative forms of energy. Ideally you should be looking to partner with a supplier who, like Enigin, is taking a long-term view of this industry and will be in a position to provide you with the best solutions, fully tested and ready for you to market. Otherwise you can waste an inordinate amount of time assessing products that are ineffective, rather than concentrating on winning business.

6 Closing The Gap Between Knowing And Doing:

In truth, building a successful business is not rocket science. There are recipes for success in much the same way as there are recipes for making a chocolate cake. So... another critical success factor requires little more than you simply implementing the principles that have been proven time and again to work. Don't be the person

who tries 'half-heartedly', (with a contingency plan for failure) and never subjects themselves to the very real 'risk' that someone might just buy something from them! Equally, don't be the person, who, a few years from now will be talking to friends and colleagues in the bar about the time you *thought* about setting up your own business because you *knew* the market was going to be big... but never quite got started!

Let's consider what you should expect to get from your prospective supplier or licensor if you are investing in a Business Opportunity. Then we will consider what you will need to 'bring to the table' in order to give yourself the best possible chance of success. This section is also valuable if you decide to 'go it alone' as it will give you an idea of the resources you will need to bring together.

Firstly, you will need a quality product that can be effectively demonstrated and sold by a professional, salesperson, which initially could be you. Ideally you will benefit from having an ever expanding range of products so as to be able to meet the needs of your clients both today and on into the future. Remember your first order from a new client will be the hardest to secure, and your next sale starts where your last one finished. Look for products that are able to provide a minimum two-year payback to your client. If you can have an arrangement with your supplier whereby you do not have to carry inventory but you can draw down products as and when needed, at the best possible volume discount pricing, it will help significantly with cash flow and ultimate profitability.

Secondly, even if you have great products don't make the classic mistake of thinking it will 'sell itself'. A famous individual once said, "build a better mouse trap and people will beat a path to your door"... This is wholly untrue! In my experience this is one of the most misleading statements ever made, especially in the energy saving business. Your solutions have to be professionally presented and *sold* to client companies. You will need to ensure that you have a business sales model that will enable you to open doors, secure business and build solid client relationships. If your supplier has little or no practical sales and marketing experience think again. Are you being offered a comprehensive residential training course covering every aspect of the business? If not... how are you going to source the practical help and direction you will undoubtedly need?

Are you being provided with a methodology for assessing a client's energy needs with simple energy saving calculators that will help you predict ROI for your

customers? Do you have the benefit of being able to offer a 'no quibble' guaranteed energy savings package to your clients?

Implementing an effective sales and marketing campaign is undoubtedly one of the most Critical Success Factors in your new business. In spite of the fact that most would be business opportunists acknowledge this fact, failure to do this effectively is probably the primary cause of failures in business. Look at the sales model and marketing materials made available to you by your Licensor and consider if it's acceptable. Is it what you need to give yourself the best possible chance of early success? Do you have everything you will need to present to customers? Is there a simple and credible way of demonstrating the products?

Thirdly, you will benefit greatly if you have access to some business tools to assist you in running your business on a day-to-day basis. A CRM (Customer Relationship Management system) can prove absolutely invaluable. The cost of developing one yourself could set you back in excess of £50k, maybe even £100k. Some specialist companies will offer a license by user option, which has minimal initial investment but higher on-cost. Nowadays I would not run a business without a powerful CRM.

In today's fast paced high tech world, technology is often the difference that really makes the difference. For example... Will you be given the software to manage all your business activities and communications from your PC or laptop? Will you be able to download monitoring results from all your key clients? Will you be able to generate a personalised tailor-made proposal at the touch of a button? Are you being provided with motivating audiovisual presentations to show your clients? Will you have access to on-line training materials for both your sales and technical people? Will you have the wherewithal to produce an energy audit report? Are you given access to a reliable psychometric assessment tool so you can ensure you have the most suitable people in key positions within your organisation?

Strive for excellence in everything you do... if you are prepared to settle for second best, that's what you'll always have!

