

59 Business Management Lessons

for your first 7 years in business

Mastering your personal and entrepreneurial outlook:
A handbook for young CEOs and founders

From the author of: A Becomer's Philosophy

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DEDICATION

With special thanks to the Almighty God for allowing me into the vision and inspiration of this book.

This book is dedicated to all of you with love.

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FOREWORD

In this book is a guide to developing successful businesses, developed from experience working as a strategy and management consultant with hundreds of firms and individuals across the board. In the wake of and after the Covid-19 pandemic, many people have found themselves having to go into business, or having to figure out how to stay in business, creating an adequate need to learning the ins and outs of strategic business management. This book is recommended for people who are either just about to start out, recently started out in business, or are in business but experience stagnation, as a guide on how best to go about common business management challenges, more so with one of the worst pandemics of the 21st century in the equation, and more turbulence expected in coming years. I believe that it will turn lives around and inspire great successful bra

INTRODUCTION

You have always wanted to start your own brand, but some fear keeps you from doing so right? Or well, you actually did overcome the fear, but still got stuck, okay, so what next? Well, who is corona, it finally pushed you out there. Mine is a gift to help you reach the vision you have for your brand. So in this book are some of the secrets you may need to know to take your brand from non-existent, or barely existent to your envisioned level of success. Hopefully you will learn something that will also impact your personal life as well, and pass on the same knowledge to other generations.

When beginning a business, there is a lot of pressure to fast-track the registration process. Often times, as entrepreneurs we get tempted to settle on things we haven't quite thought through, because we assume that once we get the certifications, and are ready for work, we will magically change everything to match the our expectations. However, this is not always the case. Once you register, and you begin to get your brand out there, it is quite hard to change. This is because there are bigger problems to deal with, and also because such changes may make a start-up look unsure of itself, not to mention that such changes require money and time to implement.

As such, it is important to make decisions after thinking thoroughly, to ensure that should going back be difficult, the current decisions can still drive your brand forward. In here are tens of lessons you need to learn before your brand gets to 7 years, and most of them apply even later. Most of these are lessons I have learned the hard way with the 10 startup brands I have begun or

been part of, some which have seen the light of day, and some which have failed. Others are lessons I have learned from tens of projects that I have helped to diagnose during my career as a strategy and management consultant.

I welcome you to usurp of this wisdom, to make yours a safer, easier and well-advised journey in creating your own brand, I really hope and pray that this book helps you achieve your life goals, in one way or another, and please be sure to write to me and let me know what was most helpful to you. And by the way, this is not exactly new information from out of this world, it's probably things you have heard many times, but definitely not from me, and not in this context.

PART 1

Before you start your business...

1. Find your purpose in life first

You have no business running a business if you don't know what your purpose in life is. Period. Before you even go out to start a business, you need to know who you are in the first place. Being an entrepreneur, understanding yourself will make it way much easier to know what you want to do. The first question you should seek to answer is, what is my purpose in life, my calling? There are many things that one can do in today's world, but not everyone is gifted/called to do anything. Each career is best pursued by those who are gifted and purposed for such careers. There is a reason why we are made different with different passions and abilities, and we cannot be everything. Many of us have the academic qualifications to make us members of the coveted elite society *i.e.* doctors, lawyers, engineers just to name a few, but our callings are different, and we just cannot force ourselves into such, or rather we better not force ourselves into what we are not gifted to do.

As an entrepreneur, if you understand what your gift is, nothing will discourage you to an extent of doubting your pursuit,

but if you do not know who you are and what you are gifted to do, you will be easily discouraged, jealous and never contented. Chase your purpose first and money will find you in the right field of work. If you are gifted to be a mechanic, you have no business starting a supermarket, go start a garage. If it is millions you want, you can get them outside of your purpose, but if it is success and fulfillment you want, start a business that revolves around your gift.

Take time to understand what you are made of, what you are happy doing, what comes naturally to you. Instead of building a multibillion dollar company that makes you sick to imagine another new day of work is two hours away, you would rather build a local family business that you are eager to report to every morning. But hey, listen, if your calling is to start a multibillion dollar supermarket, please don't go starting a local family business. Knowing your purpose doesn't mean having a mediocre vision in life. You will be happier doing something that is within your calling, huge or small, and will grow old loving yourself for the choice you made to pursue a line of business that is within your gift.

2. Get a niche you are passionate about, and able to do

In my book, *A Becomer's Philosophy*, I explored in-depth the relationship between passion and ability. If you haven't read it, I would recommend that you get that book and go through the first chapter titled *Barcode and Exposure*, and you will be in a better position to understand why I will emphasize on the importance of identifying your passions and ability, and the points where they meet. Even after knowing your purpose, there are very many things you can do that are still within that purpose. As such, you need to clearly understand what niche within that purpose you are most comfortable with. Assuming you are called to motivate people

and lift up their spirits, you will realize that the field is so wide that you can easily get lost, even though you know your purpose. There are people who specialize in motivation for personal development, rehabilitation for criminals, parenting advise, counselling for drug and substance abuse, organizational growth and development, entrepreneurship advise, marriage, and academic progress among others. There are others that are so specific like motivating CEOs, counselling presidents, inspiring girls in science, motivating mothers who have undergone birth complications, counseling suicide victims and so on and so forth.

I cannot overemphasize on the importance of realizing your niche, and owning it up. When you know your niche, nothing, no amount of storm can convince you to back down, and you will always be happy about your job. You will know what opportunities to accept and what to reject. If you want to tutor, don't just open a school and wait to teach anything. Identify a niche that you are best in, you could teach music, and maybe even go down further into specializing in string instruments, or drums, or saxophone.

If you want to start a YouTube brand, you could start an education platform for training of dogs, or cats, or cows (if it is possible, why not?).

If you want to start an online business, you could start a cloth-line for teenagers, or dancers, or corporations or for charity.

If you want to start an NGO, you cannot fulfil everyone's needs, so specialize in food security, or water management, or plastic recycling, or road repair.

The point I am trying to put across is, don't just invest blindly, get yourself a spot you love, have the knowledge about, and can see an opportunity in. Remember once you start, there may never be a chance to go back and start again *correctly*. So, if you make a

mistake from the start, it will haunt you to the third and fourth generation, should they inherit the business. Look for something you are not just passionate about, but one that you have the ability to do, and do well.

3. Define your vision

One of the biggest mistakes that we make as entrepreneurs is rushing to put our money where our mouths are not. We so easily invest in businesses where we see no future, or understand nothing about. Just because a certain investment is working well for me is no guarantee that it will work for you.

As an entrepreneur who seeks to succeed and make history, begin with the end in mind. You have to see yourself as you want to be, before others can see you as such. Before you even invest the first coin in the purpose and niche you have already identified in lesson 1 and 2 above, contemplate on your vision in the purpose and niche. If you are called to be a teacher and would want to open a music academy, what is your end goal? What end do you already have in mind? You want to open a boutique, for what reason? What do you want to see at the end of the day? A few years ago, a good friend of mine rang me and wanted to start an organization to help raise awareness and mentor and support girls in STEM. The first question I asked her was, what is your vision? Why do you want to start the organization? What do you see at the end of the day? These were critical questions my friend had to go back and think over for a couple days, it's actually years now. What is driving your desire to do what you want to do?

On another occasion, one of the organizations I consulted for had a problem jump-starting operations, with a back and forth that didn't actually materialize into action. So I proposed a diagnosis of the organizational system. Come to find out, what half of the team

thought was the vision was what the other half took as the mission, casting everyone into confusion. So what exactly is a brand vision?

A vision is defined as what you see at the end of the day. When you start your business, what is the one picture you have in mind, what scenario are you trying to create? That vision is what will keep you motivated all the time, and will be most important during times of hardship. In Zimbabwe and DRC, there are stories of young men and women who enter dangerous gold, diamond and coal mines that go as deep as 40 meters and as wide as several hundred meters in a hot and dark itinerary, where the ground can easily crumble, or a venomous snake could bite and kill. Those people spend up to 3 days in the dark scary mines, thirsty, hungry, desperate, poor and uncomfortable, just so they can secure a livelihood. If you ask me what drives these people, I will tell you it is the vision they have. The end they have in mind is the gold, diamond or coal they will get. It doesn't matter whether there is gold or not, what matters is they believe in their vision, the gold. They believe they will reach the end and come back loaded with gold. If that vision can get someone to pursue such a dangerous path, how much more would it help to keep you and your employees on track? Let me just remind you that the worst thing other than being blind is having sight, but no vision. Warren Buffet once said, an idiot with a plan can defeat a genius without a plan.

4. Define your mission

After knowing what you want to achieve, the next question is how will you achieve it? The mission of a brand talks about how you will get to your vision, your goal. A mission is mostly an extension of the vision, explaining how a brand intends to achieve the picture of the end as they saw it from the beginning. I will give an analogy here that I believe we are all well versed with. When soldiers go out for battle, they have an end goal in mind, so what

they go to do is to implement the plan, so as to achieve the vision. This plan is the mission. The mission is the plan that makes one achieve the vision they have in mind.

Similarly, when an organization is started, before there is even a mission, there has to be a clearly defined vision, after which, the proprietors will then begin to define how they will reach their vision. Mission entails a generalization of the step-by-step process through which a brand will achieve its vision. If you start a hotel with a vision of being the most culturally diverse brand in town, you could define your mission as preparing meals from at least five international or local cultures, where you feature each culture each day, all the cultures featured daily or whichever way you deem most strategic.

If you invest in real estate and intend to provide the most affordable and decent housing for middle-income families, your mission could be to build houses that have modern sanitation, parking space, lawn, internet connectivity and security at discounted rates, by partnering with money lending institutions to give mortgages to qualified people. In this example, what you see at the end of the day is a very decent home, better than what is currently known as decent. But the way to do that is by ensuring that your housing units have all that a modern middle-income family needs to be comfortable, and that they are affordable to those families.

5. Consult widely; manage our ego

One of the biggest hindrances that we face as entrepreneurs is our attitude. Many are the times we either trust too easily, or we refuse to trust for far too long. As an entrepreneur, or a brand in this case, you stand to benefit a lot by letting other people advise you. Being told does not mean that you do not know what you are

doing or saying, it means you are wise enough to allow other people to add valuable contribution to your work. People who refuse to be told often do not go very far before they realize they actually needed to be told.

There is nothing as embarrassing as having refused to be told, then you have to go back for the piece of advice. Chances are the adviser may ridicule you and not end up telling you, or they might have already forgotten, or have ran out the inspiration of the advice. While at it, when you go out consulting, remember to know up to what point you will accept guidance. There are times when some counsel doesn't help at all, so you must know when to stop listening. This is a skill that is delicate; if you stop too early or too late, you will lose either way. In addition, you must know who to consult. Not everyone wants the best for you, and so you must be sober while making the decision as to who is fit to be consulted. If you choose the wrong person, you will not be sure your ideas are safe, and you will also not be able to share your intricate business secrets, which means you will be seeking half-baked advice, which may not actually help you much. Your choice for consultation should be someone, or a firm that you have confidence in, one that you can share even your most intricate secrets with, and be at peace.

It has always been said that asking is not foolishness, and sure it is not. As a matter of fact, those who ask, know, and those who know, know. When I first rolled out in business, I had a kind of attitude that could not be told, or advised. I remember making heavy transactions in the *dark* because I did not want to be advised. I thought I knew it all, but life showed me that I had a lot of stuff I still needed to learn, which I have gradually opened my mind to. For every single investment I made in my early 20's, I was either duped or overcharged yet had I asked, I would have been able to invest in even more fruitful ventures. For me to accept

to be told, I had to be humbled in many different ways. By the time life had humbled me enough to take advice from friends and family, I had lost thousands of dollars. Sometimes I sit back to think, I wish someone, some book, some video, some newspaper had talked to me about the importance of consulting trusted people earlier on in life.

It is not by chance that there are people ahead of you who have done been in business for a longer time, and as such have much more experience than you may have. These people are not a threat, and some of them don't even want to benefit from your money, neither are they interested in stealing your business ideas. It is not foolishness to consult these people and seek to know their opinions on such and such a business idea that you are thinking of venturing into. As it is now, before making a business decision, I not only think twice, but I also consult mercilessly.

I have come to learn the importance of consulting those who have been where I intend to be, or close, because in as much as they may not have all the words I need to hear, there is one or two sentences they may know that could mean the difference between success and failure.

6. Focus on the people as much as the need

One evening I was having a dinner meeting with one of my protégé, and he asked me, so what would you recommend for me as I start my business? I looked up and said, business is not all about money, but about striving to win the minds and hearts of your clientele. Once you have won them over, you have little to worry about. What will keep you in business is having a clientele that loves you, otherwise, there will probably be hundreds of people who will do the same thing you want to do, and maybe even better than you.

Customers prefer to buy from a specific dealer because they love that dealer, or something about them. Business is about getting the target market to like you, and psychologically enslave them around you or your product(s). There are different ways of winning such people. Some of these may be discounts, gifts, price reduction, advertising, shop design, personalization and many others.

If you want to make significant impact in business, you have to be able to master what your people like, and use that against them to win their minds and hearts. Some of the clients just want a nice hotel that they will not be embarrassed being seen entering or leaving. Others want a cheap hotel they can afford. Some people want class, others want comfort, others price, others want courtesy. There are people who will pay thousands of dollars more for the same service they could have received at a hundred dollars, if they are assured of privacy and comfort. You have to know who you are serving, and what they want. There are people who will never pay a penny more, but there are others who have no issue with money, as long as you deliver in time.

There are customers who focus on quantity, others on quality. The point is, never go into the market blindly. You have to know what your clientele wants. If it is price reduction, deliver. If it is class, deliver on that. If it is comfort, deliver on that. If it is privacy, deliver on that. You can even have different packages for different groups of people. There are some who want their cars customized, but others will just buy what is available. Some will want their suits tailored, others will buy what they can see.

