

How to Start a Sustainable Business in Nigeria With Less Than N20, 000 And FREE Tools In 12 Weeks- (part 1)



This guide will show you how to build a sustainable small business in Nigeria, step-by-step.

Many people go through different struggles and experiences when building a small business for the first time. There is definitely a learning curve in doing it and becoming successful.

So, if you're having trouble building your own small business, you're just getting started, or you're looking to improve your profits - don't worry.

You're in the right place.

No matter what your business model, this guide will help you to maximise its profits potential by getting you focused only on what matter; things that get you results.

My goal is to give you a guide that will take out all the guess work - from this point to when you start making money from your own.

This is your one stop shop for learning how to build a sustainable small business in Nigeria.

Let's have some fun!

Attention, please!

This is a long post. It's so, because I've left nothing out to allow you get what you deserve. I'll advise that you read the entire post and do something about what you learn.

I know you'll, because you're committed to taking things to the next level in your life or business.

If you would prefer to have the PDF version of this post, kindly click on the link below to get it.

Online or offline, business is business.

Whether you're already running one, or you are thinking of doing so, you know that at the end of the day, you have one major purpose.

To make **PROFITS (maybe)**.

That's right. Not just profits, but *huge profits* – profits so large that you are guaranteed more access to what you need to live the type of life you desire.

Your head is full of dreams.

You're thinking about what you will do with your new business.

You dream about the life that you'll create for yourself, the impact that you'll make on the community that will assemble around you, and the difference that you'll make in the world.

All in high hope!

You've heard that you can do this in 24 hours with no capital investment or prior knowledge whatsoever, with promises to hand you all their tools to get it done.

They call that 'rolodex'.

They also told you, you will 'make money' while you sleep and meet your bank account filled with cash from a faulty ATM the following day.

They have sold you every of their products for you to be able to achieve your dreams. But, you have been struggling to get any close to it, because you have been sold on false claims.

Something is wrong!

I used to believe them, too...

I used to believe that what they sold me were the solutions to my quest for 'making money'. I used to believe that all it took was hard work, commitment, dedication and money to pay them!

All these, I took to the table!

And I held firm to those erroneous beliefs for over seven (7) years, only to finally realise that all were ruse. I really believed that I was doing the right things as set out in the scripts they sold me.

It's only now that I'm in **REAL BUSINESS** that I'm seeing what it looks like from the other side.

Maybe you have committed many resources into actualising your dreams, but to no avail. You have rather been left in the stray, looking for the next available exit to take; you are thinking of quitting!

I'll say, don't. That's not even when you had put in that much.

Your efforts have not yielded any results, not because you are dumb. NO! You're one of the best that live on this planet.

The route you have been taking so far is responsible for all that. But no more!

I promise you will find every part of this guide useful.

The route to achieving success in business, online or offline **is SIMPLE**, but those who sold you on their schemes intentionally made it complicated.

They claim they make millions of naira online, with **unimaginable proofs**. They flash you with 'their luxurious lifestyles' but you hardly progress an inch towards attaining their **claimed status**. This even leaves you thinking maybe the whole world is against you.

Relax!

What's going on?

You eventually reach the conclusion that you must be missing something. You go looking for more helps, and you're bombarded with offers and falsified claims: But you didn't suspect it!

"Make N250, 000 in one month with my no-fail system!"

"Fire your Boss: Make N500, 000 from so and so in a day"

*"How I make N**, 000,000 in 201* with my money making system"*

"Make \$250 in an hour posting adverts on Facebook"

"Make 3million naira before Christmas ..." Current time: September. (I fell for this in 2008).

Everyday there are new programs released teaching you the latest ploy on how to "get rich quickly". And there's always a new flavour of the day.

Sure, these claims raise an eyebrow, and at least a few questions. If it's so easy to make \$250 (N122, 500 as at the time of writing this) in an hour, then why are they selling the secrets for N2000, instead of just hiring people to do the work and make *them* the money? Wouldn't they rather keep the secrets to their immediate families and make as much as they could, instead of selling a piece at N2000.

But as doubtful as you might be, you're also hopeful. It seems like everyone but you is out there making huge money on the internet.

What's the secret?

You do everything you can to attend their trainings or buy their products, stubbornly ignoring the "results not typical" disclaimers (*if they even include one*). You took your

time to go through the nonsense, and find some 'good advice', which you diligently put to work. And then...

Nothing happens. What?!

*To everything they do, there s a reason and it's deliberate: **trying to keep you in their nest for as long as you allow them.***

The truth is you CANNOT and WILL NOT achieve your financial dreams if you continue to follow them.

Today Is The First Day Of The Rest Of Your Business Life!

And congratulations on taking a first step in transforming your life.

You're here reading this, you're looking to improve your business performance. And I'm here to help you.

So... Are you ready? Excited?

Well, hold that thought.

Because I have spent enough time studying and getting good understanding of people who want to make money online. And we've got to get some things straight.

