

4 ways chocolate-chip cookies helped an entrepreneur become a better leader

[Business](#), [Industries](#)



\n[[toc title="Table of Contents"](#)]\n

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1. [1. Enjoy yourself.](#) \n \t
2. [2. Build your reputation.](#) \n \t
3. [3. Focus.](#) \n \t
4. [4. Ask.](#) \n

\n[/toc]\n \n

Usually when you first hear about a entrepreneur it's for what their company has done. When I first heard about , it wasn't about his business savvy or what he had done; it was about his love for cookies.

More specifically, the #cookielife, an oddball movement where people from all over the world send him cookies. The start of #cookielife began as a neat way to deepen his connections. As a entrepreneur, Sol realized he needed a way for people to easily remember him. What started as a cookie competition with five people, quickly grew across his network. As of this writing, more than 60 people this year alone have sent Sol cookies in the mail.

What makes this really intriguing is what Sol has been able to accomplish. Having started his first online business in 1999, he's been able to create three seven-figure businesses, all in completely different industries (online gaming, local search and nutrition). His most recent, , which garners more than 2 million visitors a month, is considered the trusted and unbiased

source for nutrition and supplements. It has even got him on board as a digital adviser to Arnold Schwarzenegger.

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Learning more about the #cookielifemovement, I realized it lends itself to four important business lessons:

1. Enjoy yourself.

Too many entrepreneurs forget that running a business, while definitely involving hustle and grit, is not meant to wear you down to a breaking point. The entire reason #cookielifemovement started was simply because Sol loved chocolate chip cookies. As he hustled his way to the top, he wanted a enjoyable way to interact with new connections. Take your business seriously, but don't forget to enjoy the entire journey.

2. Build your reputation.

A strong reputation makes it incredibly easy to sell. For better or worse, there's a reason why celebrities are paid large amounts of money to endorse products. When I first heard about Sol, it was about the #cookielifemovement. People associated him with cookies. Though he isn't paid by any cookie companies just yet, when you hear about his love for cookies you also find out about his business successes.

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It was this strong reputation that got him on board the Schwarzenegger team. Similarly, at a recent event where Sol was a speaker alongside Tim

Ferriss and Noah Kagan, sold at a purchase price of \$5,000 a ticket simply by telling his audience.

Your reputation is built up over time. Once it's established, you can use it to offer something of value and your audience will pick it up.

3. Focus.

Entrepreneurs often try to do too many things at once. Not only that, they focus on too many market segments, making themselves to be a generic company that works in multiple niches, instead of being the dominant company in one niche.

When Sol originally started the #cookielifelife, it was just about chocolate chip cookies. After a while, people started sending him all kinds of cookies. Since then, he now receives in the mail.

Examine.com was built up in a similar vein. Originally it covered body building supplements. Then fitness supplements. Then all supplements. And finally nutrition. By focusing on dominating each niche bit by bit, Examine.com was able to build itself as the trusted source.

Focus on your niche so that you become so good people can't ignore, and then worry about expanding

4. Ask.

The biggest mistake entrepreneurs usually make is that they do not go for the ask. Too many people feel shy or sleazy about asking for the sale, but

without revenue, your business will fail! If you provide something of value, people will pay.

Originally, Sol helped host a . After posting it on Facebook, people in his network started saying how they could make better cookies. With most people, the story would end there. But Sol went for the ask and told them to prove it by shipping their cookies to him.

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You won't make sales unless you ask for someone to pay you.

Though Sol's #cookielifelife story is unusual, examples from it relate directly to key business tactics to become a success. As an entrepreneur, you always need to find ways to stick out in your network and be remembered. If you're looking to build a reputation, enjoy yourself as an entrepreneur and focus. It's time to find a creative way to do so.