We all have needs, but there is a reason why we choose to use certain brands to solve those needs. For example, we all have communication needs, that is a constant, but we choose to solve this need through different options, such as land lines, various brands of mobile phones, Skype, email, Zoom, Facebook, Google

Meet etc. We also have a need for entertainment, but we chose to be entertained differently. While some choose live music, others want the radio, others want TV, and others want the newly launched Apple streaming services while still others want Netflix. The point I am putting across is that if you focus on the need, you will succeed, eventually, but it could take you longer. Don't focus on the need only, focus on your people, the market. Focus on meeting your clients' level of satisfaction, and not just solving the need. So don't invest in a business that you may succeed in, invest in a business that you will succeed in. So you have to know me in order to get business out of me. You have to know what I like, and bring me that or you are wasting my and your time and money. That is what I mean.

If you want to make significant impact in business, your job is not to know that a customer has a need, that is pretty much obvious, yours is to know what customers are looking for in a solution, and provide that in a way that will make them buy the solution. In the 21st century business, you don't just sell solutions, you sell solutions that must meet your clientele's irreducible minimums, be it class, comfort, price, size, color, make, year or manufacture or whatever it is.

7. Know your numbers (KYN)

Never go to war if you have not mastered your weapons. Numbers are your weapons in the business war. These are the tools that you will use to clear the way for you so you can keep forging forward. Numbers will tell you where there is a ditch, a steep climb, a waterfall, and even where the enemy is waylaying you. Numbers in business can be profit margins, net income, gross income, shareholders equity, debit, credit, sales, cost of goods sold (COGS), short-term or long-term liabilities, assets, demand and supply, tax, custom duty, employee turnover, break-even time *etc.*,

never ignore the power of numbers. You need to keep watching your numbers, to know whether you are doing well or failing.

You could be in business, but with unhealthy numbers. Don't just smile because you are in business, smile because you know your numbers are healthy. Do your math periodically. Have staff meetings to discuss what you can do to change a bad trend in your numbers. Focus on keeping a healthy life for your business numbers. When in business, do not ignore even a single change in your numbers, it may mean the difference between the ditch you are about to fall into, and the success you left behind. Always be sure you know what your stock price is, be sure to know how many employees you have. Take interest in knowing what your COGS is. Have a well-done balance sheet. Ask for graphs and presentations for your figures/ numbers every soonest possible.

8. You need to be known, or you don't matter

Many are the times when we start a business and leave its future to luck, not knowing the importance of creating awareness about the brand. One important thing to know is that customers buy from businesses, mostly because they know them, and what they do. There are very many brands with a lot of potential hidden somewhere in cages all over the world, their biggest ailment, no one knows about them.

Today, if I walk into a store to get myself a phone, I will either go knowing the brand I am looking for, or will very easily be attracted to a brand that I already know. As an Apple user, when I walk into an Apple store, I go knowing I intend to buy either an iPhone 9, 10, 11 or 14 or 15. In my mind, I will already be aware of what I want to buy. When I get to the store, chances of convincing me to buy another brand, no matter how cheap or sophisticated the brand is are very low. Apple has created such a

strong brand awareness that we know them even in our dreams.

What you want to create is a brand name that becomes a household name. Some of the household names that we know include Samsung for their fridges, phones, laptops, televisions etc., Yamaha for their drums, pianos, keyboards, guitars and motorbikes, Apple for their electronics, CNN for their news, Barack Obama and Donald Trump for their political activities, Mercedes Benz for their cars, Sony for their electronics, McDonalds for their food products etc.

You want to create a brand that even the smallest child will be aware of. You want to create a brand that you are sure if you walk down the street, you are likely to hear at least several random people speak about it. You want to create a brand that everyone will want to associate with, whether or not they know what you are.

Now creating a brand awareness may or may not be a one-day activity. Some companies take long to be known, while others are just an instant hit. For example, President George W Bush., was by far much more famous than any of the presidents who have ruled the US. Having grown up at a time when Bush was in charge, I can tell you we all wanted to be little Bushes. We could try to adopt some mannerisms that depicted our admiration for Bush, including, trying to speak just like him. As a result, traders were clever enough to invest in selling merchandise that made us feel Bush-like. There were many military-like hats, calendars with the portrait of Bush, t-shirts and diaries. Bush was an international brand name that even the old identified with. Some of us had no idea what or who Bush was, but we wanted to be associated with whoever this Bush was.

Creating a strong brand awareness goes together with a very effective operational and marketing strategy. We cannot know who

you are unless you devise effective ways of introducing yourself. So the mistake that many businesses make is assume that since they have been registered, the spending spree has ended. Dearest friends, the journey has just began. After registration there is need for a lot of marketing. In doing so, you must understand what will most captivate your target audience. For example, while in the US many adverts are made in the form of an informative skit, in Kenya, most of the adverts are made in the form of a comedy.

In Kenya, the norm among a huge number of viewers is, if your advert does not make me laugh, I am not watching it, unless you are a known brand that I like anyway. This could explain the reason you will notice there is a boom in the number of comedians taking up advertising roles. In fact as it is now, most companies are paying vloggers to make skits, and at the end of the video, the products of that company or contacts are shared. There is a very sharp contrast between this and what happens in India. Indian adverts are somewhat closer to the American adverts, but are somewhere in between that and the Kenyan version. This goes to tell you that you cannot, or rather let me say it is not advisable to have a single advert that you intend to be consumed by different groups of people within the market. You must be able to know what is best for which segment of your clientele. To create a marketing strategy that works to the benefit of your brand awareness.

9. Get a mouth-watering brand name

Speaking of being known, a brand name can easily influence how well a brand is known. The brand name that you select has to be as captivating as possible. A name can mean the difference between going past your first day of business and a hundred years of business. A name can be the only thing that can make your competitor more favorable in the eyes of your target market

compared to your brand. There are many factors that may determine the manner in which a name is judged, and some may be out of the brand's control, locked in the market's own perception.

The other day I was chatting with a friend about the importance of color and names that a brand chooses, then she pulled a mug of yogurt from the driver's cup holder of her car, and showed me a brand of yogurt she had bought earlier. She said, 'Tim you see this, what is this now? What does this name even mean? Look, what colors are these and how does they relate to vanilla flavor? Also, now what kind of symbol have they printed? How does a butterfly on a flower relate to a vanilla flavored yogurt?' This conversation escalated to other brands such as corn flour, the packaging, color and font they use for their products, and was quite an interesting discussion. But you see, that is her own perception, for which she has a right to, now imagine a million other people sharing the same perception, while on the other half of the world, the brand's manager is out looking for loans to invest in production. Production for who, I ask?

There is no limit to the number and nature of perceptions that the market might develop towards a brand, based on its name. A name may be liked/ disliked because it reminds of something, because it is long/short, because it is funny/ serious, because it is associated with something likable/ dis-likable and so on and so forth.

The stage of name selection is a crucial stage that **MUST** be approached with a lot of caution. There are several ways through which to come up with a brand name. You can get a:

- i. Descriptive brand name - this is a name that revolves around what a company does. This name can talk about the service or good that a brand is going to provide, or the work that the product is going to serve. An example of

this is Bamburi Cement, by just reading the name, one can tell that the product is a company that deals with cement products. Another example is Frontier Marketing, whose name tells you upfront that it is a marketing firm. The options are unlimited, with pros and cons to each. It is perfectly okay to name your business based on the benefit it brings to the market, but the downside with this is that should the business decide to grow its service portfolio, there might be a problem with the relevance of the name. For example, should Bamburi Cement consider going into car manufacturing business, the name would be irrelevant *per se*.

- ii. Evocative brand name - often a single name with a lot of creativity inside, not necessarily drawn from the product(s) that the brand offers. Popular evocative brand names include Game and Amazon. The advantage with using such a brand name is that it does not tie the brand to a single specific scope of operation. It is important to note, the name does, however, exist in common language.
- iii. Abstract/ invented brand name - this is a name that is totally made up, meaning that it has no meaning other than what they are as a brand name. The beauty about this is that you can basically come up with any abracadabra as your brand name, and it will grow into a perfectly equitable brand. Examples of such brands names include Toyota, Verizon. I mean what is Toyota in English? Outside of its use as a brand name, it has no meaning at all. It is important to note, the name does not exist in common language.
- iv. Lexical brand name - this is a name that is drawn from interlinking two names, intentionally misspelling a known name, onomatopoeia or joining words from two languages

to form a brand name. Common examples include Safaricom which is a combination of a Swahili word Safari and an English word Communication, or Airtel which combines two English words, air, and a short of the name telecommunication. Facebook is made from interlinking the words face and book while Instagram links Instant and telegram.

- v. Acronym brand name - this takes either the first letters of a long word to combine into one, or otherwise, but the letters picked represent a long sentence. Common examples include AT&T, UNICEF, KENHA, AU, UN, TED Talks, USIU, POTUS, and KFC etc.
- vi. Founder brand name - this is a brand name that is based on the actual name of the founder of the business. Examples include Nelson Mandela Foundation, Oprah Winfrey Show, Procter & Gamble Company, Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, Jimmy Kimmel Show or Ford Motors named after Henry Ford.
- vii. Geographical brand name - this often alludes to the place where the organization was began, or where it is located/operates. Example include Nairobi Bottlers, Mount Kenya Bottlers, Chelsea Group *Mozambique* (CGM), or East Africa Tenders
- viii. Mixed brand name - this is a brand name that mixes two or more of the categories above. For example Rensyl Integral, East African Bottlers Ltd talks about the geographical location of the company as well as the benefit it brings to the market.

10. Brand colors really matter

Many a men are often accused of a scathing color blindness, but there is no excuse for lacking an eye for brand colors that captivate. I don't know if you have ever walked into a hotel or a butchery feeling hungry, and then you look around, look up the ceiling and leave even before the waiter can get to your table? Also, I don't know if you size up hotels, and your ability to pay for meals based on their theme colors. If you look at brands such as Java, Mugg & Bean and Big Square, there is something about them with brown and black colors. There is just some customer attracting element in their choice of brand colors.

I did not know there was a difference in the cost of hiring and buying cars based on their colors, until I once overheard a very interesting conversation that led me into research. Even in the showrooms, there is a difference in cost of purchase between white cars and chocolate, shiny black and gray cars. Leave alone that, there are even differences based on the shade of a color, you know, and this translates to perceptual stimuli which may positively or negatively affect a brand.

This goes to show you that a difference in my brand color could convince my client to buy a cup of tea at \$20, yet you are selling the same cup of tea at \$10. With this in mind, when you set out to create a brand, be open-minded in selecting a brand color(s) that will speak for you. A brand color(s) can say a lot of things, it can show your identity, your price and your vision. As a matter of fact, some of the organizations in California, are identifying themselves as LGBTQ friendly using the colors on the LGBTQ's flag. This enables them to steer clear of outrightly saying, but not failing to say that they are LGBTQ friendly. In the food industry, green makes us think, organic and eco-friendly for the most part right?

The importance of color to a brand can well be advised by a special branch of psychology known as color psychology, a field specially dedicated to studying the relationship between color and human perception and behavior. Have you ever entered a car that has mahogany or brown finishing, what was your feeling about its ambience? Also, ever wondered why children seem more attached to toys that have brighter colors than those with dull colors? Interestingly, I went shopping with my nephews a few days ago, and unbeknownst to me, they started drifting from my budget towards the toys section. Before I knew it, the little guys were already holding either red or bright blue helicopter toys. I looked around and realized the manufacturer had already played with these little guys' minds, and put my wallet on the blink of survival in the process. Different colors work well with different age brackets, regions, social classes and genders.

Below, I will share with you some of the perceptions that go with popular colors

Red/ pink/ orange - passion and energy

Green - calming, healthy, natural

Yellow - optimism

Purple - royalty

Black/ Brown - elegance, stability, simplicity

White - cleanliness

11. Clearly define your brand architecture.

Just like a house, a brand also needs an architectural design. You need to be able to know how you want your brand to be built, whether you want a two-story brand, a basement brand, sky

scrapper or bungalow brand. There are three main designs of brand architecture;

i. Monolithic/ branded house design - refers to an architectural design where one brand name is used for all products. Individual products may inherit their names from the parent brand name. An example is iPhone as a brand name, where you all the products in that brand identify with the parents brand name, but are separated by a number and/or a letter, e.g., iPhone 6, iPhone 6s.

ii. Endorsed design - refers to an architectural design where individual products are associated to the parent brand through an endorsement which can be visual or verbal. For example, Mpesa is a brand of Safaricom that recently gained its independence, but is associated to Safaricom through endorsement. All Mpesa shops are painted the same color as Safaricom's theme color, and all Mpesa posters have a Safaricom logo.

iii. Freestanding/ house of brands design - refers to an architectural design where each individual product is branded as a complete standalone without any endorsement. The main parent name only acts as the glue that holds all the products together, but each individual product within the company are branded individually. For example, Kenyatta University is an academic institution, a brand of its own. The institution owns a beach hotel known as North Beach Hotel, and also owns a referral Hospital known as the Kenyatta University Teaching and Referral Hospital. These two investments, are ran separately, and market separately. As a matter of fact, these two are brands that one can hardly identify as ran by the university, well unless you know. I mean anyone can call a hospital a Kenyatta University Hospital, and either pay for that association, or claim to be using a public landmark to identify their business. We have hospitals such as Nairobi Hospital which do not imply that they belong to the county government. We have hospitals such as Karen Hospital which do

not imply that they are only found in Karen.

You must be able to clearly state the type of architectural design you will adopt for your organization. You can have many different products all endorsed by the parent brand name, or have freestanding product brand names, or a monolithic system. But you need to be able to foresee and select the right design. If you fail to select from the word go, you will have a system full of confusion, with some brands looking like they are growing faster than their parent brand.