Before we go any further, I've got to be straight up with you, and explain some uncomfortable truths about what you're getting into...

Don't Expect What You're Expecting

First—don't expect what you're most likely expecting.

You're not going to find here a bunch of catchy clichés, quick, crazy, easiest tips, instant tactics or "how to" techniques that promise to suddenly and magically transform your world into sunshine, roses and huge piles of money.

I know that does not work in real life.

And I'll tell you why... (Pay attention now, because here's the break you need).

You can't solve a problem on the same level where the problem was created.

Allow that to have a place in your subconscious. Have you?

Yes? No? Maybe?

Just in case you didn't understand me...

It means if the get rich quick schemes are your favourites.

It means if you enjoy hacking your ways into success without actually wanting to do the works involved.

It means if you enjoy reading those proof-craze copies that eventually harm you.

It means if your mind is closed to learning new things.

It means if you have struggled to get momentum because of lack of focus.

It means if you don't want to help others with what you have.

Got what I'm saying?

You have to start doing the right thing straight away!

If you don't start with that right thing, well, you can expect more of the same.

Asked what is the right thing?

That's what the rest of this post will give to you.

Bear with me; I have to use some nasty language.

I'm not going to sugar coat anything. If you want success before or without works, you should probably go find another blog right now.

Too many "gurus" out there are dying to give you what you WANT, which most times are disastrous to you. And care-less about giving you the things you NEED.

OK, that's not my style.

I've been through such stages of growth in this business, and, their intents are clear enough.

It's been proven, what you want, most times are not good for you. Why not do the right thing!

So, I'm going to only take you through what you need to achieve your goals here.

To REALLY 'make' the money you desire to make, you have to start looking at things differently, and act with different mindset.

You have to start at the beginning, and work your way up, one step at a time. The tactics they sell you can be likened to the upholstery meant to be seated on in your car.

Any rational human being would know that those can never be valuable if the other mechanical components of the car are not in place. The chairs would be useless without the body and working engine to drive it.

You have to take a break from those disjointed tactics and build something that stands on a solid foundation.

This was boldly stated in [my book](#), that the only thing you NEED to focus on is to build your own business, and not buying more of their tactics that take you nowhere.

By the way, if you've not downloaded a copy of the FREE book, it's available [here](#).

Remember, you want to build a business that makes good profits. Ok!

This guide will take you through how to make that happen by adding values to enough people.

Because profit making does not happen without you first adding values to people you are targeting. The more values you can add is what determines how much profits you can make.

This is NOT a gimmick. I've used everything I'll be giving you to build businesses from ground up and helped others do it too.

What I demand of you is to be sincere with yourself and act as recommended.

If you get a new twist to whatever you will learn here, by all means, try it out and see what works. That's how best you can develop as an entrepreneur.

Please pay very close attention to the words that follow. They are important building blocks that determine the success or otherwise of your business.

Call them the pillars that hold everything!

Now I think we can get to work.

So you want to build a business. And a **small** business for that matter!

But do you know what that word stands for?

A lot of definitions have been given based on different perspectives. However, for our own purpose, and considering the need to be realistic about what operates in our immediate environment, I've defined small business as follows:

Small business in the context of this guide refers to any activity that seeks profits by providing needed products (goods and services) to others and, one which is independently owned and operated, not dominant in its field of operation and has between zero (0) and ten (10) employees, and investment of 20-100 thousand naira.

I hope you will not be disappointed by the word **small** in what you will be building.

Please don't!

The reason why you should take this route is because, you will only build on what you already got in you, and you and I know that funding for starting a big business is not within reach.

This is also the best way for you to implement the knowledge you have acquired in school, not having to depend on unavailable jobs that force you to rely on parents, friends and relatives for your sustenance after graduation.

Agreed? Ok, let's continue.

According to the Central bank of Nigeria in its N200 Billion Small And Medium Enterprises (SME) Credit Guarantee Scheme (SMECGS), Small and Medium scale Enterprises (SME) was defined as. . .

"an enterprise that has asset base (excluding land) of **between N5 million and N500 million and labour force of between 11 and 300**".

<https://goo.gl/dGWajH>

Honestly speaking, how many youths in Nigeria can even afford to get N1million to start a business, not to talk of N5 million.

So, stop stressing yourself with something difficult you may not get done until when you have access to public funds, maybe! :-)

You have to start from somewhere and grow to a level you thing you want to get to.

Look into the successful ones you look up to, how did they start? Where are they now?

So, again if you don't start with what you have, you may not get to anywhere you wish to be.

"Big, successful businesses were at some point small businesses. They started at the same place you are today. You can only grow in biz when you are in biz". Najeem Akinwande.

You should be accustomed to the statistics that say many businesses fail in their first five years.

The failure is not because they do not have enough money to operate on, but because they run in a manner suited for stage of growth other than theirs.

They emulate established businesses in their operations.

