



# How to stay the course and win

**Peter Irvine** co-founded the fast growing Gloria Jean's coffee chain which is now expanding across the globe. In this article for *My Business*, he outlines some of the key building blocks in creating a dynamic business.

**EVERY PERSON**, business and venture needs a purpose to achieve one's full potential, and although it is important to have an end goal in mind, the way we walk the journey will determine whether we reach our ultimate goal.

We certainly haven't arrived when we first start a business and, as many know, there are always several distractions along the way! After 45 years of business experience I have seen first hand the many challenges that can be thrown in the path of a growing business. Time and again you will face a choice — meet the challenge and continue along the path, or resign your vision.

After facing many challenges over the years, I believe you can stay on course and achieve your goal. How? The following are some of the key learnings that over the years I have seen work for countless successful businesses.

## Vision

The Book of Proverbs says when there is no vision, people lose focus. In order to get where you want to go, the first step is to know where you are heading. It is important to ensure that your vision is tied to your passion and that you develop an action plan that outlines responsibilities and deadlines of when things need to be achieved.

## Be aware of mindsets

The big problem for any business person is the mindsets they face in the workplace. Whenever you decide to do something, 10 per cent of people will undoubtedly either oppose or disagree with you. You cannot build a business on such people — they are the outspoken ones and tend to make most of the noise, and unfortunately tend to get listened to. They will never help you get where you are going.

- When Gloria Jean's Coffees launched in the early days people told us that it wouldn't work, customers would not buy flavoured coffees, they would not get it in a take-away cup and the business would not succeed — we proved them wrong. ▶



*Peter Irvine, co-founder of the fast growing Gloria Jean's coffee chain*





- When we purchased the brand overseas for both naming rights and also supply, we were told that you could not run it from Australia, due to distance, customs, language, cultures and in the end they were probably right — but we went and did it anyway.
- When I worked for DDB Advertising, the company was always portrayed as conservative, and not very adventurous, and yet we had clients that were achieving sensational sales figures, and we were continuing to add new clients to our portfolio.
- McDonalds was told that no one would ever eat the McDonalds' hamburgers yet look where they are today.

The moral of the story — don't live in other people's mindsets!

## Get good advice

Advice can come in many forms, however there are a few key areas that every business person will no doubt be exposed to at some point:

- Consultants are great for 'doing the detail', but unless they have worked in your business, they are not able to bring a lot of commercial expertise, only opinions about what they have heard.
- When you are starting or building a business, or going through a difficult time, you need to find someone who has experience, but from the outside, will be able to look objectively at your challenges or expose something that needs to be addressed.
- When you are weak on an area like customer service, learn to use your car as your university. Get teaching CDs on customer service, leadership, or building confidence, whatever topic you're currently tackling and use the time wisely to learn on the go. Learn to ask, question, listen, read, watch and observe other businesses and people.
- Invest in time with positive people who give positive input. It is easy to pick up negative attitudes and negative opinions. This will not help build your business.

No single learning experience is a waste of time — you'll often learn how not to do things, as well as how to do things well and for the benefit of your vision.

## Develop a 'yes' face

Your staff, customers and banking advisers will all have a different opinion

when you are confident and have a 'Yes' face. When they see the 'No', they will develop a 'No' face along with the body language which often says that the task you are proposing cannot be achieved.

## Teamwork

Get the right people. If you get the wrong people because that is all you can afford, they can hinder your business growth; they will introduce potentially damaging systems — or won't abide by existing systems — and your business will potentially go in the wrong direction, making it very hard to pull back on track.

It is also important to share your vision and values with new and existing employees. Let them see your passion for the business. Look for employees who are going to share the passion for the business — not people who are just looking for a few dollars to pay bills.

You also need to look for a powerful combination of people who embody teamwork and can work together as a team. Avoid staff who position themselves simply as 'arms and legs'. You need to have the legs, arms, nose, mouth, hair etc all working together as a team to create a very powerful team.

## Look forward

We need to keep looking forward in our business and in our relationships. Often when we face problems or difficulties (that appear like mountains), we tend to turn around and look back, but we need to keep looking forward to be able to plough through those problems. You've heard the saying, "The definition of insanity is to keep doing the same thing in the same way while expecting a different result." Continually looking back and regretting mistakes only makes us want to do the same thing in the same way.

Sometimes it's tough looking ahead; all you can see are the challenges and the hard times. If you are under attack in your business, if you are under attack from your competitors, enjoy the compliment! If you are taking ground, then somebody's losing ground and they won't like it! Part of succeeding in business is facing some competition. As the saying goes, "No pain, no gain."

Be aware of the trap in believing that current ideas, thoughts, procedures, teachings and communication methods

can't be challenged. If you fall into that trap, you will risk missing out on future opportunities as they present themselves. Opportunities tend to fall into the path of people who look forward rather than back.

In a nutshell, get rid of the rear vision mirror mentality. The reason that the rear vision mirror is so small is because it shows the past. It is all back there, you need to learn from it but you need to be looking out of the front windscreen, which is wide and big, because that is your future.

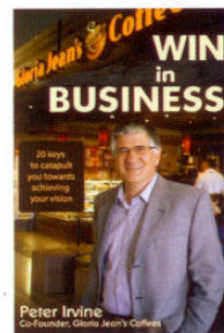
We always see obstacles as problems that are going to knock us over or keep us down. However, when you actually solve these problems or difficulties, your confidence builds, your business systems improve and you learn a lot through the experience. It gets you ready for the next stage.

## Marketing

Marketing is about focusing everything that you do on your core idea. If you have an idea about your business, your key difference, then that needs to be communicated in your public relations, advertising, packaging, pricing, local store marketing, signage, store décor (if applicable), stationary, receptionist, website — everything. The key mistake that many people make is that they waste their money in marketing when they communicate different messages through different aspects of the marketing pie.

Remember, today is the first day of the rest of your life. Today is a new day in your business; today you are perched on the edge of your destiny. What are you going to do with it? ●

Enjoy the journey!



Peter Irvine is the co-founder of Gloria Jean's Coffees in Australia, and has enjoyed a successful business career in advertising and other fields. He has published *Win in Business* as a guide for those looking to unleash the full

potential of their business. It is available through leading retailers and bookstores nationally. For further information, or to order a copy, please visit: [www.pirvine.com](http://www.pirvine.com)