12. Know of your partners (KYP)

For many of us, your first partner in business is either your spouse, your college or high school friend or a family member. Because of the past relationship we have had with these people, they may either tend to take the partnership as a joke, or bring past relationships into work. This is a huge mistake, and an unhealthy gamble for our businesses. When you are getting a partner, ensure you are not driven by pressure to start that you pick a wrong partner(s). Be careful with who you choose as your business partner. A wrong business partner is a thorn in the flesh that you will have to carry along all the days of your business life. Take time to vet your different options and pick the best person.

Refusing to pick a close relative or friend to be your business partner because they are not compatible with your vision is not a crime. Do not compromise on your brand vision. Go for the best. Look for a person who will motivate you and challenge you. Look for someone who has the same zeal and motivation as you, if not better. Look for someone who will motivate you to go to work when you are almost giving up. Look for someone who will be your friend through good and bad days of work, because they will surely come. Don't pick a partner so that you can have your

business registered, hoping you will get a better partner later, or hoping that your current partner will change. Go for the best right from the start. Go for the person you can leave the business to, and be confident that he or she will manage it as good as you would, if not better.

Who are you picking to stay by your side when there are no profits? You need to be careful about who you are picking to be your partner/adviser. One of the movies I used to like watching is called *Alex Inc.*, and the reason I liked it was because it portrays a family man who quits his job and tries to start his own company at the prime of his career, throwing his entirely family into turbulence. The main character Alex decides to pick his second cousin Eddie to be his partner, not because they are blood relatives, but it is because in his words, Eddie could *yang* him, that is, keep him on his toes, and for sure, Eddie does not disappoint. That is what you need in selecting a partner. You need that person who will not give you peace when you are derailing. You need a person who will not smile at you as if things are okay yet you are miles away from your path to success.

The partner you select goes a long way to show what is in you, and this is not just in business. The person you select to be your closest ally can tell me who you are and what to expect of you, by just interacting with them. So you need to be careful. Some of your investors and business associates will judge you based on what they make of your partner. If you have not started your business yet, as my mom often tells me, you are in the field right now, and you have all the liberty to choose whatever you want, however you want it. If you want a partner who has a large nose and small feet, don't trade quality for short-term convenience, go for it, look for one till you find that him or her, because that business partner will more or less become your biggest success or failure.

13. Be open to allowing someone run your start-up

Because of the desire to start our own business and be known for it, we sometimes end up trusting no one but ourselves. However, we forget that we may be blessed with starting something, but others are blessed with making those things successful. There are people who are blessed with a gift of knowing what should be started, but others are blessed with the gift of knowing how it should be ran, and these two people need each other. Just because you are the proprietor of a business does not mean you are the only one with the know-how, and thus the only one fit to serve as its leader. There are times when one needs to sit down and be told. There are times when other people have better ideas than yours.

If you want to grow, be open to the idea of having someone else run your start-up. Some of your juniors have brilliant idea, but you have shunned them because you think they want to take your fame. There are many times when I have watched at my friends who are fighting to be known as founders of little startup companies, companies which have not even made any significant success. Just because you are the founder does not mean you are the only one who has the ideas to grow the company. There are times when you need to call in your deputy and ask for fresh ideas. The ideas you had while starting may not even be useful now. You need to call someone from the outside to check on your progress once in a while. Do not be selfish with success. Be willing to share it out. No one will take away the title of founder from you. Be open to have other people come and serve as CEO. You mustn't serve as Founder, CEO, Finance Director, HR, gateman, chef and what have you. Yours was to start, you have a lot of people who can help you grow if you let them. You mustn't trouble yourself with being CEO until you die, you can go the Nelson Mandela way, you know.

Believe in other people, mentor others to take after you. Now that you have the time and energy, start mentoring someone, so that by the time you retire, you can trust the person you are handing over to. Many of us rule over our start-ups with iron fists, and since we are not open to the idea of mentoring people to take after us, we end up being inherited by people who have no clue as to what was the initial vision of the brand.

14. Build castles on land, not air

Many businesses, especially in this age of social media boom and consequent addiction are baseless. There are businesses that thrive on social media propaganda. Instead of doing real things, there are businesses that have only been posting quotes and pictures for the past 6 months without actually doing any tangible work. There are brands whose only positive progress is getting their registration papers, posting a few selfies and making business cards.

My dear friends, building a brand takes more than just having a highly active social media presence. Don't get me wrong, you need to have a social media presence, but surely, that cannot be the only thing your brand has been doing since launch. You need to go out there and do actual tangible things. You need to be seen making those water bottles you registered your business so you could make. If you started an NGO, don't thrive on social media only so your friends and peers can see, go out there and do real things. If you began an online clothes store, import clothes and post pictures of them, not motivational quotes day-in-day-out.

Stop sharing pictures of things you don't have so we can see and think you are doing well. I know you are faking it till you make it, but be realistic in doing so. Don't go making business cards to feel like you are making progress while you are not. Face

reality. Live in the reality. Go out there and make your vision real. Printing business cards, getting team t-shirts, an active social media profile is not all it takes to build a brand.

Fold your sleeves and do real things. Start making those videos, start playing that music instrument or teach others how to, start baking those cakes, start selling those farm products. Just don't lie to yourself by keeping an active social media profile for your business while in the real sense you are doing nothing on the ground. You still have time, sit down today and strategize. Make real impact.

In the world today, there are many companies, especially those ran by millennials that thrive on tweeting and retweeting and some little hullabaloo on Instagram, and that's it. Where did the people who used to work hard go? You will find a company that was formed, then the founders parted ways because of frustrations, and instead of rebuilding, the have majored on building castles on social media. There are companies where 75% of the activity is about posting things for their audience to appreciate, but most of those things are not an actual activity that the company is carrying out in the field.

We need to stop lying to ourselves that social media is the lifeline of our brands, well, at least not without active real and true operations on the ground. Customers do not want to see those memes and links you share about other people's success, unless that is what your brand is about. Otherwise, if your brand is not a news agency, get down to real work and begin posting pictures and links of real work you are doing on the ground. We shall be happy and laugh at all those motivational links and stories you are sharing, but that will not make us trust you, neither give you business, and may not put food on your table. What will earn you our trust is to see the real things you are doing out there on the ground.

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Assuming you began with the steps shared above, never ever think of quitting. Business is not for the faint-hearted. It is for those who will make losses in the tune of millions and still rise up and go back to business a minute later. Entrepreneurship is addictive because it leaves you time to be you, your own boss and to directly impact on the lives of others, so if you quit, you have a long list of advantages to lose. No matter the situation, keep going, if you have to crawl, do so.

There are times when taxes will be raised and your invoice slashed by half, keep going. There are times when landslides will take away half of your business premises, rebuild and move on. There will be other times when half your employees will be poached by your competitors, don't quit, hire others and mentor them to the level of productivity you need. When you feel you have reached your breaking point, rest but don't quit. There are many people out there who are being touched by what your brand is doing. If you quit, you put their lives in jeopardy. You may not know, but your brand might be the only reason some people wish to see the break of dawn. Keep moving and keep pressing on. Soldier on, don't even think of quitting, it's not an option.

PART 2

After you finally start your business...

So, hey, you have started out, but as you may have already found out, real work begins after registration. If you are as articulate in planning like I am, or this is your first business to start, you must have spent a lot of time on preparations to register that you almost forgot that was just preparing you to what was to come. Real work begins once you get those papers. Once you are cleared by the government to carry out business within a certain jurisdiction, all hell breaks loose, and the marathon begins. Here is when you now need to be really cautious and more visionary than ever before.

Every so often the real problem was in our strategies and logistics and not the certification. As entrepreneurs, we have been tasked with the making of decisions that help our brands move from non-existent to excellent, and the real test comes soon after going past the registration barrier.

So in this next section, I want us to look at some of the things to do once you are past registration stage. You have been granted permission to do business, so what's next? Hold tight, it is about to

get really educative in here.

15. Understand growth is a journey

Be patient but persistent if you really mean to grow. Growth may happen overnight, but not always, and not for all people. While some people grew within a few weeks, maybe your growth will come after three years. You need to be patient, and keep doing what you are doing if you have a vision of success. Yes I know there are times when it will be hard and you will almost quit, but you need to learn to be patient. Business can take long to pick and succeed, so you must have a heart that knows how to wait. Do not just quit because things are hard, you will start a quitter's cycle that will never end. You will quit this business, begin another and quit and begin another and quit.

Be wise and know the difference between failure and a test of patience. Sometimes, we attach more value for those things that we have seen come up to the picture of what you wanted them to be, that those that happen overnight. When you have the patience to wait, you will appreciate the value of the result. If you rush, you will engage in all sorts of unscrupulous deals to jumpstart your success. Be open to the idea of going for long periods of time without a single client. Be open to having to wait. Be patient, and don't give up. Sooner or later, luck, or your hard work will bear fruit.

16. Yours is not too small a brand

Sometimes we are held back by the feeling of being too small to be doing incredible things. This is a bondage that can very easily follow us through the lifetime of our brands. We so often have incredible ideas, but ask ourselves, how come other big brands aren't doing such things? Because of that, we panic and fail to do

so. We tend to think we will be ridiculed if we tend to be better than what has been known as the best. As a result, we give up on ideas that would change the world. This mustn't be the case. All big brands started somewhere, and yours is just beginning. Let nothing hinder you from trying out those incredible ideas. Allow nothing to hinder you from making it. Just because others have not made it does not mean you will not make it.

Don't be satisfied with the taste of failure that other people tell you. If you want your brand to succeed, fold your sleeves, overcome your fears and taste that failure yourself, you may find out it is not as bitter as you were made to think. Define your own limits. You have all it takes to grow and excel, so don't panic or give up. Don't be satisfied with the argument that you are too small to do stuff, let no one tell you that. You have come so far to look down on yourself. Keep believing in the vision that motivated you to start. Remember, it is not the size of the dog, it is the size of the fight in the dog.

17. Have a crazy imagination

You are an individual with your own capabilities and, no one can be like you in this world, or the world to come. You are you, and you will remain you. There are people who will tell you what you are thinking is crazy and cannot be done. Others will tell you they tried and failed. Others will dare you to try and promise to laugh at you when you fail, but come one, how bad can it possibly get? Try stuff and think crazy. You have what it takes to rewrite what we know as success in your industry. You can achieve everything you set out to achieve, if you purpose to.

Allow no one to classify your ideas as crazy, and even if they were, what is the harm? Imagine crazily, for it is in those imaginations that great innovations are birthed. Be crazy in your

thinking. Try out what looks impossible. Venture into places others have not ventured before. Refuse to be average. Add a taste of your crazy imagination to every solution. Don't just make a car, try and make one that can fly. Don't just make a road, try and make one that can charge a car on transit. Don't just make an artificial flower, make one that can be folded and be used as a mat while on the front lawn, then while on a date, your client can turn the mat into a flower in the middle of desert. Think outside the box. Think crazy if I may say. If you do not think crazy and seek to implement those ideas, there are two likely options. No one will ever think of the same, so those will be innovations lost, or someone else will think of the same and get the credit you would have received. Besides, who has a crazyometer that measures what ideas are to be considered crazy and which ones are sane? Don't be afraid to think creatively. Don't allow someone's idea of crazy choke your success. You could be harboring the next big innovation with your crazy idea.

18. Put impact before money

There is a reason why you go into business, and this should never leave your mind as long as you are still running the business. The purpose and motivation that drove you to start the business should be a constant factor firm enough to weather any situations, to inspire you during the times when you are low in spirit, and to give you reason to smile during times of happiness. Now let me say that I believe any business that is began with the sole intention of making money does not go far, soon that foundation begins to shake under the weight of reality. Any time when someone starts a business with the sole mindset of I want to make money, there are many bugs waiting to bite, and usually, there is never satisfaction in such a business.

You start a brand because you want to solve a challenge for a

market, and to make impact in your community, and in return the brand rewards you by buying your solution. There are brands that have been began to help people fund raise, others have been founded to help people save their money, others to help people invest and make profit without having to work for it, others have been began to provide assistance to ailing people, others have been began to help people get insurances for their cars and lives so that they are covered in times of accidents, others are began to give care to people's gums and teeth, others provide marketing solutions to help investors build noticeable brands, others are meant to teach people how to make good music, others are formed to make music that can encourage others or help us focus when doing heavy mental work and so on and so forth. What I am trying to say that what we think is that brands are began to make money, but in real sense, businesses are began to solve societal problems.

As long as you are in business, you are going to make money, but if you put money before impact and the solution you are presenting to the society, you will lose track somewhere. If you follow money, you will never be satisfied, because you will never have enough, but if your focus as a brand is to make impact, you will be satisfied because you will touch a life somewhere, and be rewarded in form of sales. You may never be able to solve everyone's problems, but that one life you touch is a star in your brand's crown.

Money is important, as a matter of fact, money is the lifeline of a brand, but if it comes before the desire to make impact, there is imminent failure or frustration lurking. One time I went to the garage, having identified a major problem with my car, and since I didn't have the money right there, and I did not want to go to the bank, I began panicking. So when the mechanic examined the car and found the issues was not actually what I had thought it was, and that it would now cost just a couple shillings to fix, I asked,

him, why he didn't decide to trick me and go for the fixing that would cost more so he could make more? He said, 'that is not business. Business is what you do in honesty and integrity, anything else is just theft.' It moved me that such a great business lesson and ethic could come from an industry I least expected. If we can learn this business ethic, we can really go far. Never put money before impact, or at least try not to. Even if you will lose a few dollars just so you can make impact on someone's life, you can choose to, it's your call. That should not be taken to imply you should not make money, what I said is, make money while solving a real problem, that is the impact.

19. Have a central organizing thought (COT)

A COT is the vision, mission, strategy and direction (VMSD) of the brand, compressed to a simple phrase for your employees. Usually, a COT is condensed to a single sentence in which the management communicates the vision, mission, strategies and direction in the most motivating and captivating manner. The COT helps entrepreneurs to communicate their VMSD to their colleagues, partners and employees clearly and effectively.