Now You Want to Start A Small Business?

But do you want the truth?

You will probably fail.

Why?

It's hard to start and grow a successful business.

For you to achieve the goal of having a profitable idea, validating the idea, building the idea, and getting people to pay you for the idea.

All hard! But you don't have to fail.

It is possible to make it, to reach your goal.

You are reading this now so that you can get to know how to drastically increase your chances of hitting your objective.

I hope to deliver (and give you appropriate exercises to work on at the end).

I am living proof that **YOU** can create a small business of your dream. Even doing it part time!

If you set things up correctly and avoid the FATAL mistakes, you can do it.

Like I use to say, your object of focus determines how successful you will be.

The methods you see the 'gurus' use may not be good for you.

Why?

It's simply because they are operating at their own level, and for you to be copying what they do, it means you won't get things right.

They already built a large following that answer to their calls whenever they make such. How they got that done is an issue to be discussed in another day.

You as a beginner should be focused on building a solid foundation upon which you build your own empire.

Having put your mind on a positive pedestal, let's get started.

One of my favourite sayings often attributed to Stephen Covey is "**Begin with the end in mind.**"

What are we trying to accomplish here?

I heard you say, that seems quite simple. "We're trying to make money, Najeem."

Yes, you are. However, I think a little more detailed analysis will help you do a whole lot better job of doing that.

So the beginning first step is to answer what are you're trying to do?

Okay, let's backtrack and figure out what you have to do from the beginning and each step successively in order to accomplish that end.

What you actually hope to get from your efforts is to (-----).

I want you to fill in the gap. Your aim of wanting to start your own small business may be different from others.

But notwithstanding whatever your aim is, let us accept the fact that you want to make money doing this. Okay?

You will agree with me.

The internet is filled with varying perspectives on getting things done.

Worse still is the niche of making money online / online business.

You can easily get confused by the available variations if you don't know what to look for, and your resources could suffer for it.

But, it doesn't have to be that way!

Most resources I found on starting an online business / making money online tell you to go look for hot selling /trending products then register a domain name and set up your blog. And your business is up and running.

I just read through one of such resources now!

That can be one of the short cuts to wealth you WANT, but honestly, that's not what you NEED to succeed long term!

It only sets you up for failure and heart break.

Instead, I would encourage you to take time to do some little works upfront.

You really need this success, right?

Ok.

The reason why you have to do this is so that you can be guided and have adequate understanding of the most important entities in your business world, the ones that make or mare your efforts- ***the customers who give you the money you want to make.***

Your customers do not do business with a blog or any technology, they do with human beings behind the technologies, ones who understand them and give them their heart desires.

So, it's important you do this.

To start with, consider the business you will be working on as a building that has both foundation and roof.

The extent to which the foundation is qualitative will determine whether the roof will last or not.

Agreed?

Ok.

The Important Questions (Do NOT Joke With Them)

Before we go deeper, it would be good for us to put the important basic things in place.

These things are very important for the success of any business, whether online or offline and it applies to whatever business model you choose to go after; Affiliate marketing, freelancing, information marketing, consulting, ecommerce or coaching.

Joking with them will only ensure your failure in whatever model you decide to work on.

For you to succeed, you must honestly answer these fundamental questions.

Think about a building; you cannot build the roof first before you build the foundation.

Can you?

Consider actions like setting up your blog, marketing or promoting your blog and developing your products as the roof of your business.

Believe me those things would crumble if the foundations are not well built.

Here are the questions you need to answer now to ensure your success

Question 1: What is your reason for doing this? - Your WHY

Many people try to make things work, but no success.

A lot of factors could contribute to that. What I noticed is that most people are wrongly focused on the less important part of the whole, leaving the main things undone.

I hope you're not one of them?

The most difficult thing to do in anything, business inclusive, is to start.

Pressing that little start button could be scary at times.

Yes, it's, but it can be rewarding if you take the plunge, not before doing the right things though.

You may expect me to go just straight to topics like how to build your website, building products, getting traffic and host of other less important things that you have been conditioned to believe are the most important.

No. Just bear with me as we painstakingly lay a very solid foundation for what we are going to be building for long term benefits.

Having a clearly stated WHY allows you to develop the right mindset that fulfils your purpose in business without any hesitation, even at times of challenges.

Getting this correctly will give you a solid foundation upon which you build your long term profitable business. It will stand you out from the crowd and determine how successful you will be.

You will never bother yourself about competitions around you, because most time, they all are getting things wrong, giving you the leverage to profit massively from what you do in your market place.

You will also get the advantage of spending less time and money on building your business, and become laser focused on only what works. This is the greatest weapon no one can give you.

I wrote extensively on the WHY in [this post](#).

Question 2: Who are your target audiences? - Your WHO.

This gives you the power to know who you are talking to in your marketing.

To be honest with you, it will take some works on your part to really know who you are talking to. But, once you take the time to do the work, the benefits that follow will continue to give you joy.

