

Introduction

I'm assuming you've purchased this E-book because you currently own a coffee business, but you're not making any money. Or, maybe you're stuck at break-even or barely profitable, and want to drive your business to the next level. Or, perhaps you're one of those prudent individuals who want to know everything, and be as prepared as possible, before starting your business. Whichever category you fall into, I guarantee the information contained within this book will be of great value to you, if you follow the advice and apply the suggested principles.

If you are that "prudent individual," then bravo! Knowing as much as possible before you begin will greatly increase your chances for success. This book will give you a better understanding of what it will take to create and run a profitable coffee business. It should help you make wise decisions as you plan for your business. You'll learn how your future success or failure might be predestined by the decisions you make in the beginning. You'll also gain a much better understanding of why it's so important to have a great location. Finally, you'll realize the necessity of setting up some "operational systems." These will provide your business with some structure and controls, and supply you with information about your business's performance, so you can identify and solve problems, and systematically plan for your future growth.

If you're already operating a coffee business, but you're only generating a modest profit, or no profit, or worse yet, you're on the verge of shutting your doors, then the information covered in the following chapters can make a real difference. If you diligently apply the principles explained in this book, they will certainly improve your business, and might even help turn it around. At very least they'll buy you time while you figure out a business exit strategy, (*if you determine your situation is hopeless*). A thoughtful exit strategy will allow you to recoup some of your investment, or at least minimize your financial losses. Exit strategies will be discussed in detail in the last chapter of this book, but it is premature to be thinking about "shuttering" your business if you haven't examined all the possible alternatives to just closing it.

When someone fails in this business, it can usually be attributed to a couple of reasons: 1. They either made fatal mistakes during their business planning and creation, and or - 2. They didn't understand how to control and grow their business once it had opened.

Being a conscientious consultant, I always try to position my clients for success, before they open for business. However, this doesn't mean that everyone always follows my advice. I've warned clients about decisions they were contemplating, and the possible negative consequences that might result. Some ignored my warning, and sadly, some failed because of their own poor judgment. You can warn someone who is standing near the edge of a cliff about the potential danger, but if they keep moving closer to the edge and fall off, what can you do? Don't be your own worst enemy!



If you currently own a coffee business and you're struggling, you may have already and unknowingly "walked over a cliff." Perhaps you selected a poor location, agreed to an outrageous lease, miscalculated your market, created an inadequate concept, designed a poor store layout, or made some other equally devastating mistake. Sometimes these types of mistakes can't be easily or affordably fixed, and sadly the prognosis for the business may be fatal. If this is your case, then acceptance of the situation, and a plan for exiting the business as quickly and painlessly as possible, may be the best prescription. We'll look in detail at these types of mistakes in the second chapter. We'll also discuss how you might be able to prevail in some cases, even in spite of these mistakes.

Finally, there are also those who start off in business well positioned for success, only to "stumble" after they get started. The one thing I can't do for my clients as a consultant, is manage their business for them after it has opened and I've gone home. Running a food service business is analogous to juggling a dozen balls. You'll have to be able to keep all of them in motion and under control if you want to be successful. This will require "know-how" and a lot of practice. Unfortunately, many people who start coffee businesses have never actually owned a business before, and/or never managed a foodservice business. This means they must conquer a steep learning curve in a short period of time... before their operating capital runs out! Many failures in this industry can be directly attributed to a simple lack of "know-how." As you progress through the chapters in this book, you will learn how to systematically run and control your business, and grow it into a profitable endeavor.

Understand that I did not create the philosophies, insights, and actions that are talked about in this book. I actually learned them from other successful

foodservice managers, with years of experience greater than mine. This occurred when I was managing stores for national and regional restaurant chains 35-years ago. The things these managers taught me are seldom written about, and are the product of years of trial and error and hands-on experience. By applying the principles they taught me, I was able to achieve the bottom line results they wanted and expected. These principles are as valid and effective today as they were when they were taught to me years ago. After all, the fundamentals of business success seldom change. These principles will work for you too, if you execute “the plan” with relentless tenacity!

Don’t become overwhelmed as you read through the following chapters. Yes, there is a lot of information, and many things to plan and do. I wish I could tell you that there is only one critical factor, or one “button” to push, that would turn your entire business around. Unfortunately, that’s seldom the case. It will usually take a combination of actions, performed consistently and diligently, to achieve or maximize the profitability from your business. Some things will help your business more than others. You’ll probably have to try a number of things to understand what will work best for you.

In chapter-13 I will provide you with a ready-to-use action plan that will help pull together all the variables you will read about. If you follow the action plan, or use it as a template to create your own, you will have a guide to systematically tackle the tasks that lie ahead. Just remember, it’s a “journey” to profitability, and every step will be important in getting to your desired destination.

That brings us to you. To be successful in business you must have a positive attitude. As you are reading this book, if you look upon every suggestion cynically, if you say to yourself, “*this won’t work*,” then I can almost guarantee it won’t. Believe that your situation is hopeless, and it will be. Expect your business to fail, and it will. If you always think of the glass as being half empty, then how will you ever imagine it as being half full? You create what you think and believe. Think success and prosperity!

Good Luck!