

Stephen Covey describes how to implement his famous Seven Habits:

1. Be proactive.

People who run small businesses must take responsibility and initiative, and they must get out of victimism, blaming the culture, the environment, the people, the customers, and anything that's external to their own control. You have to learn to adapt, flow with whatever reality is given to you.

2. Begin with the end in mind.

Get a clear sense of your personal mission, your business mission, and your values. If you're principle-centered, you'll find that you'll build a clientele that will stay with you and the velocity of that clientele will significantly increase, which will help you move far beyond the break-even point and make some good money.

3. Put first things first.

You have to have good self-mastery and a good sense of what's important so you can neglect what is urgent but not important. One of the problems of most small business people is they haven't carefully thought through what is supremely important and they often get focused on putting out fires. They end up letting urgency define importance.

4. Think win-win.

Focus on interpersonal relations, with customers, employees, and suppliers. You have to learn to develop long-term relationships that are trustworthy, that are filled with integrity, and a spirit of mutual benefit where no one attempts to manipulate or take advantage. Always think about mutual benefit.

5. Seek first to understand and then to be understood.

Learn how to listen first. Most people don't know how the world looks for other people. They will take stabs at it and often fake it or pretend to listen, but really they're just filled with their own agenda, and it ends up becoming a collective monologue. The net effect of it is that relationships do not go deep and loyalty will not be strong and enduring or sustainable.

6. Synergize.

Synergy means that the whole is greater than the sum of its parts, which means that you can produce far more. When you work together, you go back and forth really easily and effortlessly. In relationships with suppliers or employers, or family or anyone, if there's any resistance at all, immediately practice habits four, five, and six and you'll transform the energy from being negative to being not only positive, but creative. You come up with better solutions than what anyone has come up with.

7. Sharpen the saw.

People can become so busy sawing that they don't take the time to *sharpen the saw*. You have to have renewal in the four dimensions of life: your body, your mind, your heart, and your spirit. The body you keep healthy. With the mind, you constantly learn. For the heart, you build strong relationships with the key people in your life. And for the spirit, you make sure you live by your conscience so that you have total integrity.