Know their demographic and psychographic data. What are their buying habits, where do they gather online and offline?

There will be need to zero down on an individual you will use as your specific marketing messages recipient.

Doing this will give you clarity on your messages to him.

For example, Joel is a male between age 22 to 35 years; he's struggling to make money online. He has invested at least N10,000 on make money online products in the past two years and these are the websites he visits and he has also bought into other self development course.

Doing this will give you more legitimate power to speak to his mind, because you will be speaking to his desires.

There are two parts to WHO; your target audience and YOU.

The second part is YOU.

You need to know who you are, what are your strengths? What type of micro niche do you want to operate in?

You have to really narrow down which area you want to go into.

This is because your product cannot apply to everybody.

For example, I render coaching and consulting services to small business owners and entrepreneurs who need to build and grow their revenues and profits.

I couldn't have targeted the wider small business niche, hence my focus on building small businesses around soft assets (Knowledge, experiences, passion and skills).

I also have some other conditions I look for in my ideal clients to ensure that I'm able to deliver values and ensure they get high return on their investments.

I cannot sell my service to everybody in the world. It only appeals to some segment of the society.

Don't make the mistake of trying to be everything to everybody.

Specialize!

Question 3: What are Your Audiences' problems - Your WHAT

Having known who your ideal audiences are, now what are you talking about?

What major problems are you trying to help them solve?

You better don't waste your time if you haven't figured out what problem(s) your ideal clients/customers seek solutions to.

Figure out at least 5 -10 problems of your ideal audience and solve them.

You can get these figured out in forums based on the demographic and psychographic information you got earlier on.

These will be used later in your marketing to speak to their desires and get them to say YES to your calls to action.

Question 4: What does your audience want to achieve/where are you taking them (the end result) - Your WHERE

Where are you taking your audience? It's your job to take your audience from the point of her present need to that point at which she is fulfilled (achieved her needs).

It is your responsibility to teach her how your products will take her there. You have to show her where you're taking her.

Do this by not only showing features of your products because your audience doesn't buy features, but emotions and feelings.

One proven way you can get this done is by building meaningful relationship with your audience through your articles, videos, infographics etc showing her the possibilities of getting her needs fulfilled.

Show her by giving values through those means.

Question 5: What is the framework for getting there - Your HOW

You want to make money, right?

This is the point that is done.

But, wait, don't screw up yet!

This is where your products come in. You laid down everything about what you have to solve their major problems.

Here, you must ensure your 'how' serves your audience well enough to have a high return on investment of their time and money with you.

Do not do any shady things that leave you hanging after your first business transaction with them because doing that will only result in loss of confidence and later ruin your business.

I want to believe you know what that can cause you.

You will have to go and start from the ground up again looking to cultivate new customers.

Remember, it is easier and more cost effective to sell to an already acquired customer than selling to a new one.

Now, having laid the essential foundation for your business to thrive on, let's explain some other important things....

Don't Start Building Your Business with an IDEA

An idea is a brief description of what you want to do. It's your response to solving an identified problem or meeting perceived needs in your environment.

Before you rush into generating that life transforming idea, I will advise that you settle one other important thing that would make your efforts worthwhile.

Do not start building your business with an idea. This may sound counter intuitive, but it's the right way to go.

Let me explain.....

Your target audience only pay you for solutions to their pressing problems in the market. So, your primary focus should be on the problem you want to provide solutions to.

Again, your audience cares less about how you get their problems solved; if it's one they need a painkiller for. When you get the problem figured out, you can go and think out ideas and ways to get it solved.

The idea must be confirmed before you can be sure of making it profitable by taking some things into consideration like how the idea addresses realistic events in your area, how competitive it is going to be, how easy will it be for you to actualise etc.

How Do You Generate Profitable Business Ideas?

This step does not just appear, rather, it results from hard works on your part as the entrepreneur.

Interesting enough, sources of business ideas abound around and within you. It's your duty to identify them.

I have read several blogs and books highlighting different business ideas you can go into in Nigeria or types of businesses you can do in Nigeria.

I appreciate the efforts of people behind such ideas. They are doing great work researching for the good of others.

However, it does not end there, and you cannot even make any reasonable sense of the list of ideas if you don't know how to transform such into something realistic; something that actually address humans in the real sense of it.

Also, most of them do not belong to the class of small, if you want to be realistic with the environment you've found yourself- Nigeria.

Or, how will you consider a business that requires you to put up at least N800, 000 to start? Is that a small business?

I don't think it's easy and within your reach. Most of the business ideas are actually focused on the developed nations of the world that enjoy a more favourable environment.

[Check out this again](#) to see how, even the central bank of Nigeria categorises small business.

I believe that any business that requires more than N50, 000 to build is not a small business.

Having realised you don't have access to huge start up funds, it's wise to go for ideas you can build with enough hard work and persistence.

