

4 pieces of advice every entrepreneur needs to hear

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As an entrepreneur, or even an aspiring entrepreneur, you've always felt that it's your calling to make an impact. But taking that first step can be daunting. You have so many questions about how to do it on a budget and what it takes to be successful.

John Spence and Kim Linster know the joys and hardships of owning a business firsthand. Over the past 13 years, Spence has opened 22 gyms in Indiana and Ohio, and was named . Linster, a dietician by trade, owns a studio in Fargo, N. D.

Here, Linster and Spence talk about how they got started, the challenges they've encountered through their journey and the advice they have for those just starting to pursue their dreams as business owners:

1. Do something you're passionate about.

As a dietician, Linster always enjoyed helping people live better lives. When she opened her Waxing The City studio, she had the opportunity to expand

that passion to a lot more people—both her customers and her team members.

Sometimes, the two groups intersected. A couple of the people on Linster's team came into Waxing The City while attending esthetics school. They loved the service so much that when they finished their degrees, they joined the staff. Another employee, a stay-at-home mom, was so inspired by the service she received that she went into esthetic school to become a waxer and work for Linster after finishing her degree.

“ My goal is to run a business where people can have fun and makemoney, but where they can also make a difference and be a day-maker for others,” Linster says. “ You want it to be a place where people feel like it's a home and a family.”

2. Everything is better with a support system.

If you ask Linster, one of the best things about joining a franchise system is there is already a structure in place. “ The people behind Anytime Fitness and Waxing The City have been doing this for 14 years, so they're experts at it,” she says. “ This makes getting started that much easier because they already have teams in place that you just kind of plug-in. They have resources and processes you follow and connect the dots.”

Getting your foot in the door in the community and attracting your first customers is typically easier with an established brand. Additionally, having that corporate support system means never having to solve problems alone.

But even more valuable for many franchisees is the network of other franchisees. “ You're in business for yourself, but you're not by yourself,” Linster says. “ We tap into this network of owners and it's helped us solve problems and grow faster. Time and money are precious and if you can conserve both, then your business is likely to succeed more rapidly.”

3. Have a vision and keep pushing forward.

Spence may own 22 gyms today, but of course he didn't start with that many. With just enough capital to open one gym, he and his partner worked their way up and grew organically.

At first, Spence planned to own only five Anytime Fitness locations. “ We figured we'd be happy there and that would be the end,” Spence says. “ When we hit five gyms, my partner and I looked at each other and knew we just had to keep going.”

Throughout the process, they've kept their goal of creating exceptional customer experiences front-of-mind. Preventing themselves from getting sidetracked has kept them resilient. No matter what happened, they knew they were working to help people get to a better place in their lives, and they were always making progress on that.

4. Never stop learning.

While you don't need to be an expert in every aspect of your business, you need to know them well enough to manage the people that you've hired to run each part of the company. And always be ready for change.

“ Your company is changing so rapidly and you need to make sure you can keep up,” Spence says. Making sure you can help your managers succeed will, in turn, help your business be successful as a whole.

Part of training management means understanding how your business is going to scale. You have to ask yourself if what you're doing is going to work when you start growing.

“ Know what your business looks like today and picture what it will look like when you have 20 locations,” Spence says. “ We've got our 23rd gym under construction right now and our next threshold is to operate 30 gyms. Take your vision and make that into a plan. That's how we keep growing and pushing our thresholds.”

By evolving as you go, you'll be able to achieve more difficult and ambitious goals. After all, isn't that what every entrepreneur dreams of?

For information about Anytime Fitness franchise opportunities, visit .