

*Caffè Business*

# *How to Guide*

*Section 1*



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**caffè**  
**CULTURE**

# The Big Question

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During the twenty years that we have owned or advised literally hundreds of start up coffee shops there has emerged one key question that, if answered correctly, will have a huge effect on the success or failure of the enterprise.

So much of our message normally revolves around the need to treat your enterprise like a business and focus on the profit but this question covers a very different and somewhat more esoteric place.

## So what is this question?

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To find out the ten big mistakes that we see coffee shop owners making make sure you check out [www.tenbigmistakes.com](http://www.tenbigmistakes.com)

## Do you have the passionate desire to create something truly unique and great?

That sounds simplistic and almost trite but you should underestimate it at your peril. The simple fact is that once you start your business you will be assaulted on all fronts by people who want to dilute the original concept that you carefully crafted in your mind. Unless you have an almost messianic passion for what it is that you wanted to do you will find yourself worn down by these people and inch by inch you'll end up bending your concept towards something that is anodyne and mediocre. And in today's tough economy a business like that will never survive.

If you don't start with passionate desire to create something great then you'll be even more susceptible to these concept diluters and you'll find yourself out of business in record time.

## So who are these people that will wear you down and want to dilute this great original idea?

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### 1/ Salesmen

The people that supply you with goods and services will generally be trying to sell you their product based upon how easy it will make your life or how much extra profit it can make you. The minute you hear the famous words “the customer will never know” you know to put the phone down or forcibly eject the person who uttered that sentence from your business. The customer WILL know. You cannot create a great business that your staff and customers will buy into if you’re cutting corners for ease of production or cost at every turn.

### 2/ Friends and family

Sometimes those who are nearest and dearest to you will become increasingly exasperated by the long hours and madness that you seem to be subjecting yourself to in an effort to create this great new business. And, with good intentions, they too will urge you to “take it easy” or “ease off a bit” as you run around like a mad man instilling passion and drive into your employees or working until 3.00 a.m. to make sure something new you’ve been working on is just right.

The problem with these 3.00 a.m. sessions is that they very often end up in failure and that’s when you’re at your most vulnerable. But what you mustn’t do is take this well meaning advice and give up. You regroup the next day and get back on the horse.

### 3/ Struggling business acquaintances

Struggling business friends are something to be avoided like the plague. The simple reality is that there are lots of people out there having great success in the coffee business and lots who aren’t. Those who aren’t are desperate for people to blame (the government, staff, landlords etc.) and desperate to have people to moan to who will sympathise with them. Make sure that isn’t you. If you can’t find successful people in your area to spend time with then speak to us about one of our mastermind groups. Masterminding with like minded business owners is one of the fastest ways to make huge leaps forward in your business. Hanging around with moaning people who are struggling is a great way to find yourself in bankruptcy court.

### 4/ Staff

Your staff will, in most cases, be keen for you to take the easy option in terms of running the business since that will generally make their lives easier. You’ll find yourself being endlessly worn down with lines such as “we keep getting asked for XXX” or “all the customers want YYY”. Generally, despite well meaning advice from business theorists to “listen to your customers”, this is nonsense. All of your research into what your customers actually want needs to come from proper trials and the evidence in your tills. Do not bend based on what one or two customers “may” have said to your staff.

Instead your job is to instil this passion for a great product and wonderful service, even if it is a pain to deliver, to all who work for you. Your job is to get them to buy into the fact that you’re doing something really great and that they can be a part of it. Something dramatically better than the competition are doing.

This kind of slightly over the top passion is very appealing to the very best staff out there and you’ll gradually find, by sticking to your guns, that these people start to approach you looking for work rather than you endlessly having to complain that you can’t find great staff. The complaint that there are “no good staff” out there is a key indicator of a bad business. There are lots of great people out there but generally they have no interest in working for a mediocre business.

So if you’re starting out make sure you can answer this question with a resounding yes. And if you’re already operating but feel that your great business concept has been diluted then now is the time to do something about it. You need to march back in and reclaim that dream and provide a truly memorable and great experience for your customers - even if that is hard work and does cause you and your staff some short term pain. It’s the only way to ensure that your business thrives in testing economic times.