That's where your soft assets come in. I want to believe you have got one or two of these: skills, passions, knowledge, and experiences about something. Or you are ready to learn any of such things that will be valuable in the eyes of many others.

The goal here is not just to list business ideas; I will do my best to give you proven action steps needed to take any idea you choose from just something in your head to something that puts money in your pockets.

Sources of Business ideas

Sources of business ideas are classified into two: **Internal and External sources**

The internal source has to do with you as the entrepreneur.

Ask yourself, what's your hobby or your interest? What are your personal skills and experiences? What knowledge have you acquired in recent times? What problems or challenges have you resolved in your life or lives of others? What do people seek you out for? All these are very good sources of profitable business ideas.

Remember, you are trying to build a business around what you have already got in you, so it will be helpful for you to honestly answer those questions.

The external source has to do with your environment and what you can do with what you have/hear in your environment.

You have always been greeted with great business ideas by the mass media (TV, radio, Magazine etc), and complaints about existing products (goods and services) around you.

As I said, it's your responsibility to identify these ideas from a pool of what several others see and consider as challenges or problems. You will be seeing those problems from a different perspective as a problem solver, who provides solutions to problems and get paid in the process.

I find that a lot of people are so focused and obsessed with making money and becoming rich quickly. They forget about the ultimate route to take for the process to result in making money and eventually becoming rich.

It's important you begin your journey, or course-correct yours by focusing on your assets and continue to give values to your target audience.

That's a sure way for you to 'make money'. Stop focusing on the money, because you may not make any eventually.

Maybe your own challenge is you have deployed your passion towards adding values to others, but you're yet to get results; then go and do this exercise:

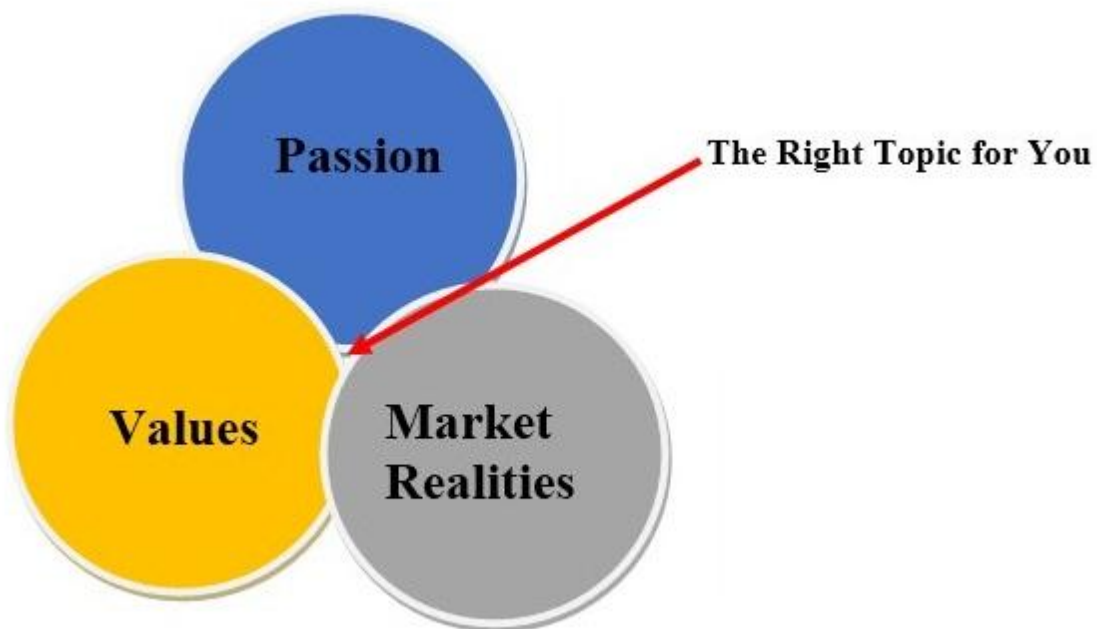
(a). Sincerely identify your soft assets (your passion, skills, knowledge, experiences).

(b). Know your values and aspiration (what is important in your life and your wishes, goals, and vision of the future).

(c). Discover the market realities.

It's in doing this that you will know whether your assets combined with your values and aspirations will pay you in terms of money.

Those two things must work harmoniously with the market realities. If they don't, then failure is imminent.



A very good example of this is someone who is talented in craft. He is very good at wood works, and he makes slates (little wooden pieces used to write in primary schools some years back). He aspires to dominate the slate making industry, and become the sole supplier of slate to primary schools in Nigeria.

What do you think will happen to this guy?

No matter how aesthetic his work could be, it's sure he will fail.

This is because his assets, combined with his values and aspirations do not conform to the market realities.

Instead, he should have been thinking on introducing *white boards* to those schools.