The COT is hence used to communicate the brand essence in the most motivating manner to internal stakeholders. For clarity, brand managers should not confuse between the COT and a slogan. While both are usually single sentence phrases, the slogan is meant for external use, mainly by customers. The brand communicates its VMSD to consumers through the slogan. The COT is not favorable for use by the consumers, as it may disgust and even cause resentment among the customers. Ideally, an organization cannot tell its customers that it intends to manipulate them, but let's be honest, that is what happens in the business world, well mostly. A COT helps an organization to move in one direction, clearly understanding where it is headed and how.

20. Don't rule, mentor

Most of the time, entrepreneurs are so burdened with the pressure to succeed, monetarily, that we end up forgetting the difference and importance between ruling and mentoring. I want to just emphasize here that you can run your brand as a mentor and succeed, far much better than if you were to rule with an iron fist. Mentorship adds value to your employees, and not only makes them understand you as the founder and your vision, but also helps them to own up the art and skill of entrepreneurship, making them much more valuable to your enterprise.

21. No compromise on timeliness

Time is everything to successful brands. You would rather waste money but not time, for money you can regain, but time, you cannot. Successful brands know that time matters, and so they do not just open for the sake of being open, rather, every minute, every second is calculated, all factors held constant. Right from the top management to the lowest employee, brands that *become* have established a culture of timeliness in all operations. There is time to report, time to start, time to stop, time to break, time to rest, time to leave and time to plan among others.

It is important to point out here that something as common as timeliness can be a brand's only competitive advantage in a raging storm of competition. The more time-conscious a brand is, the timelier its clientele is. Mostly, clients will adopt the culture they tap from an organization. In Kenya, if you happen work with individuals like me, you must have come across a phrase such as *masaa ya mzungu* (by no means should you get late, which can also be loosely translated to get ready to be skinned you if you get late).

We Africans, well not all, are notorious for failing to keep time. However, many individual and organizations have come to appreciate that without proper time management, no meaningful progress can be made. As such, we have turned to phone reminders, email notifications, friends, calendars and diaries to be our constant and faithful reminders of the days and times when we need to make specific appointments. This has become quite helpful in making sure we fulfil our obligations, since nowadays, if you miss an appointment by a minute, you are as good as wasted. Employers are not welcoming to lateness, and so are employees. We are all running very busy lives, so if you have employed people from 9-5, you had better use that time wisely, because at 5, they may just storm out of that office to be in an investors meeting at 505pm, and for the most part, you may have absolutely no justification and obligation to convince them otherwise. Just because you have employed someone does not give you the right to mismanage their time, neither do employees have the right to misuse the time when you are paying them to work for you.

In your organization, time management can be seen even from the manner in which your security personnel at the gate frisk people as they enter, the manner in which employees walk around the business premises, the time they take to set up and begin work, the conversations they have, their facial expressions, the contributions they make during meetings and so forth. When employees learn the culture of time management within the organization, they are better placed to make decisions and contributions during meetings. The meetings end faster, because people have learned how to go straight to the point. People know how to say no, later, and/ or yes. Clients will definitely learn that you have a no-nonsense policy on time, and will learn to keep time and conversations short and straight to the point. Suppliers will learn to deliver in time and distributors throughout your value chain will know you do not tolerate lateness.

Now I am not saying that you should not be patient, or that you should not leave a leeway for people to be a little late. All I am saying is, you should teach your stakeholders that if they anticipate they will be late, they should tell you in advance, so you can do something else meanwhile as you wait for them. In addition, learn to always have a plan b, so that should someone get late for an appointment or ask for a little more time, you can always use that time to do something else that will add value to you. Never put all your trays in one basket when it comes to time. For example, if you are attending a breakfast meeting with a potential client, carry your laptop and finish your backlog, just in case the client is late.

As an entrepreneur, it starts with you. Show your team the way by reporting to work early, leaving at the right time and observing time during the workday.

22. Define a clear organizational culture

John Doerr in his book *Measure What Matters* talks about the importance of organizational culture, and summarizes it as helping to align a brand's objectives and key results (OKRs) to its VMSD. He further emphasizes the importance of not only portraying the culture only by words, but also by deeds. This means, do not just say you keep time or that you listen to your clients, but actually do listen to them, and respect their time. Do not just say you are eco-friendly, but be seen promoting environmental-friendly activities within and without. If you put a poster that your organizational premises are a corruption-free zone, resist the temptation to take that bribe. If you claim you are drug-free zone, either have a smoking zone, (if you must), or don't take that puff, even in secret.

In defining the culture, think about what you want to be remembered for, what you want your staff to grow into, and what behaviors you are trying to nurture. A brand culture represents the

values, assumptions and beliefs that the organization has. It is basically the philosophy guiding the existence and operation of the brand. There are several types of organizational cultures, including clan, adhocracy, market and hierarchy, and I will recommend that you research and read more about the same, in order to help you define an organizational culture and if you already have one, to review it against your VMDS.

Often times, because of the pressure to want to be professional, we end up setting cultures that are not compatible with our organizations, especially during their infancy. Because of over-expecting, we may end up hoping too much, and proposing cultural elements that will not work for us. It is important for top leadership to understand its environment, and come up with a culture that is compatible to the organization. Otherwise, an organization may have a list of fancy words describing its culture, but at the end of the day, find that it is way harder to implement such, than to quit, and having communicated the culture to the market, it then becomes even harder to live outside of the promise documented in the culture. When coming up with a brand culture, be *REALISTIC*.

23. Win hearts and minds

I was advising a friend the other day, that whether it is your employees or your clientele, focus on conquering their minds and hearts. Let me tell you, trade, or for the sale of clarity, business, is not so much a matter of money, but hearts and minds. Making it in business, and especially in this century is a matter of how well you can woo customers, and win their minds and hearts. Making it in business is a matter of winning the loyalty of customers, and making them fall in love with whatever it is that you do, so you must find a unique way of doing so. Customers will love your business because of how well you keep time, how smartly your

employees dress, the color of your office, whether you remember to wish them a happy birthday, happy independence day or treat them with personalized discounts *etc.*

Winning the hearts and minds of your clientele is not just about giving monetary incentives, some people have enough money to pay you double the price, so think outside the box. It is about going out of your way to think of creative ways to make stakeholders feel part of your plan. Not long ago, my friend and I were in the bank and she pointed a flask of tea that some lady was holding and pouring tea into a cup. She insisted the tea was meant for clients, but in my doubt, I convinced her maybe it was staff tea. I later came to learn that some of the businesses are now introducing customers' tea to their premises to take care of customers who may end up spending long hours waiting for transactions to go through. Now this is thinking outside the box. I mean what else do they expect one to be doing while waiting in the lobby? What would it cost you to add flavor to your customers as well? How much would it cost you to make some tea to your customers, or have a Wi-Fi service?

In order to make it in business, you have to understand what your customers cherish, and invest in fulfilling that need. If you want to succeed in business, don't just count money, count the number of times you win your clients' minds and hearts. A customer whose mind and heart you have won is a sure bet to your business, so work on winning them over. There are people who will not fuel anywhere else if it is not a Shell gas station. These people will drive for tens of kilometers on low gas, passing other gas stations until they reach their preferred station. There are people who will not eat at any joint if it is not McDonald's. There are people who will not use a phone if it is not an iPhone or Samsung. You get the idea?

The point I am communicating is, successful brand

management is about mastering the art of winning your clientele's minds and hearts.

24. Don't be a slave of history - you can redefine the threshold

This lesson is a delicate one to learn. Well, first, let me begin by contradicting myself and saying you must listen to statistics, because they give you an idea of what to do, and how others performed when they tried to do what you are thinking of, or doing. As a matter of fact, it is said that statistics don't lie. What you should not do is overly rely, and adopt those statistics as a measure of how much you can achieve. The success of other people before you should not define how high you can climb, but how low you cannot fall. The minimum is defined, but the maximum is for you to define. If it has been said that no company can make \$1,000 in its first day of operations, close your ears and challenge it.

Statistics are figures that others before you have defined, let them not scare you. You have what it takes to redefine the statistics. You have no limits to what you can do. You can be as good as you choose to, or as bad as you choose to. If it has been said only those companies that are 5 years and older that can penetrate a certain market segment, defy statistics and go for the ultimate prize. If you confine yourself to the bondage of judging yourself based on history, you will never stand out. If you are a personal brand that wants to venture into a particular field, let no one tell you that you are too young for it. If you know in your heart that is your calling, go for it. Just because there has not been someone like you to challenge history does not mean we cannot outwit history, just be the change you are looking for.

Dare to redefine what others have set as the standard of accomplishment. Others have said that you cannot start a business

without a loan and make it. Prove to yourself that it is possible. Others say you cannot work with family members and succeed. Prove to yourself it is possible. Others say that if you see a business making such huge losses it is doomed to fail. Prove to yourself that you can rise up and beat the storm.

25. Don't try, do or don't

Entrepreneurship requires a tough heart. It requires a man or woman who goes beyond the ordinary, to try out ideas they believe will work. It requires someone who will make a business move that will look foolish, but believe in that move until it materializes. Business is about going full-out to fight for what you believe will add value to you and to the society, whether or not other people believe in it. If you want to make it, you have to do it, not try it.

It has always been said business is not for the faint-hearted. You know why, because businessmen and women do not try to make smart business moves, they actually make the moves. If you are in business to try, quit, and go home. Business is about doing, not trying to do. The quickest way to fail in business is to try, and the surest way to succeed is to actually do, and not try. To do and not try requires a strong heart, and a clear-cut vision. The reason why people waste time and money trying is because they are not sure of their purpose in life, and if they do, they have no vision. A man or a woman with a vision knows what they are doing, they do not try to do things, instead, they actually do those things.

The other worst thing apart from failing is trying, instead of actually doing. When you try, you are not sure whether to invest or not to, so you make half-smart, half-dumb moves. When you know what you want, you make smart moves, because you are dedicated, and you believe in what you are doing. You cannot succeed as long as you have a *mpango wa kando* with failure.

When you are trying, you know very well you can fail, and so you focus half your energy, and ultimately fail. When you are trying, you are open to the possibility of failure, but when you are actually doing it, you know you have no option but to make it. When you are trying, you have an attitude of either way it is okay, but when you are actually doing, you know either way is not okay, it is only okay if you make it. When you are trying, you also do not believe in yourself, and your vision.

If you are in business to try, think again. If you are in business to try, quit the business, or stop trying and start doing. I would rather fail after actually doing something, rather than fail after trying to do it. Why try? Wait until you have the guts to do business. Trying will only lead you to failure. The message I am passing across is, stop trying, fold your sleeves and get into doing.

26. Resist the feeling of entitlement

This is one of my most favorite. So many times, when you start a brand, be it a personal brand or an organization, the founders tend to get entitled, and because of that, they put ego ahead of work. I know you might have been a founding employee of an organization, and if you look at it, there is a very big difference between how the founding CEO behaves and how all others behave. As a matter of fact, unless one is very careful, the founders are the same people who bring down their very organizations because of pride and ego. It is no wonder Albert Einstein said that the more the knowledge, the lesser the ego, the lesser the knowledge the more the ego.

You may find a situation where a founding member does not listen, because they assume they know it all. Many a time a significant number of founding CEOs don't consult, and they assume they know everything there is to know. This is one of the

greatest hindrances I have encountered while working with startup businesses. It is very hard to convince a founder to allow someone else to run their organization. Some founders have the tendency to believe that they are the only ones who can drive their vision to success. One thing that they tend to forget is that while there are some people who are blessed with founding ideas, others are blessed with coming up with strategies to make the ideas happen. This section is a close relative of another section you may have found in this book that talks about considering allowing another person to run your start up for you.

The problem with feeling entitled is that it leads to personal bias and may work against the progress of the startup by encouraging the founder and members of the founding team to despise counsel. In as much as you are the founder, you have to acknowledge that you cannot work alone, and that is why you got the people to work with you. If you found that you needed other people to get your startup on its feet in the first place, never forget that they are equal partners in your dream. Never disregard your team simply because you were the founder. Separate your ego from work if you want great things to happen to your brand. Humble yourself and work with whoever is important in making your dream fulfilled.

One of the ways to get rid of feeling entitled is to separate yourself from your entity. You did a good thing to have the mind to start, but once you brought your team in, it stopped being your stuff as an individual, and became your stuff as a team. So all the stress, joy and disappointments are a shared asset or liability. That entitlement creates unhealthy obsession catalyzed by ego, which chokes the development of a brand. If you are looking at creating a strong, healthy brand, focus on making a brand that is separate from you as an individual. Come up with a working system that separates you from the organization, meaning that your brand can

easily be able to succeed even without you as an individual.

If you hold your brand at ransom, with the mindset that the organization cannot run without you simply because you are the founder, it won't be long before you wish you knew better.

There is nothing wrong with being happy to be associated with a brand that you founded, but don't let that grow into an unhealthy obsession that will crowd your objectivity. The problem with entitlement to a brand as a founder is that what begins as a little sense of association soon escalates into a full-blown and chronic cycle of obsession, mashed with ego. This makes one unable to differentiate between their personal interests and those of the brand, and even when bad things happen to the brand, say a negative comment is given, the founder ends up taking it personally and bearing the burden as though it were an individual attack.

Something important to note is that if you want to succeed in business, you must be able to take in criticism and work on making your brand better. Otherwise, if you soak in all the bad things that come as though they were individual attacks, you will die of stress, yet you mustn't. Sometimes people will hate what your brand is doing, yet they love you as a person. Sometimes people will hate decisions you make as a brand leader, yet they love you as a person. You must learn to separate your personal life from your corporate life, or else you will end up living a life of pressure, guilt and precarious caution.

