

6 Business Success Tips from Jane Wurwand, Founder of Dermalogica

by Alison Storm (as seen in Money Crashers)

There's nothing like a great rags-to-riches story, and Jane Wurwand has a remarkable one. She started Dermalogica, a professional skin care company, in 1983 with \$1,400. Her goal was to bridge the gap in skin care between salons and at-home users. Dermalogica products are now sold in 28,000 salons and spas in 86 countries.

Wurwand's business model is a bit unheard of. For starters, she has never taken a bank loan or an investment, and she doesn't pay for advertising. But obviously she is doing something right – Dermalogica topped \$260 million in sales in 2011. Recently, Jane Wurwand shared her tips for financial success with a group of entrepreneurs at a conference. Her unconventional approach and passion are inspiring, as is her tactful advice.

Tips for Entrepreneurs

1. Your Authenticity Is Your Strength

Wurwand says it's your uniqueness that will build your business' character and help you stand out from the competition: "Be yourself," she says. "Everyone else is taken."

During the first three years after launching Dermalogica, Wurwand didn't draw a salary. Then, in her fourth year, she began paying herself \$300 a month. She says that if you're passionate about your idea, having little or no income will not deter you from staying the course. After years of earning a miniscule salary – or none at all – many people told her to give up, but she's glad she didn't. "You have to be able to dig in and dig in deep," Wurwand says.

If you've got a plan B, you may as well follow it, because having a backup plan suggests that you're not entirely passionate about your idea. Not everyone is an entrepreneur, and that's okay. Pursuing something you are not passionate about is never a good idea.

2. Start With a Safe Idea, Then Stretch It

Dreaming big can be hard for some people. Wurwand suggests instead starting with a safe idea, then stretching it as much as possible.

"You don't want to be in the zone of mediocrity," she says. In Wurwand's case, her initial safe idea may have been to create Dermalogica sunscreen, a product most skincare brands sell. But Wurwand decided to stretch that idea by creating a sunscreen built into a wipe, something no other company was creating at the time of the product's launch. That idea launched a highly successful product.

3. Thrive Under Pressure

Have you ever been told to relax when you become stressed or worried over a business matter? Wurwand says it is wiser to take an opposite approach. “When you’re under pressure, don’t relax,” she says. Rather, it is important to buckle down and refocus your energy.

Wurwand also suggests that you practice saying “no” to keep yourself from getting into situations where your time is stretched too thin. She admits that it’s easier to say “yes” to requests and demands. However, “Saying ‘no’ lets us choose our ‘yeses.’”

Business owners tend to take on too much, but Wurwand has found that achieving financial success relies largely upon the delegation of work, rather than solely focusing on what she could do. “Hire people who will allow you to focus on your business,” which in turn will allow you to **increase productivity**.

4. Be a Great Storyteller

It is a common desire for people to want to feel a connection to the businesses they love. They want to know the story behind them, and social media marketing allows entrepreneurs to share those stories more readily.

Wurwand tells her company’s story to anyone who will listen, and additionally, she volunteers in leadership positions through various charities and schools as a way to spread Dermalogica’s story. She has also partnered with the popular micro-lending site Kiva, solidifying Dermalogica’s position as a socially responsible company that supports women in numerous ways.

5. Be Frugal

It’s hard to imagine that someone at the helm of a company earning \$260 million annually believes in frugality, but that’s one of Wurwand’s keys to financial success. When you’re starting your company, don’t spend money frivolously.

“Spend where it matters,” Wurwand advises. “A door on two piles of bricks works fine as a desk.” Instead of making yourself look successful, focus on *being* successful by spending money on telling your story and creating a great product. Consider these **cost-cutting ideas for small businesses**.

One offbeat money-saving technique employed by Dermalogica is that the company does not spend any money on advertisements. Instead, Dermalogica relies on public relations to get their name in print. Initially, Wurwand says she supplied product samples to magazine editors, confident that once they used her skin care line they would want to write about it. This would get Dermalogica’s name publicity without the cost of advertising. By liberally sharing your product with key people, you’ll have a better shot at garnering media coverage without spending a large amount of money.

6. Develop a Clear Culture

The people you hire for your business are the ones who will either help you succeed or drag you down. Wurwand describes the ideal candidates as “dream believers.” These are people who embrace and drive change, and are enthusiastic, kind, and friendly. The people who don’t fit into this category should be shown the exit as quickly as possible.

Wurwand says networking is also an important part of reaching financial success. “Connections are like trampolines,” she says. “The tighter they are, the higher you’ll bounce.”

Final Word

Wurwand’s story is inspirational, but her success is built on a solid foundation of hard work, thriftiness, and unending passion. Anyone with a dream could potentially walk in her footsteps and head a company, such as Dermalogica, built from the ground up.

Perhaps the most valuable lesson offered by Wurwand’s success story is that one must forge ahead, no matter what, regardless of any distractions or discouragement. One day, perhaps, you will be inspiring other up-and-coming business owners with your story.