“Your skills, experiences, and other soft assets, no matter how special you think they are, won’t give you an edge unless they meet the needs of a paying market”.... *Reid Hoffman*
- *Cofounder and Chairman of LinkedIn*

Another one is if you are a graphic designer, a shortage of nurses in hospitals, meaning there’s demand for credentialed nurses - doesn’t mean *you* should get on the nursing track. No matter what the demand, you’re not going to be most competitive unless your own passions and strengths are in play.

I took this wrong route in 2010, when I ran a recruitment agency targeting semi skilled labourers around my locality. I did not bother to confirm the readiness of these groups of people to use my service.

After so much time and money had been expended on the project, then did I discover that my audiences didn’t care about whatever innovation I thought I was bringing to them.

They preferred to queue up at various junctions to be picked up for various available jobs. The experience was not sweet, so I do not want you to do the same.

There is a secret...

The sauce in every tasty food in a restaurant is not laid out in the open.

That’s what keeps you patronising it for long time!

You want to know how to prepare such a delicious food with inviting aroma in your own home too.

But is the master Chef prepared to give you his secrets?

Whether from him or not, I believe you can get what you want if you dig deep enough. There is need for persistence in your search for the secret formula.

Business success is no different.

Do you care to know the main secret behind the success of any business; both offline and the type you will be building, leveraging the power of the internet?

Get this secret before your competitors do

Things become more challenging when you look at the number of activities to be performed in your business, and honestly speaking, they do.

Having experienced both failures and success in this business, I've been able to classify what the important components of a successful business look like.

According to the great business strategist – **Rich Schefren**,

"the fact that you have so many things to do in business does not mean you should be the one doing them".

It'll be more useful to break this challenge into two components.

Both of them are important, but one is more important than the other, in that, it determines its success.

The two components are:

- Technical component
- Non-technical component

You might have been told that you must know how to code or write certain computer language for you to succeed with internet business. Or, that you must be a graphic designer who puts aesthetic touch to websites appearance.

I beg to disagree. That advice will only disallow you from starting your own business.

The reason why I said so is because, the technologies you need to achieve your goals online are all thinking of some other people. There are different perspectives and thoughts behind every one of them.

If I may tell you, the non-technical part of this challenge of building your own business is the most critical, that needs to be mastered and worried about.

It's easier and you can always get people to implement the technical components if you don't have the skills or don't want to do it yourself.

Wait, why have several people gotten their blogs/website set up for them and still could not figure out what the problems are with their business?

It goes beyond building the platform. What you say on the platform and how much it resonates with your target audience is what determines your success.

The rare skill you need for success, which needs your attention the more is the non-technical ones.

They are the engine in your automobile.

Without them, nothing can happen, except if you only want to use the edifice to display some figurative attractiveness.

The thinking behind what you do with the technical components is the engine because, again, it is the one actually addressing the concerns of the most important players in your business universe - **your customers**, who pay you!

Remember you must build your business around your strengths and focus on those whose wallets determine your success or otherwise.

This will give you enough certainty that you have understood their pains and needs and figured out the best ways to give your solutions to them.

In short you will be acting based on your understanding of their patterns of behaviours.

Look critically into all the technologies out there; you will agree with me that the architects had one or two behavioural expectations built into them all, which prompts you to consider purchasing or trying them free, leading you to the next behavioural expectation.

Honestly, I've done and I'm doing the same thing with you here, now :-)

Remember how you got on this list?

It wasn't by accident. I thought about the whole process with you in mind.

That's exactly how you should think about your own business, too.

Maybe you've been made to believe it's only about the technologies.

Or, you just bought into a business model that involves other people's thinking without any knowledge of the goals of the modelling.

NO! That's also enough to expose you to failure.

Let's see some other practical examples that keep you engaged and eventually make you form a habit using them.

Think about Facebook for a second. Do you care about whatever programming language or hosting plans Mark Zuckerberg and his team used to build and run the site?

No, of course!

What is important to you as the user is for you to get done what needs to be done through the platform.

The company and the people behind it had you in mind before they gave you what you want. They knew about your behaviours and framed their applications in such a way that keeps you coming back.

It has become part of your life. You can't do without it. J

Likewise every other products you buy and use, be it your phone or laptop, the producers have adequate knowledge about your behaviours before they make them. They know what rewards you seek in using their products.

The psychology behind everything you do in business is the most important thing that needs your attention the most.

And that's why I'm emphasising it, because knowing it will stand you out from the competition.

How best you achieve results from your contents and promotion depends solely on how much you understand your consumers.

So, pay more attention to this. We shall get to the ones you are used to like creating your blog/website, email marketing, creating your products and others later.

Let's use another analogy; someone in a radio or television station giving quality advise on how to build small businesses to a well targeted audience.

Would you agree that he/she has no business knowing how signals are transferred from the studio onto his audience?

I believe you do. If he does, then he loses focus on what he is supposed to do.

His business on that platform, just as you are on the internet is to be harmed with enough understanding of your subject and your target audience.

