

## 10 More Tips for SOHO Business Success

Jane Pollak is a living example of how to turn a passion into a thriving business.

Is this one of your dreams?

Jane's career shot to a new level when she was asked to decorate a Ukrainian Easter egg for the annual Easter Egg Roll at the White House. Not long afterwards, this wife and mother was running a successful home-based business, speaking internationally about entrepreneurship and appearing on national TV, including NBC and CNN.

She has also written two books, *Soul proprietor: 101 lessons from a lifestyle entrepreneur* and *Decorating eggs: exquisite designs with wax & dye*.

Here are 10 of my favourite success tips from Jane, from her book *Soul proprietor: 101 lessons from a lifestyle entrepreneur* -

- 1. Take care of your image and you will be taken seriously. Perception is everything.** 'In the past, when I explained to people "I am an artist and my medium is Ukrainian Easter eggs" often, the response I received was patronising. I realised it would be up to me to establish the seriousness of my enterprise. I changed the way I exhibited my eggs from a whimsical bird's nest setting to showing them in glass showcases or under glass domes. The presentation informed the public that they were Art, cost a lot and were worth the money.'
- 2. It's necessary to dress the part.** 'During the final session of a semester-long program I took for women business owners, an image consultant told me "Your haircut is too suburban." She asked me what image I would like to convey. "Artistic, sophisticated, stylish," I responded. After assessing me, she recommended a New York hair stylist, as well as an outlet for designer clothing. Our class had a reunion six months later and everyone loved my asymmetrical haircut and chic new outfit. I, too, had begun to feel more like the contemporary craft artist I wanted to be. Image is not the solution to everything, but dressing the part to support your work is a step toward business success.'
- 3. Words shape your company's image. Make sure they reflect what you want said about your business.** 'I found I had to upgrade the look and feel of my marketing materials to enter a bigger league. I had an elegant logo created that would reach a more sophisticated audience than I had previously targeted, but my written materials did not match the upscale look. Through a referral, I met a gifted copywriter. I loved what she wrote but could never have produced those words myself. I was too modest. The bonus of having a great copywriter has been twofold. The mental and emotional time it would have taken me to create those marketing messages is now devoted to doing what I do best and living up to these marketing messages.'

For **more free tips** on clearing clutter, staying focused and reaching your goals, or to find out more about one-to-one business, executive or life coaching and group coaching or to arrange a no-obligation session with Tania, visit the Blue Sky Coaching website at [www.blueskycoaching.com.au](http://www.blueskycoaching.com.au). Tania can be contacted Monday to Friday between 8 am and 8 pm (Adelaide CST), on (08) 8338 3134 or 0411 471 941 or by e-mail on [tania@blueskycoaching.com.au](mailto:tania@blueskycoaching.com.au)



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4. **Contact your customers frequently, but don't worry if they don't respond quickly.** 'I finally came to the conclusion that I had to send out frequent mailings without worrying about responses. The remarkable thing is that it works with different people each time, creating a revolving list of customers, exactly what I want. So if someone is paying attention to me for the first time in four years, that's okay.'
5. **Learn from each experience - positive or negative - and move forward.** 'I have experienced several dead-ends in my business. You could call them failures, but along the way, they taught me what I can't do and what I'm not good at. They also have shown me which dream I need to discard and which dream I need to continue dreaming. I spent several years trying to be the next Laura Ashley, but time after time I received messages from the commercial world and from my heart and brain telling me that this wasn't my ultimate calling. Eventually I hopped off the design path and leapt on the professional speaking route and never looked back.'
6. **Until they say, 'Never call us again!'** don't give up. Keep calling. 'Paper House Productions has been my favourite greeting card company for many years. From the first time I saw their cards, I visualized having images of my eggs as part of their line and I pursued them for several years. In 1997, nine years after my first letter to Paper House, my eggs were featured in their catalogue in a row of note cards, next to Faberge's.'
7. **Heed the advice of those who have gone before you.** 'When an NSA colleague, Nancy Stevens, referred me for an opportunity to be a keynote speaker for a group in Argentina, I knew there would be many hurdles I'd have to leap over. I had never addressed such a large audience, nor had I ever had to speak for such a long period of time. I began talking to colleagues about my forthcoming trip abroad. Nancy Stevens and others recommended a book on cultural differences called Kiss, bow or shake hands, which I read carefully. I also had tea with a woman from Buenos Aires in order to make sure my references would be clear to the audience. All the legwork required for the venture paid off. It was a thrill being hailed as an internationally known speaker.'
8. **It is important to thank everyone who has helped you in significant ways.** 'When I teach strategies for growing a business, I always include thanking people who have helped you in significant ways - showing your gratitude when someone gives you a great lead or referral, a piece of advice, or has simply said something that has helped you grow your business. All that is required is the simplest line in the mail - "thanks so much for the referral" - or a quick phone call. That little touch can work wonders.'
9. **Stay focused on the people who are buying your products.** 'I often go to a day spa I like and frequently talk to the owner, Noel. She truly nurtures her customers and they respond by caring about her and her spa. As a marketing ploy, she gives a \$5 gift certificate to each customer and a reduced price on haircuts for customers who make appointments at hours when the spa is slow. I took her up on both offers. When I arrived for my first haircut the receptionist personally escorted me and asked "While you're waiting for your shampoo, can I bring you a cup of coffee, tea, herbal tea, or hot water with lemon?" She made me feel pampered, treasured, wonderful. A bit later, a young man in black approached. "I'll be giving you your shampoo" and he too escorted me to my chair. Once there, he asked "May I massage your neck and shoulders while we wait for the water to warm up?" I felt like a goddess.'

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The haircut was equal to every other part of the experience. For Noel's \$5 investment, I became a regular customer.'

**10. A mastermind group can help you develop to the point where you can afford luxuries with or without a tax write-off.** 'For years I'd been trying to figure out how to go to a luxury spa and write the trip off as a business expense. My accountant informed me that as long as the trip was business-related and could be documented as such, then it would be an acceptable tax deduction. In the mid 1990s, I got together a support group for my business that is still going strong. I invited several of my entrepreneurial friends to my home for a brainstorming session. I wanted to form a mastermind group that would meet monthly to focus on one another's businesses and take an annual spa retreat for the purpose of professional development and business planning. The spa trip hasn't happened yet, although I can tell it's closer to reality. My dream was big, a tax-deductible spa vacation. The irony is that I achieved a truly bigger goal, a functional support group.'

If you are in business, take some time out now to consider how you might apply any of these tips to increase the success of your business. It will be time well spent.

P.S. If you're interested, I can refer you to a great hair stylist, image consultant, graphic and web designers and a wonderful copywriter - so please let me know!

P.P.S. If you're interested in joining a business mastermind group, please read on and call me to let me know.

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