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Serial Entrepreneurial and “How to Run Your Business Like A Girl” Author Elizabeth Cogswell Baskin Shares Six Tips on How to Become a Successful Business Owner

In her nine-year self-starter career, Elizabeth Cogswell Baskin has run two advertising agencies, a corporate resource provider and a book-packaging company. In her book, *How to Run Your Business Like a Girl*, she features the stories of more than 35 successful entrepreneurs, including their often haphazard paths to success. Follow their six rules for success at work – and in life.

1. Love your work: Most successful entrepreneurs don't start their businesses until they're anxious to do it – if you jump in earlier than that, the time, energy and pain of running a business may not be worth it. “Wait for the butterflies,” said Cogswell Baskin. Finding meaningful work is important to how you feel about your life. Find something you care about and working hard will have its own payoffs.

2. Think different: Unconventional doesn't mean illogical. Cogswell Baskin once ran a company that offered the staff catered lunches, to the amusement of the other advertising executives. They joked, “You must be making too much money.” But there were few restaurants around, so catering kept lunches short and gave everyone time to visit, thereby reducing chatty work-stifling interruptions at other times of the workday. “It looked like this crazy perk, but in reality it was a very smart business move,” said Cogswell Baskin.

3. Trust yourself: Many women are surprised they can make more money (eventually) in their own business than they did working for someone else, explained Cogswell Baskin. Consider this: when you're working for a corporation, the reason your company can afford to give you a paycheck is because you're making money for them. Most women felt they didn't know what they were doing when they began and they learned as they went, and their talent saw them through.

4. Keep juggling: Don't accept that working all the time – whether you own a business or not – is the only way to succeed. “It's really important not to buy into that whole 24/7 hype. When I started [my first business], for example, I kept my workweek at 20 hours, because my son was so young.” If you can't work less, focus on flexibility. “Most people don't care how hard they work, they just want to be able to choose when they work,” said Cogswell Baskin.

5. Ask for directions: Look for mentors in your field who have started their own businesses and ask them how to succeed, especially if you haven't prepared a formal business plan or you're about to open your first business. A professional support group is also invaluable for everyone, even if it's just making a good friend at work or having lunch with another working mother.

6. Be open to change: If you don't make money as early as expected, consider running your business from home to cut expenses. Or, if your business is slow, ask everyone you know for references. If you know there's a problem, you probably shouldn't hesitate. “If your gut says to turn left or right, do it, and try and do it faster rather than slower,” said Cogswell Baskin. Sometimes you just have to try a different route, and solutions will present themselves.