

## **Making “Smart” Business Decisions**

Christine Perakis

When we are running our businesses and careers, making decisions on which depend our livelihoods, our cash flow and the future sustainability of the business or career. With so much riding on these decisions, we often act out of fear, pressure, a misperception that what is right in front of us is the only choice, or some notion that we have to finish what we started.

Rarely can we imagine, caught up in those moments, that there are other choices, infinite possibilities that may even be better for us, for our business, for our cash flow or other needs. When a situation looks out of control, when we are under pressure to complete a task, meet a self-imposed, arbitrary time schedule, generate much-needed cash flow, we forget to ask ourselves about the motivations behind our choices, and how we could look at the situation or task differently. We don't ask, “What is the choice that best takes care of me?” We make critical decisions in the wake of these pressures that cause us to feel that there are no other options. The truth is that we imprison ourselves with our own limited perceptions at a most critical time.

In over two decades of working with hundreds of clients in diverse business situations and negotiations, I have witnessed the impact of getting locked into ‘the way it has to be’ because of the perception of limitations in the decision-making process. As an entrepreneur and owner of multiple businesses, I have found myself in that position many times, pushing hard for something that was started, that seemed right at first and turned into a struggle over the course of landing that “thing”. We get locked in, compromised, and contorted in the struggle to conclude the deal, relationship, new venture, or financing that we see as the only choice in that moment. All of this stress is avoidable if we learn what making a “smart” business decisions means.

Where do the highest yielding and best ideas come from in the first place? What separates a multi-millionaire entrepreneur from someone who can't seem to get a venture off the ground? Most would agree that instincts, intuition and appetite for risk are important aspects of a formula for success. Entrepreneurs and people who are successful in their careers are those who act from an intuitive sense that

what they are doing is right. They are inspired. They feel a strong urge in their being. They are willing to take risks even without a lot of evidence that what they are doing makes sense. These are the first steps to creating something meaningful, great and fulfilling in the world. And all along the way from that first step is the minefield of decision-making where even these highly intuitive people get locked down by not looking for the *smart* decision.

What is it that separates the inspired entrepreneur who intuitively takes these first steps from the business owner who finds himself in a difficult decision-making process, struggling with tasks and relationships? It is the failure to look holistically at a situation. It is a lack of understanding that there are other possibilities, other opportunities beyond the one that has become so challenging. The business owner, carrying the responsibility of making a living, sustaining the business, and 'solving the problem', becomes inflexible. He is unwilling or unable to look beyond what is in front of him and know that if the current situation stops 'feeling' right, a better option may be available, or at a minimum, there is freedom even in the current situation that just isn't being seen. Worse, the business owner often sacrifices his wellbeing to the 'advancement' of the business.

There are physical indicators signaling that a decision is being made from a perception of limitation that could lead to a bad result. Your stomach tightens. Your anxiety level rises, you feel stressed, you're worried, you can't stop thinking about the decision or task, and you don't sleep well, awaking throughout the night. You don't feel that you have any other options, you are locked in, and no one is looking out for what serves you first and foremost. The business decision or task takes over and you feel lost – imprisoned in it.

Learn to ask, "What do I really want?" Developing a practice of putting yourself first and listening to the very real, physical signals that your body sends you about what you are doing can bring you much greater peace around your decisions and, most importantly, help you to make the "smart" decision *for your business and you*.

You know the difference when you are treating yourself kindly while you are not working your business or job. You have fun doing what you enjoy, taking vacations, getting a massage or spa treatments, or having a nice dinner. *Being*

*kind to yourself does not have to end with your leisure time. In fact, it is essential that you learn to be kind to your Self in your business or career.* Learning how to ask yourself,

What serves me in this situation?

What will bring me greater ease, peace?

What is the kindest path for me right now?

will lead you to the freedom in decision-making that creates smart choices for you.

Making the “smart” choice may include doing research, analyzing a situation from different business angles, drawing from your own past business experience and other experts’. But above and beyond all of that, is the need to follow an important line of inquiry within your own being. Have this conversation with yourself and be honest!

Does this decision sit well inside?

Is it bringing me more ease?

Will I feel peaceful if this concludes on the track that it is on?

Do I have to compromise values or aspects of myself that I am unwilling to sacrifice? Have I gotten locked into thinking that this is the only way?

Have I given myself permission to investigate other options?

These questions can bring you around to seeing possibilities that you hadn’t considered before.

Exploring alternatives, in the heat of the decision-making moment, can bring the freedom you need, along with the ease of knowing that there are alternatives, to more fully embrace the choice that is right in front of you. In other words, the outcome is not as important as the process. That you arrive at the outcome with renewed freedom, peace, and a full embrace of that choice as the most right one for you is – the truly *smart* decision.