

This entrepreneur lost his sight: here's what he 'saw' next



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In 2007, entrepreneur and music artist Michael Nova was on top of the world. He had founded a successful business, . He was busy giving back to the community through his work with Metrofly, a non-profit organization he had co-founded to host charitable events.

And, he had just begun work on an inspirational film and multi-media project that would garner fans around the world. Related;; Then, seemingly overnight, Nova lost his vision due to a mysterious illness.; My life changed overnight,; he remembers. ; I was hit with multiple physical ailments all at once.

It was when I lost my vision that I could truly see . I became thankful for every breath. Things that we never even think about that we take for granted each day, like the sense of sight, suddenly became precious. I learned to appreciate everything.

; But Nova's story doesn't end there. Not only did he make a miraculous recovery — his sense of sight is now restored — but he's more committed today than ever before to affecting positive change on the world around him. And that starts with his business.“ In the business world, it's easy to focus only on the bottom line,” Nova says. “ We lose sight of how we treat our customers and our employees. We focus on what's ' good for business,' which becomes code for ' what's good for profits.

' Losing my vision due to illness and miraculously regaining it helped me 'see' for the first time what matters in life and business. What is important is the relationships we build with one another." Nova has always been a leader in customer satisfaction. His company has received the " Best of Manhattan" award in label printing for three consecutive years and shows no signs of slowing down. Here's what Nova says are his secrets to success:

1. Believe in yourself above all else.

" If you don't trust yourself and your instincts, you can't get ahead," Nova says. For years, he worked at a day job he hated until one day he decided enough was enough. He knew that if he didn't believe in himself, no one else would, either." I ate tuna out of a can for a year and hustled 24/7," Nova says.

" But I never gave up. Through this process, I realized that some people live their lives locked in a cell called 'beliefs.' They let limiting beliefs prevent them from taking any risks to achieve their dreams. Stepping outside that cell is tough and scary, but it's necessary to truly live life. Trust that what you are doing will work, despite what anyone says.

Believe in yourself." Related:

2. Get serious about business finance.

While Nova bootstrapped his business — going so far as to live off canned tuna for months to make ends meet — he also knew that he needed to get serious about business credit so his company could grow." Bootstrapping your business can work for an initial startup period, but at some point you

will need to take out a loan to expand or purchase new equipment," Nova says.

" You won't be approved for a loan without substantial business credit. Entrepreneurs like to focus on the 'passion' that drives their business, but it's equally important to be realistic about the tools it takes for expansion and growth." Small business loans can help cover cash flow troubles, equipment repairs or upgrades, inventory purchases and even marketing needs. To , you'll need excellent credit.

Learn , how this score is different from personal credit ratings and in the first place. Take the time to learn about credit scores and financing options *before* you need an emergency cash influx. Learning about business finance may not be as exciting or rewarding as building customer relationships or perfecting personalized service, but it's just as critical for advancing your entrepreneurial vision.

3. Prioritize customers over profit, every time.

All too often, businesses make sweeping " money-back guarantee" promises to , but then make customers jump through so many hoops they never actually get their money back.

Nova has no patience for this approach to business. His mission: Delight the client each and every time." Clients can always tell when you obsess over every penny," Nova says. " Even if it means losing money on a job, if the customer is a good customer, take the hit, and you will be rewarded later. The more people you can make happy, the better it will be for your business.

Word-of-mouth is powerful, and you want it on your side. Do right by the customer.”

4. Personalization matters.

In an age of mass production and mass consumption, Nova's highly personalized approach to business is refreshing. For example, rather than offering one-size-fits-all printing options at his label company, he makes sure every order is custom. He delivers this high level of customization while still providing the fastest turnaround in the industry, proving that you can provide .“ All too often, we assume that automation is necessary for success,” Nova says. “ Yes, certain marketing tasks will benefit from automation. But, never automate customer service.

A personal connection still matters. That’s why we still offer custom quotes rather than automated online orders. A real human works with every client to deliver exactly what he or she needs.”, depending on your business.

Find what works for your customers and deliver each and every time.

Related: *Bottom line:* Nova's journey to entrepreneurial success began like many small business owners’ journeys do: He was fed up working for other companies and ready to be his boss. But his story took an unusual, and shocking, turn. Only by losing his vision, Nova says, did he become truly able to “ see” what matters most for his business and any other business: people over profits, every time.