So you ask, how can I know if I have the entitlement bug? A person who feels entitled wants you to recognize them and everything they do. If you are entitled, you are aggrieved when asked to carry out roles you consider below your class. Entitled people want to be given the best even when they do not deserve. Entitled people want to do all the work because they cannot trust

anyone else with the work. Entitled people take all the credit for a brand, even when it is team effort. Entitled people want to be the only face of the brand that is known by the public. Entitled people do not believe in fairness, because that would mean equality, yet they believe they are higher than everyone else. Entitled people have a deep sense of manipulation and excessive control, mostly as a way of making other people feel that there is an authority.

You may not agree with me, but entitled people usually have a low self-esteem, and so for them, this brand is the only real tangible thing they can attach to, and that is why they will protect it with their lives. Entitled people will always remind you of what they did in the past for the brand to get to where it is. They will hold the whole team ransom in future because of the steps they took at the beginning, and will always remind you of the time and money they spent at the beginning, often as a way of avoiding to make any future commitments.

Now entitlement does not only affect the founders of a business, but also some of the employees you get to work with you, especially if they are members of the founding team. Some of the employees are often more experienced, probably have more money and status than anyone else, including the founder. If you are not careful, these are the people who will lead your team into in-fighting and failure. These are the people who look down on others, and they assume that were it not for them, the whole brand would fail. These kind of employees are dangerous because they do not listen to the advice of other people, and unless their way is taken, they are out. These employees have a kind of attitude that they know even if they come to the meeting late, it will not start before they arrive, when asked to contribute in a meeting, they will take forever because they believe their idea will sail though anyways. Such employees do not even care about the organization's progress, but are more concerned with their own

ego. Such are the employees who want to appear smart and sharper than anyone else. Such people do not even do their homework on assignments, because they believe they are inherently genius.

As a business leader, I beseech you for the sake of the growth of your brand, you must know how to handle such people. These are the people who will change the VMSD of your organization and before you know it you are doing things that you never even imagined. These are the people who will fight to topple you. If you have been in business before, I am sure you have seen these kinds of employees. This attitude is poison to your growth as a business.

People who feel entitled always play the victim card, and once in a while, they will give you a taste of their mind with a tirade of words. Especially if one is the founder of a brand, they always feel as though they are being targeted, if any suggestion that seems to be against their personal wish is made. If, for example, the person says let's go left, and someone else suggests you go right, the entitled person will there and then switch into panic mode and play the victim card. This makes them succeed at holding the rest of the team ransom, making everyone feel as though they are living the most important person behind. That is why I said earlier that entitlement and manipulation go hand in hand. If they are unable to politely convince everyone to follow their way, they will turn themselves into the victims of a subject, and impolitely force everyone to subject to their wishes.

Entitlement and the manipulation that comes with it, if you dig more into it, is often not just a survival tactic at work, but also at home and in personal life. As a result, people who have entitlement complexes are people you do not want to deal with even in personal life, because you just can't trust them. One moment they are with you, the next they are against you, and very insecure about your actions. This is a toxic attitude, because it subjects you to psychological manipulation. But get this right, entitlement can

affect both founders and employees.

27. Lead don't boss

Leaders boss from within the team, but bosses lead from without. Leaders will be the first to plunge into problems should the organization find itself in problems, but bosses will be the last to get into trouble when their organization falls into problems. Leaders show others the way, and they do so from the front-line. Bosses show the way, yes, but from a far off. Bosses will go to war, but will be drinking wine while their soldiers are dying on the front-line in battle, but leaders will be dying in war with their soldiers.

If you want your organization to succeed in its infancy, lead, do not boss. Especially when your organization is less than five years old, you cannot afford to be sitting pretty while other people try to figure out what your vision was in the first place. Before you know it, your coffee shop will be selling rubber imports from Ghana, or cocoa from Congo. To go past the seven year threshold safely, you have to be a hands-on leader, showing your team what exactly you had in mind when you started out. You have to be there to show them what needs to be done to achieve the vision of the brand that you have in mind. A time for you to be boss will come, but for the first five years of your business, focus on being a leader.

28. Reward your staff

Never let a good deed go unrewarded. Condition employees to good behavior with positive reinforcement. B. F. Skinner, in his operant theory of behavior demonstrated that we respond to stimuli based on our conditioning, and in order to condition someone to a certain behavior, the behavior has to be reinforced/ rewarded. So if

you want employees to come to work on time, reinforce that behavior, and they will be conditioned to behaving as such.

In the business context, the beauty is that positive reinforcement can range from anywhere between a verbal praise to an expensive reward. Just imagine a reward as simple as a verbal praise could jump start the success you so badly need. Skinner's operant conditioning is a method of behavior learning, etched on the use of rewards and punishment to influence behavior. This theory argues that a behavior that is reinforced will be repeated, but a behavior that is not reinforced will not be repeated, or, has little chances of repeat. This theory is actually quite similar to Thorndike's law of effect which states that a behavior that is followed by a pleasant consequence is likely to be repeated, while those followed by unpleasant consequences are unlikely to be repeated.

Skinner identified three types of operants; neutral operants that neither encourage nor discourage a behavior, reinforcers that motivate a repeat behavior, and can be positive or negative, and punishers that discourage a behavior. Positive reinforcement encourages a behavior by providing a rewarding consequence to an individual. For example taking the best employee's family on a vacation every 6 months may motivate employees to work so they can be the best. Negative reinforcement encourages a behavior by removing an unpleasant consequence from an individual. For example, if you get your best employee based on points earned over 6 months, and employees lose point if they come to work late (negative consequence) they will be motivated to come to work early (reinforced behavior) so they can retain their points.

There is a very thin line between negative reinforcement and punishment. Punishment weakens behavior. For example, if employees know they will be put in probation if they come late, they will not want to come late. In the workplace environment,

using punishment can cause increased aggression among employees, fear, and even grudge, since employees may not easily forget the punishment.

The idea I am putting across is that you, as the business owner have the power, or let me say the magic, in your hands to determine the direction your organization takes. You can choose to fail, or choose to succeed. Depending on how well you utilize the reward system around your organization.

29. Master emotional intelligence

In light of our previous topic about punishment, an entrepreneur or a manager must be a master of emotions. You must know when to smile and when to grin. There are times when you can solve challenges by just smiling. However, there are other times when you need to grin to pass a message. If you are known as the manager who never gets offended, always smiles, your employees will surely take you for a ride. There are times you need to switch from smiling to grinning within a microsecond. There are times when you will be in a corporate party and someone speaks way too much, and you grin. There are times when an employee will pick up litter from the floor and you smile in affirmation. There are times when a colleague will touch you inappropriately and you grin. There are times when your employees will bring you a birthday card and you smile. Whatever you do, just don't smile at the wrong time, and don't grin at the wrong time either.

Be a master of your emotions. Sometimes, an employee will do something that is totally out of order, but for the sake of helping preserve their dignity, you will smile, but grin with them in private. You must be wise to know when to do what.

30. Set emotional interaction boundaries with employees

Never have intimate relations with employees, unless you have a plan and a good reason to do so. This is one thing I will tell you, repeat and even write in caps. NEVER HAVE INTIMATE RELATIONS WITH YOUR EMPLOYEES, unless you know for sure what you are doing. I know this is a very thin line. For some, their employees or colleagues are actually their soulmates, but for others, such intimacy ends up wrecking not just their working relationship, but their friendship and personal lives. Especially if you are married and you end up having a relationship with your employee or colleague, it leaves a scar in your life that you will never forget. Every time you walk around the office, you see the face of the man or woman who rejected your advances. Every time your spouse visits, you see trouble brewing all around you. You will never be sure about them. There is instant bad blood between the two of you, when time for arguments and rejection comes.

Arguing in a relationship is healthy and normal, but if he or she happens to be your life partner as well as work partner, you are likely to carry over the arguments from home to your workplace and vice versa. Many people, albeit loving their spouses prefer to have them work elsewhere, because separating between what is work and what is personal can be a scathing nightmare. Assuming your wife is your boss at work, you make a mistake and she has to reprimand you, but then also drive you home where you are to lead the family? It would take a man with a spacious heart to separate between the two. On the other hand, assume your husband is your boss at work and you make a mistake and he has to reprimand you, then drive you home where he also complains you did not fix dinner in time? When will you ever learn to separate the husband who should express his feelings at home, and the boss who should guide you at work? It would take a woman with a spacious heart to separate between the two.

Trust me, it looks fun to play around with that handsome or beautiful colleague or employee, but one day one time, you come to realize you fooled yourself, playing Russian roulette with your vision in life. Unless you are emotionally mature, if you were seeing your junior and you no longer see eye to eye, you are likely to look for reasons to have them fired. The junior will suffer, not because they are poor at their work, but because they rejected your advances. Stay away from intimacy at work unless there is a clear understanding, and you know and mean what you are doing. Go play with other people out there, but let work be work. Don't even go to those sleepovers at his or her place, they will catch up with you some time. Allow workmates be workmates, and soulmates be soulmates. Workmates stay at work, soulmates stay at home, but soulmates can be at work, only if you know what you are doing, and how to separate work-life from home-life.

31. Empower your staff

Unless you entrust your employees with the freedom and liberty to make decision and do things, you will never progress as fast as you project. If you are the only right person, then why did you employ people to work with you? Through the experience gained, your employees may have matured enough to know what is needed for your business. You have to learn to delegate things to them. As discussed in the trust lesson in this book, you have to learn to trust your employees. Allow them to advise you on what they think can work. Allow them to devise strategies, and create platforms where they can present and defend their strategies. Allow your employees to go represent you in international conferences, and be sure they will say just what is profitable to your business. If you employed people you don't trust, you are the problem in the first place.

Equip your team with a lot of training and education.

Demonstrate to them what efficiency and effectiveness means. Ensure you build them to a point where they can also be as good as you. Do not be scared that they will be poached. Empower them to a point where they can also start a company of their own and compete with you so you can grow. You have nothing to lose. In any case, they are like family to you, or should be. Help them buy a new car, help them secure scholarships for their children, give them emotional support in times of need, treat them as friends, and motivate them to pursue their dreams. Do not be scared that they will outgrow you. You will get others. If you keep your employees under mediocre conditions so they won't excel and leave you, you will never know any better-than-mediocre results. Empower them to be just like you, if not better. They will never forget you. Your employees may be your most effective competitive advantage, so be their biggest fan, help them achieve their personal life goals, help them secure scholarships for their children, help them buy a new car, give them emotional support in times of need, treat them as friends, win their minds and their hearts and motivate them to pursue their dreams. You have everything to gain.

32. Don't be scared of growth

Did you know that many people are scared of what if they succeed than what if they fail? Starting a brand is not a problem, anyone can do that, but growing the brand is the real challenge, not every can do that. There are people who are gifted is making your vision come to be. There are people who have a natural ability to think about your vision, and they will give you ideas and strategies that if you follow, yours will be a story of success in the making.

Do not beat yourself so hard when you see your brand is not growing, maybe it is time to ask for help from outside. There are many times when businesses go to a lag phase, simply because there was too much excitement after launch that the founders

forgot what follows launch is tougher than the launch, or there was too much fear of what ensued after launch. Here is what causes the greatest failure for startup businesses or personal brands, either too much excitement or too much fear during initial stages, that very little actual work is done.

If you can master how to balance the level of excitement and/or fear that follows after launching your business or a new product, you will have overcome the two biggest hindrances to success in business. Don't be excessively excited or too fearful, for these two will kill the vision you have for your brand, or your life. Believe it or not, there are people who are scared of growing. Once an entrepreneur starts out, they soon come to realize that there is more to business than just getting the registration papers, what lays ahead is even tougher than the tedious process of registration. Soon after registration is the time to fold your sleeves and implement the vision that motivated you to register your business. The papers you had been waiting for will not actualize the vision for you. It is you to do the dirty work now.

One of the biggest excuses that we have as business people is to accuse the governments of killing our vision by delaying the process of registering businesses. But even then, when the registration is done, we ourselves refuse to work to actualize the vision we had. I agree that papers are important, but they are not the ones to do the growing for you. Sometimes we get scared about what will happen when we grow and have to rent a bigger office, pay more taxes, have to buy expensive equipment and so on and so forth. Interestingly, some of the things that we fear were once things that we adored, only that we doubted our ability to pursue them.

We all want to grow businesses that will employ thousands of people, but we fear how we shall be able to manage them. We all want to build estates, but we fear, what if we get half-way and run

out of money? We all want to study up to PhD, but we fear, what if things become tough and we cannot study anymore? Some of us want to venture into car and motorcycle racing, but we worry, what if we die in a competition? We want to study medicine, but we worry, what if that course becomes less marketable in a few years?

We all want to grow, but there is always something that keeps us away from this growth. If you can identify that particular thing and talk it out with an expert, you will go past the failing point of your business. If you let the fear of the unknown overwhelm your brand vision, you will go as far as nowhere, and I am sorry to say, you will go home poor, depressed and angry every day. I am not saying you will not face such worries, but when you do, how you handle it will determine if you are a winner or a loser.

Some people are scared that if they increase the quality of their products, they will have to increase their price, and this will mean loss of clients, yet that is a preconception that may or may not be accurate. Have you done it before and failed? It all depends on how such a change is executed. You can increase your price and still be the market leader. The idea I am putting across is that once you begin a brand, there is no room for backward movement, it is go go go.

33. Make employees feel like family

According to Herzberg's Two-Factor theory on employee motivation, employees feel more motivated to work when they feel recognized by their employer. The best kind of working environment is where employees own up the vision of the proprietor, and work as though the organization were theirs. For this to happen, a business owner needs to create a suitable environment.

Make sure employees share your vision, and that they are to

you a family away from their families. When your employees feel like family, they are not strangers to your vision. The worst kind of business scenario, especially for startups is when you build your brand with strangers. Do not build a brand with strangers. Strangers do not know the value of your brand, and they will sell it at peanuts when they get the chance.

