



Are you wondering how to grow your business and develop it in a way so it's not wholly reliant on you? Have you considered outsourcing/franchising/productising as a way to achieve that growth? Emma Jones outlines the options with tips for each strategy.

Grow, grow, grow!

Fellow business owners will understand when I say having a business often feels like having a child; you conceived the idea, you nurtured the business in its early stages, and it can feel tough to let it go and grow on its own! There are smart ways to scale your business and here are four of them.

1. Outsourcing – one of my longest-held mottos is ‘do what you do best and outsource the rest.’ Key functions to outsource include accounting, sales, admin and fulfilment. There is plenty of top talent available on the market and you can locate the skills you’re looking for by visiting business forums or dedicated sites such as Business Smiths www.businesssmiths.co.uk or Odesk www.odesk.com

2. Productising – if your business currently depends on you spending time on creating the finished product or service, consider putting what you do in a box and selling it at greater volume, but at a lower cost. Let me explain by using an example. I once met a lady running a business selling beautiful dresses for girls. Sales were good but the owner could sell only as many as she could make. She came up with a plan and started to produce ‘make your own dress packs’ in which material was included and DIY instructions for customers. Outcome? She could sell many more packs than dresses as they were much less time-consuming to put together. Think how you can take your knowledge or skills and package it up, to sell on.

3. Franchising – if you have a successful model of a business in one area, and want to expand nationwide, franchising could be your option. To succeed, you need a proven track record and model that other people will want to buy in to. Companies that have done a good job of growing by franchising include Girlie Gardening www.girliegardening.com, Music Bugs www.musicbugs.co.uk and My Little Wrapper www.getmylittlewrapper.co.uk

4. Going Global – markets in the UK not big enough for you? Start selling overseas! This may happen without you even pushing for it as your home on the web naturally attracts a global audience. Use Google Analytics to track the origin of your customers and if there are certain countries that keep appearing, focus efforts on these territories. Sign up with a good international courier (check out Parcelforce Worldwide www.parcelforce.com, Shipwire www.shipwire.com or Parcel2go.com www.parcel2go.com), ensure you can receive international payment (www.paypal.co.uk is a top option for this) and consider installing a customer feedback system on your site such as Get Satisfaction www.getsatisfaction.com so questions can be answered from customers who are awake when you’re asleep!

Whichever route you choose, be sure to retain your niche, and you’ll be the proud boss of a successfully operating venture that can still be run from home whilst servicing a national/international marketplace!

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