



<b>Publication</b>		
YOUR BUSINESS		
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STARTING UP

# Hitting a CENTURY

## Tactics and techniques for your first 100 days...

I remember day one of my new business well. I'd left my corporate job and was sitting in front of my new PC and printer trying to figure out how to load the software. In my corporate job there were IT nerds who did all the technical stuff and I'd never had to learn how to do it. I was stumped, and eventually had to call those nerds at the helpdesk of my previous employer and ask them to guide me through it. It was my first and most important lesson in starting my own business. I was on my own, and was the only one who would get everything going. It was all up to me.

So now it's you. You're no dummy. You've done your research, you've identified your competitors, and you know that 70% to 80% of small businesses fail in the first year and, of those left, only half will make it through the next five years. But you know that these statistics won't apply to you, because you've been smart. You're prepared, or are you?

The decision to go your own way is hard to make. Throughout our schooling we are taught to prepare for a good job; the discipline and structures imposed are designed to make us obedient employees who don't ask questions and only occasionally think for ourselves. If you choose to head off the road well-travelled, you need to approach things a little differently.

### Know thyself

Our reasons for starting a business are all different. You may have a burning passion and launching a business is the only way to live it, you may want to improve the lives of others, or perhaps you have been retrenched and have decided that you will never be secure as an employee. Or you've hit on a genius idea that's going to make you millions.

It's important to know why you are launching; this should be your guide when things get tough. And trust me, they will.

Understand what you want out of the business. Mindmaps are a great tool to use here. The further you allow your thoughts to roam, the more reasons you will find; some may even surprise you. Be sure to document your reasons and keep them close as you will need to revisit them fairly often.

### The thinking boss

In case it hasn't sunk in yet; the boss – that big scary person who tells you what

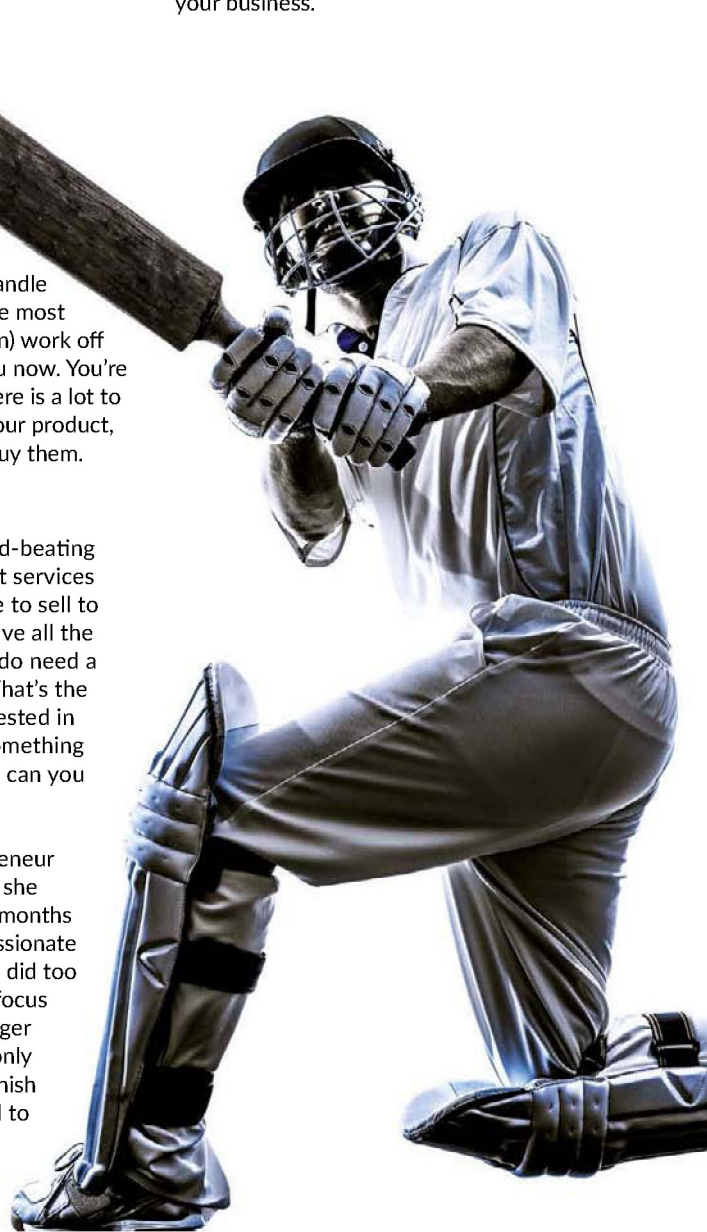
streamline her services, and focus on those that were lucrative and aligned to her business goals. It's not a bad way to start, if by doing everything you are able to create some income that keeps you eating while you figure it out. But focusing is eventually going to be the thing that helps you succeed. Knowing what you do, and what you want to do, will help you to stay focused, and develop sales and marketing strategies that are relevant and designed to build your business.

to do all the time, how to handle situations and who takes the most complex (and often most fun) work off your hands – well, that's you now. You're that person, and as such there is a lot to think about, starting with your product, and the clients that might buy them.

### Know what you do

Before launching your world-beating business, answer this: What services or products will you be able to sell to customers? You may not have all the details ironed out, but you do need a clear idea of the answer. What's the product? Who will be interested in it? Why is it unique? Is it something you understand deeply and can you confidently make it work?

We worked with an entrepreneur who took in whatever work she was offered for the first six months after launching. She was passionate about what she did; but she did too much. The business lacked focus and meandered for a lot longer than it should have. It was only when she got too busy to finish work that she finally started to



Jules Newton