



CO.W TIPS



TOP TIPS FOR EMERGING ENTREPRENEURS

> *From Nikki Clarke, founder of Cadenshae*

– meet –

NIKKI CLARKE



Nikki Clarke, a mum of four, created the now-global brand Cadenshae as she believes breastfeeding mums deserve clothes that are both functional and stylish for this super important time.

TOP TIPS FOR EMERGING ENTREPRENEURS

1. BOOTSTRAP IT

I appreciate this isn't always possible for people, but for those who want to maintain full control over their company, you have to go it alone... especially while you are starting and still figuring out who your brand is and what it stands for. Invest your own money and manage everything. Direct the company how you want to.

2. TAKE YOUR TIME TO HIRE

We've made a few mistakes, but the biggest would be hiring the wrong person, at the wrong time. You've got to make sure you get the best person for the job, first up. Don't rush selection. Do your due diligence, check their background thoroughly, interview them multiple times, give them a minor task to complete to 'test' them, and get someone (or a few people) whose judgement you trust to be there with you through the whole process. Get it right in the first instance. Also, be sure to hire when you have time to train them properly, and enough work to keep them challenged. If you don't, you'll get yourself into a world of costly trouble...so we've learned!

3. HEART OVER PROFIT

We all hear 'profit is king', but I believe having a heart comes first. Treating your customers how you want to be treated goes a long way. Get in the head of your customers and ask yourself what they would really appreciate. For me, the question was: 'Do I want to go to the post office with a toddler and newborn to post a parcel back, only to be told it was going to cost me \$20?' No!

So, we implemented free returns. Yes, it helps a bit with sales, but the main thing it did was give customers trust in us, knowing that we understand them, we get it, we're mums too. We made a connection. Consumers expect more from companies than just product these days. They want to know they're buying quality items from a company who has morals and ethics. People expect more. We knew this. It may not have been profitable, but it felt right – always trust your gut – and has led to some excellent reviews from customers, and in turn, way more sales.

4. KEEP YOUR FINGER ON THE PULSE

Once you've hired amazing people, you almost think you'll be able to take holidays whenever you want, stay at home some days and binge on Netflix. Maybe in the future, but certainly not yet. Well, not if you want your team and your business to break more barriers and continue to thrive. I thought I was busy when I was doing everything, but having a team of people doing everything you used to do just means you're now free to do a whole lot of other things: expand. Plus, you now have to manage your team and make sure everyone is doing their job how they should, all while ensuring they're happy too. Remember that happy employees equal higher levels of productivity. One of my mistakes early on was thinking that after I had shown someone how the ordering process and stock forecasting worked, for example, I could just forget it and let them take over. Nope! Taking time to work through new processes and ensuring people understand it completely is key. Employees saying they 'understand' is one thing, but being 100% confident and doing the job to the same standard as you once did, is another thing entirely.

5. DIVERSIFY

It's pretty well known that for a business to thrive, it constantly needs to grow, change and evolve. Establish your core product and make it outstanding, then branch out further and do more. We started with nursing sports bras and now we can kit a woman out from head to calf (we don't do shoes...yet!), and we also now cater to all women with our 'LEVEL' range, not just pregnant and new mums. Go hard, and keep being innovative through the years. There's no such thing as a stupid idea – that same idea could make you millions!

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cheat sheet

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- > TIP 1** Invest in your own money and manage everything. Direct the company how you want to.
- > TIP 2** Take your time to hire. Dont rush selection.
- > TIP 3** Heart over profit. Treating your customers how you want to be treated goes a long way.
- > TIP 4** Keep your finger on the pulse. Remember that happy employees equal higher levels of productivity.
- > TIP 5** Diversify. Establish your core product and make it outstanding, then branch out further and do more.