Make your employees part of a big happy work family, and make it so nice that your employees will always look forward to coming to work the next morning. A real family-life includes chastising, caning and caring. An organization where it is all rosy is a fake family, more like a family relationship where there are no fights, however little. It could be an indication that someone somewhere is living a false life, suffering in silence. That someone somewhere is not saying when they are unhappy. A real work-family fights, reconciles and moves on. There is nothing wrong with disagreeing at work, as long as it is for the better of the common good. As a brand leader, if you have disagreements with your staff, do not take it personal. We are all from different backgrounds, so it is only natural that we do not agree in everything, for if we do, there is someone somewhere who is suffering in silence.

An employee who does not understand your vision is a stranger to your brand, and is like a false tooth, that will never feel your pain, neither will you ever feel its pain, so work on making your employees part of a big happy work-family where they are not strangers but partners in your vision.

34. Extend warmth to employees' families

One of the best ways to make employees feel motivated to work is to bring those things and people that they love near their working environment. I don't know if that was the logic used at

companies like Google, but employees at Google are apparently allowed to bring precious possessions such as pets and children to work. There is a play area for the children and a pet area for the pets. You know what this does to such an employee, it makes her or him feel as at home as they would have in their real house. When you develop a culture of inviting close friends (fiancés) as well as family members of employees to events such as work dinner, Christmas celebrations, and other work events, you make the employees not only feel at home, but also give them the rare opportunity to showcase their prowess at work to their dear ones.

In addition, it also helps to build a strong extended work-family where employees' families become friends. I don't know about you, but whenever I have a close friend or relative around me, I tend to be so busy that I will even do more than I know or supposed to. There is something about the human minds that leads them to want to make themselves look good/ experienced in what they do when they have their loved ones around. You could use this opportunity to your business' advantage. Come up with a holiday vacation for families, not just employees. Better still come up with a work-visit day where everyone brings their loved ones to come see what they do. Have family competitions where the best family wins a trophy, and make it a tradition. Don't worry, this will not turn your organization into a club, it will only make it a close-knit family. Make the retirement of your oldest members a big deal, and make it a reason to call family and share a final work-meal. How much money will you lose by doing so? Trust me, you stand to benefit more by doing such, because, which employee will even think of quitting and go to a place where there are cold, fake relationships, having left behind a family of employees? Even if they quit, they will come back, and if they don't they will forever regret.

35. Be clear and concise

Be clear in your objectives. I will summarize this by saying, let people know what value you add without a shadow of doubt. Here, you have the liberty to define what you will be known for. If you want to be known for supplying farm produce, go for it, and do it really good that you will be known for it. If you want to become a middleman in business, do it so well that you will known for it. If you are in real estate, let there be no shadow of doubt about what you do. If you are entering the music industry, be known for a certain kind of music.

Let it be known what you are and what you are fighting for. A company like Mercedes is known for luxury. We all know from childhood that if you want a luxury car, get a Mercedes. Of course now we have more brands in this space. We know musicians who do hip hop. We know the late Kenny Rodgers for his brand in country music. We know Shell as a gas station, a brand for fuel and related solutions. Be known for something, and leave no chance for guesswork. Be clear about what you do and what you don't do.

36. Be consistent

Consistency means maintaining the path you follow. Don't begin real estate today, be in food and agriculture tomorrow, and in the auto spares industry the day after, with none of them even having stabilized, or with no plan for stabilizing.

Unless you are a serial entrepreneurs who knows what you are doing, you need to be consistent with what you are doing. After being clear, keep the pace and the path. Don't be everywhere. Maintain one path, and do it well. Whatever vision you started with was good, and no matter how tough things get, you can only

grow, there is no time for slowing. If you are a vlogger, maintain the consistency of your content, your video and audio quality, ensure your videos have the consistent captivating intro and outro. If you are into the beauty industry, ensure you keep a brand color that can be recognized, instead of changing after every two weeks. But should you decide to be changing after every two weeks, then be consistent with changing after every two weeks. If you are not sure about what to settle on, withdraw completely and decide on that first. If you are a programmer, settle on your niche and deliver consistently.

If you are a python programmer, get related work, deliver and grow on that. If you keep learning every new language, you will never progress, because at any given time there is something new to be learned. If you want to change, introduce periodic and systematic change that will be consistent. For example, if you a video content creator on YouTube, change the intro and outro of your videos every six months, but not haphazardously. If you have to introduce a change, make it consistent. Say for example, learn a new programming language every two years, or change your brand colors or logo every ten years, but not anyway anyhow. If you release new videos on your YouTube channel every Friday and Wednesday. Be consistent and keep that pace. If you open your shop at 8 am and close at 8 pm, be consistent.

37. Be constant

Once you start, don't run out of stock. If you are selling maize, ensure you have ways of getting that maize every time. If you are to be consistent, then you must be constant. The worst kind of frustration for a client is to find that their favorite joint is closed, unexpectedly, or that it is open but lacks the product they are interested in. In order to win the minds and hearts of your clientele, you must learn to be available all the time, when you have

promised to. Customers must be able to count on you. If you open on weekdays and Saturday up to noon, ensure your employees don't decide to close all day on Saturday just because you are out of town. Your services must be available at the time, otherwise, clients will soon realize they cannot count on you and they will go looking for a more reliable person to deal with.

If you are in garbage collection industry, don't fail your clients. Have plans to ensure you have a plan B to ensure your clients are attended to, and if worse gets to worst, at least communicate to your clients of the changes or emergency. The reason you need to be constant is that clients plan themselves in such a way that they know a specific time is for transacting with you. So if you fail, you also fail their schedules.

38. Curate a strong masterbrand

A masterbrand is the leading brand, the brand name that is known more than all other brands you have. For example in and around East Africa, there are many products that we can apply to our breads for breakfast from a variety of companies. To Unilever, Blue Band qualifies to be a masterbrand. In the case of Mercedes Benz, the terms Mercedes, Benz or Mercedes Benz are the masterbrand. A master brand can be used in the specific category groups of product lines, with editions, or roman numbers or alphabets. For example, Mercedes C180, E250, BMW X6, iPhone6, iPhone 7, iPhone 11, Land Cruiser V8 2019 edition.

A strong masterbrand helps to protect the market interests of a business, since the business knows that whatever come may, it will sell, and whatever products they introduce will have a market preceded by the liking for its masterbrand. For example, Apple Inc., knows that whether they introduce iPhone 6s or 10r, or say iPhone 11 abc, we shall still buy, why, we trust their masterbrand.

Land cruiser knows that there will always be a ready market for their product line, and that is why they will not make a super-car with all the imaginable features, rather, they make small additions every year, so that their new edition of the masterbrand has something new, however little. Having a strong masterbrand makes it easier for you to penetrate the market, and even to get new customers.

39. Create a brand that leads not follows

If you want to grow, create an organization that leads, and leads fearlessly. If you want to grow, be ready to lead, and lead fearlessly. Every successful person can be a leader, but not every leader can be successful. You can very easily create a successful brand that will lead, or create a brand that will follow the standards set by others. If your brand cannot become so good that it can lead your industry, go back and reconsider your strategy. Leaders have the advantage of dealing with little pressure to keep up with set standards. Leaders are pacesetters. Pacesetters decide what, how, when, if and where. If your brand is a follower, you might end up spending all your energy and money chasing the wind blown by others. But if you lead, you will blow the wind that others will chase.

Leaders are mature and responsible, because they have to care for those below them. If your brand is a leader, it will know better than to rest, it will keep trying to invent. Leaders in the industry are the ones who create most of the products that followers imitate. Leaders dream, and crazily. Leaders have the benefit of being known, thus earning free brand goodwill. Because of this, leaders are trusted by default. Leaders have no limits, but they are the limits of followers. If you grow your brand to become an industry leader, you will be the threshold that others will use to determine whether or not they are succeeding.

40. Close your ears to haters

I was having a breakfast meeting with the C.E.O & Founder of Alzheimers & Dementia Organization Kenya, and as we were talking, she mentioned one statement that rings in my head to date. She said, ‘Son, a tongue that has saliva will always speak’. Come to think of it, when you do something good, people speak about it, if you do something bad, they will still speak about it. Many a time, we fail to pursue our dreams because we worry that people will speak ill against us. But let me tell you something, you will never succeed and please everyone. Those two things don’t go together. You have to choose to either please everyone, or to succeed. If you choose to please everyone, lower your expectations, but if you choose to succeed, ask people to lower their expectations of you, because you are likely to do things they will not be pleased with.

The pressure to please everyone is a topic of extensive discussion I have had with many leaders in my consulting career. There are people who are bound by the bondage of pleasing everyone around them. I have, myself been a victim of the same. This is the worst form of bondage for any entrepreneur. When doing business, you will surely rub shoulders with either one person or the other. You may never please the law, please customers and meet your business dreams. You will have to strike a hard compromise. There are times you will have to hire the most unlikely candidate and rub shoulders with your HR, other times you will have to fire your best friend, you may also have to reprimand your most hardworking employee. You need to be yourself for your brand to grow. You simply cannot afford to be nice to everyone.

Because of the shoulders you rub, people will hate you, others will speak about you in the darkness and in the light. Learn to

know when to tune out to a different frequency. When you hear people talk about you, know what to listen and what not to. Even if you listen to everything, know what to take seriously and what to ignore. You mustn't really have to take in every crap that people say about you. You will die young(er). Your brand will die young(er).

You deserve a happy life, so pay attention to positive energy. Whatever does not build your brand, leave it. For your brand to grow, if haters attack you with unkind words, respond with love and maturity. If they post discouraging messages on your social media or call you with bitterness, respond with love and maturity. Define the boundary of how much negativity you are going to entertain. Focus on growing, and less on what haters say. Use negative criticism as the catalyst to change, and not as a ditch to fall into. If you do not learn how to filter things out, you will sooner or later fall into depression for things that are not worth it.

41. Differentiate leaders from followers

The easiest way to be frustrated to your decline is to expect everyone to behave the same, and the easiest way to succeed is to learn to separate between leaders and followers. Don't expect leaders to behave like followers, or followers to behave like leaders. Leaders always have to invent new ways of how to go about challenges, but followers need ways that are already invented, for them to follow. If you leave leaders in charge, things will be well, but if you leave followers in charge, you are in for a rude shock. This will be important in choosing who you want to be team leader in company programs and projects. Followers are scared about what people will say, how they will look, and if they are right. Leaders believe in themselves and seek to pursue the best, even if they know it may not be accepted by everyone.

If you place a follower as the in-charge, your organization will be redundant and average, because there will be no push from the top to progress. But if you choose a leader, there will be constant invention and growth. If you choose your brother to be the in-charge because he is related to you, yet he is not a leader, woe unto you. If you choose your son or daughter, yet they are incapable leaders, you are digging your own business' grave. Not everyone can be a leader, and similarly, not everyone can be a follower. It does not matter whether you believe leaders are born or made, but if you are intending to pass your business to an heir, you must groom them to be leaders and not followers. Leaders are dynamic, apt and handy. If your daughter or son is your heir, start training them to lead as soon as today. Take your 5 year old son to your office and let him grow knowing how to treat people and be responsible from childhood, and when he grows up, he will not depart from your teaching. Let him or her see you behave as the leader you want them to grow into. I have seen engineers whose heirs are their children, and even without the technical knowledge of engineering, these heirs run those businesses to great success. It is all about being an effective leader. Otherwise, even if your heir has a PhD in the field, but has no leadership skills, I pity the hands in which you are planning to place your brand.

42. Be slow to hire, quick to fire

One common mistake that entrepreneurs make is that we are too quick to hire and slow to fire. We hire people without even looking at their suitability, just because we either want to fill some vacuum, or please some people. However, these people, now knowing the pain of the brand end up disappointing us. As a result, many startups hardly go past the fifth year mark with 100% of the founding team. Because we hire people when we are desperate, they have the guts to hold us ransom as they know that after all, we

will not fire them. A considerably worrying number of founders are too soft to fire, but, it mustn't be the case. You do not keep people within your organization just because you pity them. If they pity themselves, they should be able to deliver. Keep those who are fit for the growth of your brand.

Before you hire, take time, and see who gives up. Take the much time you need to vet who is suitable for your brand at any one specific time. A person may be suitable for your organization, but not at the infancy phase of the organization. The bitter truth is that there are people who are only good at being employed, and without any entrepreneurial spirit in them, they will not be patient to wait for your organization to grow so you can pay them what their services are due.

At the infancy stage, what you need is someone who understands that you either do not have the money or the resources to match their skills. There are people who are good for your organization but will only deliver when your organization is paying them millions, that is, when it has already matured. You need employees who are fit for the infancy stage. So when it comes to firing, do not burn your bridges, rather fire in a way that when your startup grows, you can always recruit the same person again. Business is not about enmity, it is about fitting the employer's vision. Those who do not fit have to be fired, for the business to grow. If someone does not fit your vision, stop soothing them and trying to harbor them, when you know they are poison to your brand's success. What you need is delivery. The many people you baby around the further from success you will always be.

When it comes to business, don't compromise on delivery. Don't defend and brood someone who is not worth, and is not even trying to be. You can be patient with someone who is trying, but also don't let them fool you into waiting forever.

43. Have a crazy imagination

You are an individual with your own capabilities and, no one can be like you in this world, or the world to come. You are you, and you will remain you. There are people who will tell you what you are thinking is crazy and cannot be done. Others will tell you they tried and failed. Others will dare you to try and promise to laugh at you when you fail, but come one, how bad can it possibly get? Try stuff and think crazy. You have what it takes to rewrite what we know as success in your industry. You can achieve everything you set out to achieve, if you purpose to.