Your concerns should be about how you're going to deliver superb contents and take your target audience on a journey to their success safely.

You cannot do this without knowing their thinking patterns and how to harness it.

My duty here is to ensure you become successful with your own business; from the point of starting to the point of generating revenues and profits.

I must take you through helpful guides like this one you are reading now, and be with you throughout the journey.

I can't do this successfully if I do not understand some of your thinking patterns that influence your observable behaviours.

Do you agree to that?

Don't be fixated on thinking that technologies would not allow you to achieve your goals online.

You can learn the basics and delegate the ones you consider difficult or time consuming to 'the experts' whose business is about the technologies.

Having gotten an idea and taken time to know your target audience, the next reasonable thing to do is to;

VALIDATE your ideas first.

You cannot afford to get this wrong. Do not rush into acting on your business idea without first of all validating it.

I already told you about my experience with this in 2010. So, don't make the same mistake of building your business around unavailable audience, or something that is not needed by your target market.

Someone once said "It's easier to build a business around an existing audience than building an audience around a business"

Conventional wisdom would tell you to start listing out the tools and expenses you will need to get this done once an idea is identified, because they must feature in your business plan. No wonder you've always complained about lack of fund as the reason for not pursuing your visions.

You'd listed things like costs of your letter head, office space, furniture, beautiful website/blog, high performing page builder, autoresponder, new laptop computer, High Res. camera and others things.

Really, your business plan would need to factor those expenses and forecast based on the calculation. This is what will prove to you in the end whether your overhead would be higher than revenue or not, hence you make profit or loss.

Wait A Minute, My Friend. You've Missing It Already!

The fact that you have 'enough' money to spend does not mean that you will spend it to make more money.

The way business is built has changed from that harkward moves.

In order for you to be close to certainty that your business idea will make you money, you most times, need to do away with almost all the tools you listed above.

You can come back to them when you've helped yourself in this simple process I call VALIDATION.

What you have above is a list of expenses. I would first focus on finding out who is your market, what they want, and how you can provide it. What value would make them want to opt in to your list? And then what greater value can you provide that they will want to pay for?

If you can figure that out, then the rest is details, but if you can't figure that out, then it doesn't matter what website builder or autoresponder you have or what they cost.

Your business only exists, and will continue to do so when it serves particular need of a target market. This group of people will help you in the process of building your business.

They directly or indirectly tell you what to do with their problems and how to help them solve them, so that when you eventually introduce your products (goods and services), you will not be speaking to the wrong audience.

Do not go fully into your market without validating that the solution you will develop from your business opportunity for your target market will sell.

You will save yourself money and time if you validate your idea before diving into other activities involved in running your business.

How To Narrow Down Your Target Customers With Precision and Validate Your Idea For Guaranteed Success.

This may be the most important aspect of this guide, so I want you to pay close attention to this part.

I'll take you through the steps you need to be sure your idea will work. I will even use my own business as a case study for you to be able to relate well with the process.

The steps I took to get my idea validated will be handed to you, keep reading . . .

Now you should have identified your target audience and got to know them well enough for you to be able to address their pains.

The next thing you have to do is to figure out who is already serving this audience. It's never been easier than now to get enough intelligent information about your competition.

The internet is a very useful tool to use, and if your business is offline, other advertising media like radio, television, newspapers, magazine etc would be good sources for your research.

Why would you be doing this?

It's because you want to find out how you can be different from your competition, paying close attention to what they do, how they do it, what they do well and where they don't do well.

I need to tell you something important here; you're not doing this for the sake of just being different either by having a different logo, colour, or whatever.

No.

The essence of this exercise is for you to adapt this information about the competition to see how best you can cater to the interests and desires of your customers.

How can you add more values than others in the business?

Your customers care less about your logo, colour or about you in general.

The most paramount thing in their mind is always the benefits derivable from doing business with you. Their focus is on how to maximise everything they have with you.

This again reminds you of the need to know them well enough and not disturbing yourself with what your competitors are getting wrong – *doing only the physical branding*.

Add and continue to add more values to them than your competitions do.

That could be scary to hear, but that's the truth. I need to tell you.

Knowing this will allow you to position yourself well enough in the market by addressing the unmet needs of your audience in a different way that gives them more benefits than they do.

Did you say, but Najeem, you said I need to validate my business idea?

Yes, that's what you are doing!

The next step in the process is for you to make a FREE offer to certain segment from this audience and see if they will take you up on your offer.

Of those who took you up on your FREE offer, choose a few who got the best results or seemed to enjoy your help the most. Ask to interview them, and get their insights into how you helped them, what your gifts are, how you're different from others they've worked with, and what else you could be offering.

Do not expose this validating offer to the whole of your audience at this stage. If they do, then don't be shy to ask them to purchase your product. Any positive response to your request here will validate your business idea.

However, assess how things went with the free offer and repeat the test if necessary.