At Enigin <http://www.enigin.net/> we provide our new partners with all the above and a lot more besides, still this will not guarantee success. However these vital elements will help you identify the critical success factors you will need to consider, and give you the best possible starting point for your new business. Sorry if it sounds like a

subtle advertisement. Enigin is nonetheless a useful benchmark for you to measure others against, and in any case I am giving you lots of valuable info for free so I feel I am entitled to the odd mention!

About the Writer – Some Relevant Background:

Over the last twenty plus years I have sold many thousands of energy saving products and motivated countless others to do the same. Some people I introduced to the energy saving business either as agents, distributors or partners or employees have gone on to build highly profitable businesses, which continue to generate healthy sustainable profits year in, year out. I have seen people create substantial personal wealth from this business, and at the same time provide a highly ethical service to industry. You can do the same if you develop the right mindset, and approach your new business in the right way.

For the record I have gained much practical experience at the sharp end of this industry having started an energy saving business from scratch selling products to the end user both myself and via a team of professional sales consultants. I have set up a marketing 'lead machine' to provide a constant stream of quality leads to the sales team and recruited and managed a number of technicians and electrical engineers to install and commission products. Some of the installations I have worked on directly and indirectly have developed into large rollout programs involving hundreds, occasionally thousands of individual products saving industry literally millions of pounds. I know how to run a successful distributorship – and the pitfalls to be avoided.

Apart from the SME market (that is the smaller to medium sized enterprises where often the business is run by an owner-operator) I am proud to have been instrumental in helping distributors and partners deliver energy saving solutions into some of the world's most prestigious organizations like, Wall Mart, Coca Cola, Sainsbury's, Rolls Royce, Parker Pens, Cadbury's, Curver Limburg, British rail to name but a few. I have also produced training and support packages to help recruit, train and motivate salespeople for organizations like Barclays Bank', MacDonald Hotels PLC, British Glass, Norwich Union, Tuffnells parcels, and a lot more besides. Although these training products were generic in nature, of particular relevance is the

fact that the selling scenarios that are enacted and many of the examples provided are based on selling energy saving products... because it's what I have been successfully doing for decades!

The fact that I have enjoyed decades of success in this business is not going to guarantee that *you* will be successful, but if you choose your supplier carefully and utilize the many business tools and practical training materials that can be made available to you (from credible sources) then you have considerably more (probably a gross understatement) than I had, not only when I started but during most of my time in this business until fairly recently.

My introduction to this industry was somewhat ignominious. When I first started in the Energy saving business back in 1982 I purchased a 'business opportunity' from a UK based company selling their energy saving device in the North of England. They had little expectation of us doing business in what was considered "a salesman's graveyard". Cumbria, which was our territory, was very difficult to work logistically as it was mainly agricultural, circa 400,000 people in the whole county but nearly a million sheep!

We assessed the potential market, carried out some trial installations then appointed a salesperson and an installation engineer. When our 'distributor pack' arrived it consisted of ten fairly ugly looking boxes, with an engraved faceplate and three silver knobs... the only other feature was a single red LED that lit up to tell you it was switched on. To be fair, the concept was good, but it was early days for all of us. The units arrived in a large cardboard box that had formally been used for packing eggs (Did I not mention that we had a significant Hen population also); thankfully the units were wrapped up in tissue paper to keep them separate (this was before the days of bubble wrap). The company kept their promise to provide us with a couple of hours 'training' on how the product worked which consisted of drawing some fairly simple sketches on a white sheet of paper, the rest we had to work out for ourselves.

It all sounds a bit archaic and you may be wondering how this pathetic start in the energy saving business has any relevance to you today.... but there is an inherent principle and it's one of the most critical success factors in the development of any new business opportunity. How did we respond to the challenge?

I knew then, as I still believe today that the responsibility for the success and/or failure of my business was mine. I was too naive to realize it at the time but I have since come to appreciate that this is one of the essential mindsets of every successful entrepreneur namely; ***“they take responsibility for their financial success and or failure”***, whereas the masses of mankind, who make up all of the failures will in general try to blame anyone or anything else for the position they are in, the government, the suppliers, the salespeople, the marketplace, the products etc...etc...