Allow no one to classify your ideas as crazy, and even if they were, what is the harm? Imagine crazily, for it is in those imaginations that great innovations are birthed. Be crazy in your thinking. Try out what looks impossible. Venture into places others have not ventured before. Refuse to be average. Add a taste of your crazy imagination to every solution. Don't just make a car, try and make one that can fly. Don't just make a road, try and make one that can charge a car on transit. Don't just make an artificial flower, make one that can be folded and be used as a mat while on the front lawn, then while on a date, your client can turn the mat into a flower in the middle of desert. Think outside the box. Think crazy if I may say. If you do not think crazy and seek to implement those ideas, there are two likely options. No one will ever think of the same, so those will be innovations lost, or someone else will think of the same and get the credit you would have received. Besides, who has a crazyometer that measures what ideas are to be considered crazy and which ones are sane? Don't be afraid to think creatively. Don't allow someone's idea of crazy choke your success. You could be harboring the next big innovation with your crazy idea.

44. Create lasting relationships

A friend of mine walked up to me and asked me, *Tim, how can I boost my sales?* I looked him up and said, don't focus on the amount of money you forecast to make, focus on creating lasting relationships with your clientele, and you won't have to worry about sales. He was selling merchandise such as handbags to ladies, and so when I saw the blank stare on his face, I went on further to propose to him some of the strategies that came off the tip of my head that he could use to manage the relationship he had with his clientele. First, he could place a thank you note in teach bag/ purse, with his contacts and a nice message to say thank you. If he placed such a card inside the bag, it will surely move some of the clients who read it, how courteous he would look. Second, he could place a note that contains a quote that specifically praises or enlightens his female clientele. Finally, he could place a note that wishes the female clientele a happy mothers' day around the mother's day season. Such actions are likely to make his clientele create a special liking for his brand, and probably develop into repeat customers.

When there is a personal feel to every sale, customers tend to want to relate with such a seller. For all the tens of people I have worked for, in hundreds of projects, I always ensure I create a lasting relationship as one of my USP. I will call my clients on their special days to wish them a happy special day, text or email them randomly to see how they are doing, and even take interest in listening to some of them when they need someone to talk to, and it seems reasonable. To me, my clients are my friends. Because of this, many of the clients I have worked with are people I can still ring today, and we get to talking. I can tell you for a long time now, I have never had to worry about customer loyalty. Why, because I invest heavily in creating lasting relationships with my clientele.

Now please try that to the next customer who comes to your shop. Don't just send generalized promotional emails and texts, but also take interest in making the deal personal, of course with respect and boundaries. Be genuinely concerned with their welfare, and to see that they are happy and satisfied with your services. For those who open up, remember their special occasions such as birthdays, anniversaries, graduations, proposals and other special events, and do something special for them in the future, and in relation to the function/ event. For example, give an offer for a free table at your most comfortable and beautiful scenery for a couple during their wedding anniversary, or a birthday card for one of your clients, or a book during one's graduation, or a free pet product during the next pet vaccination visit. When a customer walks into your restaurant and says they would like to propose to their fiancé, offer to play their best song, or even ask your staff to clap after the proposal is accepted. Even go as far as getting the couple a card. They will never forget you for taking these extra steps to make yours a personalized trade.

Remember, the goal is to make your clients your friends. Do not ruin the relationships you have created with your clients because of just a few dollars, be wise, you can always recover the money, but you may never recover the relationship.

45. Invest in volunteer programs

When you start out, assuming you are doing so from scratch, you will definitely need some form of free labor to help you, before you can rest squarely on your feet. The free labor may come in the form of your wife, your husband, your child, sibling, a supportive parent, friend or stranger. Either way, you really need this volunteer, this is because such people will give you time to focus on creating your brand without the pressure of having to go back to your pocket to dig out some more cash.

Usually, when you start out, for the first few weeks, you may not make any significant developments. As such, you may realize that you may not even make enough to cater for your bills. This is the time you need to sweet-talk every visionary person you meet to encourage them to carry your vision and accept to help you out. When you get volunteers to help you grow your brand, do not treat them like trash. It is not easy to work for someone who is not paying you what your effort is worth, it takes a heart of gold to volunteer. You may not have money to pay your volunteers, but at least make them smile when they come to work, sacrifice so they can be motivated to keep working.

All the same, do not let your volunteers manipulate you into not delivering because you are not paying them. If a volunteer does not want to work, excuse them so you can develop your brand with the fire it needs to succeed. When volunteers enroll for your program, you should clearly define the terms of service, and do not assume it will be fine simply because you are working with friends or family, those are the same people who will fail to come to work when you need them badly just because they got a better offer.

If a volunteer see your vision, they will work towards growing the brand, knowing that they stand to benefit. However, you as the entrepreneur also needs to be considerate. Allow them to work elsewhere so they can earn enough to come to your work, and so they can also live comfortable while serving you without pay. You cannot be paying your volunteers close to nothing, and then expecting them to work for you for 10 hours. Let's be a little fair guys. The way you treat your volunteers, the relationship you create with them will determine whether or not your brand vision will go past the infancy stage.

46. Reward good performance

Employees who are motivated more tend to perform better. The recognition that employees get when they perform their duties makes them feel wanted, and motivates them to better performance. According to Maslow's theory of motivation, human beings have hierarchical needs that need to be fulfilled from the bottom up. Maslow classifies needs into deficiency needs which are essential and if not satisfied will hinder the development of other needs, and the growth needs that can be satisfied with time after the primary needs have been met. The first tier of human needs includes physiological needs such as food, shelter, clothing, water, air, and are needed for basic survival, and require money to be met. The second tier includes safety needs, emotionally and physically. When employees feel safe, they are motivated to perform. In the third tier, are social needs such as affection, love, acceptance, friendship and belongingness, of which their presence motivates employees to perform better. Other needs include esteem and self-actualization needs.

Now if you want to motivate your employees, you have to meet these needs. As an entrepreneur, you most certainly cannot meet all the needs of employees, but you can easily design a mechanism of meeting some of the needs in a systematic manner. Do not overlook simple achievements. Develop a culture of rewarding your employees for work well done, and they will reward you with loyalty and best performance. Rewarding can be giving a trophy, a clap, a smile, an increase in pay, or whatever your brand can afford. Congratulate employees for graduating from one stage to the other, whether in academics, family life, a new child, job promotions etc.

47. Trust your employees

One of the best ways to motivate your employees to work is trusting them. There is nothing worse than being in a situation where you have been allowed to do something, but you can clearly see there is no trust that comes with that permission. Well, if you were like me who began learning how to drive by either borrowing, or in extreme cases poaching rides out of other people's cars, then you know how you would be asked to either slow down, or put on the indicator, or not to overlap, or to be careful there was an oncoming vehicle, and this was terribly annoying, cause it felt like you were not being trusted right? This guidance was great, in fact it was magnificent, but it really made one feel unsure whether there was trust. Trust can be defined as the art of allowing something to take place without close supervision, with the belief that all will go well. In a business context, trust is allowing your employees to contribute to decision-making, giving them mandate to carry out certain tasks in the most efficient manner according to them, not blaming them all the time for failure, because you believe even if they failed, they did not mean to.

Trust is an important part of business success. Trust makes you unlikely to fail, because it keeps your employees motivated. Trust makes your employees own up, fulfilling Maslow's theory of motivation's social needs. If you trust your employees, they will make decisions that are best fit for the situation, with or without you being there to supervise. If you trust your employees, you will not have sleepless nights wondering if they will resign or be poached by your competitors. If you trust your employees, they will take your business as theirs. Sometimes as leaders, we tend not to want to leave duties, even the small ones to our employees, because we believe we are the only ones that can do them best. Come on, you will die young out of pressure to succeed, and guilt

of the many toes you step on your path to success. Take it easy, give room for failure, and give room for trust.

48. Be a father and mother to your employees.

Employees are not slaves, neither are they children. Sometimes, they will make mistakes. Sometimes, your employees will steal from you. Other times, they will lie to you, or add an extra zero in a cheque, or forget a zero in a quote. Other times, your suppliers will cheat on you. But being a leader, you need to know when to switch from being a lord to a father. You need to know when to punish and when to sit down and have a talk, or overlook some behavior.

It will not all be bliss. There will be times when you will come to work moody, and you will not want to talk to anybody. These are the times you need to know where to hide. Otherwise, that one word you might speak out of anger and frustration might ruin someone's personal academic, social and professional life. You need to be aware of the role you play as a leader, and hence the impact of your words on your people.

Let me give you a story a friend of mine once shared with me. A young man saw his primary school teacher at a wedding ceremony. He went to greet him with all respect and admiration!! He said to him:

"Can you still recognize me Sir?"

'I don't think so!!' said the Teacher, 'could you please remind me how we met?'

The student recounted:

"I was your student in 3rd grade, I stole a wrist watch belonging to my then classmate because it was unique and fascinating. My

classmate came to you crying that his wrist watch had been stolen and you ordered all students in the class to stand on a straight line, facing the wall with our hands up and our eyes closed so you could check our pockets. At this point, I became jittery and terrified of the outcome of the search. The shame I would face after other students discovered that I stole the watch, the opinions my teachers would form of me, the thought of being named a 'thief' till I left the school and my parents' reaction when they get to know about my action. All these thoughts were flowing across my heart, when suddenly it was my turn to be checked. I felt your hand slip into my pocket and you brought out the watch. I was gripped with fear, expecting the worst to be announced. I was surprised I didn't hear anything, but sir, you continued searching other students' pockets till you got to the last person. When the search was over, you asked us to open our eyes and sit on our chairs. I was afraid to sit because I was thinking you will call me out soon after everyone was seated. But to my amazement, you showed the watch to the class, gave it to the owner and you never mentioned the name of the one who stole the watch. You didn't say a word to me, and you never mentioned the story to anyone. Throughout my stay in the school, no teacher or student knew what happened. This incident naturally taught me a great lesson and I resolved in my heart never to get myself involved in taking whatever is not mine. I thought to myself, you saved my dignity."

"Do you remember the story now sir? You can't simply forget this story sir!!"

The teacher replied, ' I vividly remember the story that I found the watch in a pocket, but, I did not know in whose pocket the stolen watch was found that day because I searched your pockets while I also had my eyes closed."

In life, we need wisdom for everything we do. As parents, teachers, leaders etc... We should be able to close our eyes to some

things. Not all misbehavior require punishment. Some will need encouragement, some mentoring and some monitoring. Be a leader who impacts not one who shatters.

Sometimes, reprimand. Sometimes, fire. Sometimes, care. Sometimes, hire. A business leader must know when to switch from being a lord to being a father. Especially so, in the event that you are older than some of your employees, take time to motivate them, outside of work context. They look up to you. Do not make yourself inaccessible. Motivate them to get to where you are. One day they will remember that were it not for you, they would not be where they are. It is not in vain to get personal with your employees and care about their well-being, of course with respectable and reasonable boundaries. It is a sign that you are not just a lord over them, but a mentor and friend they can trust.

49. Don't negotiate on the brand vision

When you started out, you had a plan in mind. Your employees joined you to help you achieve the plan you had. Please do not allow people who come in to ruin your vision. Your brand has great potential, and once you leave the path you were following, once you miss the beat in that success rhythm, yours will be a success story that went awry. When it comes to jokes and fun, do it to your fullest, but the moment its work, and your vision, do not entertain any nonsense. Most of these guys may not even care about your vision. Some of them might be looking for a place to keep them busy as they look for something better to do. Do not place your hopes on strangers who came and met you with a vision. Be on the forefront to make sure your vision still pushes on.

When you build your brand, your vision should always be in front of you. Place your vision where you can see it. Do not allow yourself to be carried away by the crowd. Do not waver from your

vision to please your employees. Do not compromise so you can fit in. You had a vision that motivated you to rise from the crowd and start a brand, and if you hold on to the same vision, it will motivate you to your success. Keep believing in your vision. Know who is fit for the vision of your brand and do everything in your power to keep them. But at the same time, do not ignore any red flags that show you those who are not fit for your brand vision, you need to excuse them. Remember not every good employee is good for your brand vision. There are those you need to excuse from your business, to allow them to succeed elsewhere. Never, and I repeat never lose your vision. Brand success sits next to the brand vision. If you get successful without a brand vision, that is more like a disabled success, which is just sitting there waiting to crumble. The moment you lose your brand vision, you are stepping into a swamp of oblivion that will swallow you up into uttermost failure. Never lose your brand vision.

50. Develop effective SOPs

If you want your operations to run smoothly, don't do them blindly. You must have standards operating procedures (SOPs) that clearly show what you do, how and when. You do not want someone to wake up one day and decide to wipe the table when your client is already seated. You do not want your client to go past the door without being greeted. If you want your operations to run smoothly, have clear SOPs that define what happens from step one to the last, and ensure they are pinned on every point of interaction between the clientele and the employees. Pin the same in the waiting area and make the clients aware of what they expect when they visit your organization. I do not mean that you will make your employees act like robots, what I mean is, there must be some form of authority, order and uniformity with how you carry out your operations.

51. Have updated plans

Changes are bound to happen, and sometimes, you will have no control over how fast or intense they can take place. Whenever changes take place, change with them. A plan you have today may not be effective tomorrow, based on the changes that may take place between today and tomorrow. Ensure you not only have plans, but updated plans. If you are planning to import a van for your business, know the factors surrounding such a plan. Make sure you are within the guidelines of the current situation. If you are planning to launch a buy-one-get-one-free promotion, be sure that clients even want such a product. If you are planning to fire four employees next month, be sure you know the recent government policy about the same, and have plans to mitigate the impact that action will have on your performance. Be sure that your plans are updated or they will plan you. This is usually most necessary for long-term goals. Make sure you do not follow obsolete objectives. If you are planning to buy devices for your organization, be sure you know the recent developments about the devices. Whatever you are planning to do, be well informed about it at all times. Do your homework to remain relevant.

