

Understanding why you are in business helps you make decisions and chart your course into the future.

Small-business Savvy: Know Why You Are in Business

By Glenn Muske, Rural and Agribusiness Enterprise Development Specialist
NDSU Extension Service

Do you know why you are in business?

What a silly question! You're in business to make money, right?

Well, yes. If you are in business and want to stay in business, then generating a profit is necessary. But is that what you really want from your business?

Not all business owners focus on the money. As a business owner, and really for all of us, we need to understand what gets us up in the morning.

Today we are more likely to hear of people starting a business because they want to offer some type of social good. TOMS Shoes is one of the best known companies that started with just such a focus in mind.

Another reason people start a business is to enjoy a certain lifestyle. Maybe you only want to work a four-day week. Pick the right business and that may be possible. Or perhaps travel is what you want. Again, certain businesses may let you achieve that while also handling business.

Some people start a business because they love to start businesses. Once a business is up and stable, these individuals may sell it and start another. Yet others love the challenge of growing a business.

Of course, many people start a business because they want control or they want to maximize the use of their skills and talents.

All of these desires, plus other reasons such as building a legacy or providing a needed community service, form a perfectly good business focus. The greatest problem is when you try to do several, or all of them, at the same time. The result is often failure.

This is not to say you can't change your focus, but once changed, you need to devote your energy to your new goal and put the old one behind you. And you need to realize that each shift will cost you energy and resources.

So as you start and manage your business, know why you are doing it. Keep that in mind as you make decisions and chart your course into the future.

For more help, visit our website, <https://www.ag.ndsu.edu/smallbusiness>, and sign up for the monthly newsletter.

More information is available at your local Extension office, as well as at <http://powerofbusiness.net> and www.eXtension.org/entrepreneurship.

The Small Business Administration and its related organizations, such as the Small Business Development Centers and Service Corps of Retired Executives, along with many other state agencies, also can be valuable resources.

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Source: Glenn Muske, 701-328-9718, glenn.muske@ndsu.edu

Editor: Ellen Crawford, 701-231-5391, ellen.crawford@ndsu.edu