

Fully franked

The soul of small business: Part Two

Define your mission

By Frank Frikker

Mission: (latin: mittere): send out, dispatch.

WHY are you in the business you're in? What moves you? What is your mission?

Before you say, "the money," consider this. Suppose you run an ice-cream parlour, are you in that business because you want to bring lovely choices and tastes to the public? Is ice-cream your passion? If so, then your 'mission' would be something like 'bringing good ice-cream to the people'.

Funny though that may sound, you'd likely find that your customers *keep coming back to you* because you have passion and therefore you care about quality and so on.

If, however, you just bought the business because it was cheap and you thought, oh well, I can do this, you might still be successful, (everybody likes ice-cream), but as soon as you have a competitor who does it because they love it, then some of your customers may start to prefer *their* icecream.

So, if you *care* about what you are selling, if your mission is related to your product or service, then you will have taken a step forward in your business.

Your mission is, of course, related to your core values, (which we spoke about last month), and once you have defined those values and worked out what's important to you in your life, then of course it should be nearly impossible to have a mission *contrary* to those values.

For example, if you're thinking about taking over the local icecream parlour but you're shy and don't really feel comfortable dealing with the public, or you detest working such long hours, then it's probably not a good idea to proceed.

However, what happens if, like some in Port Douglas, you find yourself in a business that isn't satisfying you? Maybe you're making money but you're not happy. Time to revisit what your core values are and what your real mission is.

Let's say you run a kebab shop or pizza bar but your *real* passion is for more sophisticated food and presentation styles. You might be getting bored, or even starting to resent your customers for their 'simple' tastes. This is when you could consider reorganising your business, introducing new lines, etc. Then, when your values, mission and product come together, your business becomes less of a chore and your passion infectious, motivating staff and enthusing customers.

It's like the musician who knows they are probably not going to make much money but who just has to go out there and sing. Everyone in Port who's seen Ben Jammin', and the smile he has when he sings, can see that he's just full of love for the music and that's why he's good and why people love him.

If Ben went to work in an office just to earn more money, I'm sure he would suffer because that would *not* be his mission.

Next month: Defining your vision.