52. Automate what can be automated

When machines came into the job market, many of us were worried, because we feared we would soon be rendered jobless. Even today, many still have that fear, as more and more intelligent machines keep coming up. However, as time went by, new niches came in, places where machines worked well with human beings. Ultimately, the whole operational plan changed for most organizations, and now, there is probably much more appreciation for machines than there is for human capital in some quarters. Truth be told. We now have businesses running purely on

machines, to the extent that intricate medical procedures are now being entrusted to machines. As a result of the fact that we have been brought up in a society where machines are the order of the day, from waking us up, preserving and preparing our meals, driving us to work, reminding us of what needs to be done and even telling us time to sleep, we have grown generally dependent on machines, so that we simply cannot operate without them. For many, our consolation when stressed comes from watching what machines have for us, or talking to others through machines. This dependence has grown to a toxic level, so that we have far much lesser capacity to be effective as compared to ten or twenty years ago. Two decades ago, all passwords were stored in our heads, most phone numbers were either written down or stored in our heads. Right now, you cannot even remember a 5-digit passcode. Our daily programs were all in our heads. Now, we can hardly even remember what we were talking about two minutes ago.

For a business, this is a good and bad thing. It is bad because employees are now so dependent on machines that they are hardly ever useful without a machine. On the other hand, it is good because this gives the business a chance to recruit machines to work with humans, so as to enhance efficiency, accuracy, quality, quantity and general and productivity. In a workplace scenario, humans working without machines is good, machines working without humans is better, but machines working with humans is best. As such, the success of a brand relies on utilizing technology by automating what can be automated.

In the several brands I have had the opportunity to consult for, especially when it comes to building or repairing brand image, social media engagement has been a key area of my concern. Because of the fact that most of us are either not creative or simply have no time to login to our social media platforms every now and then to post an engagement, which is a must-do in this era, we

have neglected our social media part of branding. This is a crime, far more than failing to file tax returns. Social media engagement is key to enhancing or creating and sustaining a brand name. There are several tools that I recommend that can help ensure timely, and consistent posting. These are called schedulers. These applications, either free or paid, help us to schedule posts for as many as several weeks ahead, so that one is always sure that they will be having a post, a picture or a quote coming up at a specific day and time. This is an example of an automation that helps to save time, as it gives more time for one to simply log in and post things that relate to that specific day, on top of scheduled posts, as well as have time to respond to comments, while still having regular posts frequently.

The other worst crime that brands can make, other than failing to maintain an active social media platform is to fail to reply, or in some way acknowledge a social media comment from their audience. However irresponsible or misplaced a comment is, successful brands know how to turn a friend to foe, and who knows, that could be your next most loyal customer in waiting. Instead of having manual registry at the point of entry to premises, how much more time can you save by having humans working with machines? Instead of having forty and four security guards manning your building, how much more time and resources would you save by having smart systems like cameras, scanners, electric fence, and other security systems with only a few guards?

Brands that succeed know the important of automation. No wonder we are having a boom in artificial intelligence research, because in the future, we will be speaking into a door that will open itself, we shall be asking the computer to open PowerPoint and go to slide 3 then zoom in the picture in that slide, and we shall be telling our desks to remind us something, and they will, if they are already not doing so.

53. Take care of your brand reputation

The image that you create defines the reputation your will have. If you create the image of a slow-responding brand, the reputation you create is a brand that does not value its clientele. Just like your personal life, it is the small things you do every day that determine how people view you overall. Remember, some of the people will only give you one chance to express yourself, if you ruin it, you will have no chance to correct it. Some people are patient and will easily give someone a chance to explain themselves and relive their first impression, but not everybody is the same. Some others will not give you a chance to relive that first impression.

In a world where something as little as an employee's torn shirt may change a customer's perception about your brand, I recommend you invest heavily in the little everyday things that interact with your brand reputation. Many a time I walk into a restaurant hungry and storm out many minutes later after failing to have anyone politely come up to my table and ask if I have been served. Now that has often changed the perceptions I have regarding such restaurants. Those little etiquette and general mannerisms that we portray when handling our colleagues and/ or clientele are important determinants to our brand reputation, and we must invest heavily in maintaining a high brand reputation.

There are many brands whose success is mainly based on the reputation they have created over time. That reputation is enough goodwill to drive the perception of clientele for decades. Right from the word go, pursue mannerisms that will portray a good image to the customers. Do not assume those little loose ends you have do not matter, one time you will find a client who is sensitive to such loose ends, so fix them or they will put you in a fix someday.

54. Invest in market research

Market research is a must-know secret to success. If you want to succeed, you must learn to understand that the market is not constant. The needs and preferences of customers shift based on factors that you can or cannot control. A brand that becomes knows better than to set still while there are customers to keep learning. The importance of market research can be illustrated by the fact that market needs and preferences can drastically change even a minute after completing and reporting a market research. Because of the fact that needs and preferences will always change, brands must always be on the look out to ensure that there is clear, consistent and constant feedback on the situation in the ground at all times. Just so you understand, the consumer market is like a small child, once you give it food, you must constantly watch it, because one glance away, and things could go fatally awry. The moment you stop watching, all sorts of unfortunate things can happen.

To make it as a brand, NEVER stop learning. Invest heavily in market research. It may seem like a waste of money, but trust me, it is not. And for your own success' sake, do not rely on data provided by your competitors, especially if they are older in experience than your brand. They may not be the angels you take them for. They would not be as barmy as to allow you to thrive on their hard work just like that without shedding a sweat, and against their hard work. Do not even partner with a competitor to carry out market research.

55. You are good enough

One of the common demotivating factors that we encounter is the constant reminder that we are not good enough. Whenever you start a bakery, there is always a better baker. If you start a security

firm, there is always a better one that seems to have all the facilities and equipment. If you rent an office building, there is always a better building than yours. And even when you write a book, there is always the doubt about, I'm I good enough. There is nothing scarier than doing something when there is someone around who can do it better. But here is what I want you to learn from today, you are worth it, and you are the best. If it is your turn to do something, you are totally good enough for it, so stop worrying.

You do not need other people's approval to succeed, you can make it if you learn to be positive and believe in yourself, and so can your brand. You will need feedback to move fast, but if you keep waiting for approval to act or to believe in yourself, you will move, but at the slowest pace there is. The only approval you need is God's, the rest, just seek feedback from them, and use it to build the path to your vision.

You are good enough to do amazing things. You have to be resolute with your pursuit, and big things will happen. Sometimes it is our minds that keep us from doing things that we are good in, or that we can excel in. Most of us have great potentials that we cannot see in ourselves. I do not know if you have ever had your friends tell you that you are good in such and such and you are started thinking, *so you guys are just flattering me in broad daylight, huh?* There are many times when those around us see potentials in us that we cannot see. There are many times when we fail to pursue things in life because we think we do not have what it takes, yet we have everything it takes, only that we cannot see, or we have seen or are doubting our ability. We have to learn to believe in ourselves, and know that we are good enough.

It doesn't matter the circumstance, you are good enough to achieve what you have set out to achieve, if you purpose to. We have heard many inspiring stories of people who have changed the

world, when it looked like there was no chance for them to do so. What are you waiting for, you could be the next inspiring story, but you got to rise up and get to work, you got to rise up from the shadow of fear and start believing in your brand. Condition your mind and your heart to know yours is a winning brand. Motivate your employees and infect them with the vision and passion for what you do. You guys can go really far, but it will have to start with a change in the conditioning of your minds, towards positive thinking.

56. You are the best

Whatever makes you think you are not the best is the cancer eating your success from the inside. Most often, new brands (newbies) face the ridicule of lack of experience and the possibility of failure is well pronounced. No one wants a new entrant to thrive. Until and unless the proprietors of new brands are self-aware, and deaf to discouragements, they are unlikely to progress in any way. When you roll out in business, if you are aware of what you are doing, give a deaf ear to negative energy. Focus all your energy on positive thinking.

As I mentioned in my book *A Becomer's Philosophy*, when you go out to do something, you are the only one who truly knows what you are up to. The motivation you had while starting should not die. The focus you had should not waver. Regardless of who says what, when and how, keep on believing. Keep on fighting. There are people out there who do not want you to succeed. There are people who have been paid to bring you down. There are people who have grudges against you or any of your team members, and want to bring you down. There are people who just have a spirit of malice and will not have a good night's sleep as long as you are succeeding.

Know when to stop listening to people. You are perfectly the best for what you are doing. Keep on believing until you make it.

57. Never be a little too comfortable.

The problem with being the founder or among the founders of a brand is that we tend to get comfortable a little too fast, soon after achieving little things, yet there is a lot more that needs to be achieved, and so we are trapped in a cycle of mediocre results. At the beginning of a brand, we basically just want to penetrate the market and be among the known brands. However, the desire to be the only, if not best, known brand soon overtakes, and we pursue our VMSSD with much more vigor. There is never a time when we can afford to get a little too comfortable. This is because there is always a competitor around every corner. As achievers, we must always be on our feet, to ensure that we are not caught off-guard. Of course you must rest and be content, but there is a very big difference between these, and getting a little too comfortable.

When we get a little too comfortable we give up on chasing our dreams, rather, we live on the past successes. While this is good, there is a today to be lived, and there is need to create today's success, for tomorrow's comfort. Be content, but do not get comfortable more than is necessary. Condition your mind to switch between rest and comfort easily and effectively, so that you don't get stuck in comfort and forget to fight today's battles.

I am not encouraging being a workaholic, but I want to bring out a point that this is a journey, and you must keep moving. You cannot afford to stop or slack. You can rest but you cannot lax. Even if you have to crawl so you move, do it. Just don't stop. You will think you are successful, but one day you will come to realization that you have been in a lag phase for so long that you have eaten away the success you had built so passionately. You

must keep moving, and without lax. Of course you need to rest and to enjoy your little everyday success, but do not get a little too comfortable, or you will crash back into misery.

58. Cross bridges when you get there

One huge mistake that we often make, speaking to myself and my brands, is that we tend to cross bridges/ foresee barriers through our imaginations rather than physically, so most of our potentials are chocked before actualization. Many are the times when incredible start-up ideas, many development plans are crashed by the imagination that we cannot make it because we do not have this or that. Many are the times when we fail to pursue important dreams that can actually make us successful, simply because we tend to convince ourselves that we cannot. As such, there are many great ideas that have not been tried, but have been extensively thought through.

I wonder what makes us cross bridges even before we get to them. We so often make up bridges and cross them in our imaginations, even when such bridges do not exist in reality, and this is a major hindrance to positive progress in our brands and our lives. We often convince ourselves that we cannot grow our brands to double-profits because we do not have the capital needed. We often tell ourselves that we will not submit a proposal to an investor because most investors prefer companies with a history of success. We often tell ourselves we will not get a business loan because the market is already flooded, so we will not succeed if we pick the loan. Sometimes, there are totally no bridges where we create them, and the ones that exist are probably not too high to hinder our success, but unless you hold on and find out the actual nature of the bridge, or if there is one in the first place, your success will never go past imagination.

In my book, *A Becomer's Philosophy*, I wrote extensively about the importance of daring. To create a brand that will go past the 5 years mark, you must be crazy enough to do things, and one day one time, you will realize all the hindrances to your success were just in your head and not in the real world. Never give up too easily or too quickly to fail to reach your purpose in life. Refuse to create bridges in your imagination, prepare well, and wait until you get to the bridge so you can know whether it exists in the first place, and how high it is. And remember, we are different, so don't copy me. Look for your own unique calling and do it as you are led. You can be unique and successful, or you can be a troubled copycat. Copy what is good in me, but don't try to become me, because you will not, and it will cause you life-long frustrations.

59. Learn but don't quit

In business, if you quit you were not even meant to be in the first place, and not being meant to be is not your fault, it means you are edging closer to finding what you were meant to be. Becomers do not know quitting. There is never time for things like quitting. Sometimes, temptations to quit come up, but if you did follow lesson 1, 2 and 3 in this book before starting your business, I assume you are serving your purpose, in that case, all you need to do is keep pushing. When such temptations come, think about your motivation. Do not be cowered into giving up on your vision. There are many people out there who dream to be where you are.

There are many people out there who would give anything to become a fraction of what you are. Even when things get tough, when you make costly mistakes, pat yourself in the back, take a breath of fresh air and give it another shot. If you set out in the right direction and fail, do not change your destination, just regroup and rethink your tools and the strategy. You have come so far, why should you quit? If it is about motivation, look at the little

things you have done that have touched someone's life. Look at the many times you have brought tears of joy on people's faces. Look at the many times your heart has smiled at the joy of your past accomplishments. Always appreciate the sweet everyday achievements, they are proof you are already a motivating story of success worth listening. Rule 058, never quit, keep pushing, for it is in failing that you learn how to excel. If you were meant to be, you can rest but you can't quit.

At no point should you consider quitting, if you are in your purpose/ calling, have a vision and clear mission. Sometimes we let little passing storms take away the sunshine in our lives, and this tricks us to lock the doors of success earlier than we should. Friends, sometimes things will be tough. Sometimes things will look impossible. Sometimes things will turn to the unexpected, but if you purpose to persist, you will see the break of dawn. We are humans, and so no matter how much you achieve, you will never be sure of what is next. Today you could be a multimillionaire, tomorrow a sick pauper on the street. Today you could own a mansion, tomorrow you could be living in a tent-house. Today you could be healthy, tomorrow Covid19 could happen. But even when things have turned towards the wrong side, you have to keep believing that all will be well, and they sure will. Even when things are going towards the wrong, you have to keep trusting that what you did as right, and soon, it will be okay.

If you do not have the faith to persist, you will never stop quitting, and will never settle. You have to believe in your ability to weather the storm and come out victorious. Building a brand requires a heart of stone that braces tough times, a tongue like a fountain that gushes sweet water, and a mind of steel that remains resolute to the vision, for one to go through the many storms that will definitely face your brand.

60. Let's meet for lesson 60 in volume 2

It has been a pleasure having come all this way together. Let's meet again in volume 2 of this series. Until then, stay safe.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Tim Mwangi is an entrepreneur, strategy and management consultant, and a student of the principles of psychology. Passionate for writing and reading. It's my greatest desire to interact with you in this channel of communication, hoping this interaction bears fruit by transforming not just your life, but mine too.