I subsequently spent years developing a methodology for selling to the end user that has enabled me to secure consistent quality and profitable business ever since. From those humble beginnings (and there are many, many stories in between) I have gone on to work on the design of energy saving products that have been sold in over 70 countries of the world, including the world’s first truly intelligent motor controller which, following intensive trials and evaluations, won numerous prestigious technical and innovation awards in both the UK and overseas.

Additionally, I built a company that won the Queens Award for International Trade. Three directors were invited to Buckingham Palace to receive the award from the Queen herself. The Queens representative told me that this was the highest award that could be bestowed upon a British Company and was, in her words, “equivalent to a knighthood for a company”.

I am currently Managing Director of Enigin PLC and have the privilege of working along side one of the best management teams in the business (I’m entitled to my opinion like everyone else) delivering to both partners and end users some of the most efficacious energy saving solutions available on the planet! You can achieve the same if you have the right mental attitude and implement the critical success factors.

Over the years commerce and industry has changed almost beyond recognition and methodologies that worked up until quite recently need to be revisited. There is no room for complacency. Companies can no longer survive by giving a mediocre service. The average customer has access to considerably more information and comparisons are much easier. Thanks to the Internet the customer has come to expect high standards from suppliers.

In a Nutshell...

Your attitude more than anything else will influence your future. It is attitude more than ability that determines success. We don't have 'problems' we have situations and situations require a solution – be a solver.

Without persistence you will never survive the inevitable difficult times. It's a bit of a cliché but; grit, willpower and a burning desire to succeed coupled with a resolute determination never to quit are critical.

You must be willing to accept responsibility for your success and or failure. You, nobody else, is responsible for who you are now... and for who, or what, you become in the future.

Always strive to be the best and ensure you partner with the best suppliers and service providers you can find. Associate yourself with successful people and organizations and benefit from their experience.

Be modest and know your limitations. Only a fool thinks he knows it all. Acquire the needed skills by maintaining an open mind and carefully assimilating whatever training you receive. Always ensuring it is from an authoritative source. Take legal and or professional advice wherever appropriate.

Know your business inside out. Learn about the industry and all the anomalies associated with it. Understand all the products you are offering both in terms of the unique selling points and their technical abilities and limitations.

It is vital that you are able to support your products, salespeople, and customers with all the technical help they will require. Make sure you have access to a good quality well-trained and qualified engineer.

Ensure you are continually proactive in driving business to your door. Don't catch the dreaded 'bigcaseitus'. You need to approach lots of companies to win consistent, profitable business. Remember your level of focuses activity in the area of sales and marketing will be the single biggest factor in your success. Don't become a statistician or a hoarder of information believing you can't start to talk to customers

until everything is 'perfect'. Be balanced - get out there and start talking to potential customers sooner rather than later. You never know you might just run the risk of someone actually buying something from you.

Prepare a through business plan that details exactly how your business will operate including; marketing, lead generation, the sales model, recruitment of your team including sales people and engineers, provision of technical support to your customers, the product offerings, cash flow projections, sales targets, setting up and running the office etc. etc.

Ensure you have the resources in place, financial and otherwise, before you start so you can follow the business plan through and support it to completion.

And finally, remember that people often *overestimate* what can be achieved in a few months or a year, but *underestimate* what can be achieved in a decade... so take a long-term view of your new business.

Getting a new business off the ground is a rewarding but challenging experience. I have come to realize the trueness of the statement that "problems and progress go together". People make investments in business every day with expectation of getting a return without having fully considered the risk and commitment required – it's a risk that sometimes pays off sometimes but rarely. However this is a great business to be in and I have met some wonderful people over the years.

Regardless of the decision you finally make, and whatever you ultimately do in the future, I genuinely wish you well and hope you eventually succeed as an entrepreneur - preferably - in the energy saving business.

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<http://www.enigin.net/>