If the test failed, do not hesitate to change your business idea because your market has just given you very important information that they would not buy the product if you insist on creating it.

This will save you lots of time and money. Continue to test your ideas until when you see one that resonates with your audience.

Wait! You may be thinking this is a lot of work.

Yes, it is. But, the benefits you will get later in your business will be much greater than the efforts you are putting into it now.

Notice I said if your free offer did not go as you hoped, you should get to work on another one. This is the reason why you must not be married to your idea or product.

You are not the one to determine what is valuable in the eye of your target audience. It's their responsibility to tell you what they want. And it's only they, who can say your idea or product is valuable to them or not.

So, instead of going head on to creating your product or sourcing products without carrying out this litmus test and waste a lot of resources, you'll only need to invest very little to get the near exact, if not the exact valuable solutions in the eye of your audience to them.

How I Validated my Idea for ProfitsMax

If I have not told you, ProfitsMax is a business I run to help small business owners get more targeted customers, and grow their revenues and profits.

It started precisely in October of 2014.

I did not register the business with the Corporate Affairs Commission (CAC) nor did I spend any money on office or business cards until when I knew I had something to work on.

The idea of working with small businesses was borne out of the discovery I made while working on an academic research about the impact of advertising on small business profits in Ile-Ife in August 2014.

Out of the seventy (70) small businesses surveyed in the study, it was found that only one (1) was aware of using different media to get its messages to the right audience.

Over 30% did not see any need to advertise or market their businesses and about 50% that did was leaving it to agents who understood little or nothing about consumer buying behaviour.

This affected their performances and resulted in a waste of resources.

I thought, after the study, that I had found a need I needed to fill with my knowledge of consumer behaviours and a bit of influence to generate more revenues for the businesses.

I used to have a swipe file containing marketing and promotional pieces (handbills, yellow page advertisement pieces and newspaper adverts) that struck my attention!

It contained specimens as far back as 1995.

I dogged into the file, looked up addresses and phone numbers of service professionals I could work with, called them to introduce myself, what I do and how I could help their businesses get more people to buy what they sell.

I got a total of twenty-two **(22) service professionals** to contact. I did, and I eventually got access to nineteen (19).

My focus was to get them to say yes to the free consultation I planned to offer them so that they could see what I got to offer them.

But, what? Only seven business owners eventually took me up on my free consultation offer.

My contact with the first seven prospects resulted in three appointments, which eventually landed me my first consulting job.

Thereafter, things got better everyday.

The same principles apply online. You just need to identify your right target and locate where they congregate. Find out about their pains and desires. Offer them something free and take it off from there.

If the response towards your free offer is encouraging, it may signal you've got the right idea to pursue. Otherwise, hop on another one and test to make sure it is what they would want to be part of.

Getting this done was a pain in the neck for me. Some of them responded with reactions that were strict enough to scare me to death. Like how do you think you can help my business, what experience has you?

But, I kept on focusing on the big thing.

You can imagine how someone like me, who doesn't need anyone to introduce him as an introvert, would feel doing all that J

Can you now see why I took you through the need for you to [have a strong WHY](#) before doing anything?

If I had not had that strong WHY that kept me on in the game, I would have left the business, and continued wasting my time on those shining objects.

I bet you've got to find your own stronger WHY before you go on, if you've not done so.

How about your own WHY? Did you work on the last home work I gave you? Kindly do, if you've not. It's very important.

If you are yet to read the post, [here is the link to it.](#)

Doing it this way will allow you to make progress and monitor what you are doing. It's not how far, but how well.

And that's how you win in business.

This being the first series in a two part guide has been able to help you establish a solid footing upon which you build your small business.

I decided to break the whole guide into two, so as to allow you implement what you learn and not to get overwhelmed with too much information.

I hope you like that?

In our next series, we shall be talking about how to put up your platform (blog) where your audience find you to consume the solutions you have for them, develop trust in you, how to create products that address their pains, and how to convert them to buying customers.

I mean how you make the money!

Here is the Digest

You are going to build a small business around your soft assets because it's a smarter and wiser route to take, as funding for starting a big business is not within reach and this will allow you to put to use the knowledge you've gathered in school.

The business will succeed when the following works in harmony: Your assets, your philosophy about life and the market realities.

You also need to find an idea, which must be validated among your target audiences before you decide to go deep into working on it.

Your business will exist when there are people to serve. These people will give you money in return for the quantity and quality of values you are able to add to them.

Technology is important, but more important is the non-technical part that actually drives the technology and your business in general.

You must strive to understand your customer behaviours and what influences her buying processes.

I hope you've enjoyed the content of this post. If you did, please take time to leave your thoughts in the comment box below.

If there is anything I have left out, that you would want me to consider adding, you are welcome to talk about it. I believe we are here to learn one or two things from each other.

If you really enjoyed the contents, please share it with people in your circle of influence.

Share it on Facebook, twitter, through email and what a few.

I can't wait to read your success stories.