

Entrepreneur Jerome Cohen's business growth strategy: sustainability

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The CEO of Offlimit Communication (OLC), Jerome Cohen, has a rich history in entrepreneurship and business development. Over the last decade, he has managed to move brands and businesses at large from strength to strength and Offlimit (OLC) has proved that he may know a thing or two about taking a business to the next level.



Jerome Cohen

His inspiration, when establishing the business, came from his substantial experience in sponsorship and production. With interests in new territories, he made the decision to move his sights to the corporate world and apply this very expertise to build brands by providing strong consumer experiences. This shift led to the evolution of the business – from being a pure production company to an activation agency and then a through-the-line agency.

An entrepreneur with a difference, Cohen has managed to disrupt the industry with his keen business sense and innovative streak, yet without having the traditional agency experience commonly found among his peers. His entrepreneurial tactics and business strategy have served Offlimit well over the years, ensuring

the business remains agile, on-trend and continues to deliver top-notch through-the-line offerings to high-profile clients.

“ *“There is only one boss. The customer. And he can fire everybody in the company from the chairman on down, simply by spending his money somewhere else.” – Sam Walton* ”

Cohen is a Tony Robbins enthusiast and has taken Robbins' wisdom and successfully and holistically applied it to his life and work. Cohen places great importance on building a sustainable business, above all else, especially in these uncertain economic times. He has also created a culture within the organisation of turning clients into raving fans.

“The value of a business is based entirely on its sustainability and future streams of earnings. Keen attention must be paid to the ‘concentration’ risk in order to make it sustainable.”

“Client budgets are shrinking globally. It’s more important than ever to innovate and anticipate,” Cohen says. A company should be concerned about serving only one large client. This poses a massive risk to a business if it becomes dependent on a client for the majority of its income. It needs to expand its client base in order to reduce dependency and thereby reducing the business’s risk.

In 2010, with six years of experience in the corporate world, Offlimit pitched and won the Coca-Cola account, which paved the way for the next 10 tremendously successful years; seeing the business turnover increase exponentially. It also marks the point where the business predominantly served one large client, so he speaks from first-hand experience on the challenges that go along with that.

So, what are the solutions? How do you diversify your client base? The answer is simple yet difficult to achieve. You do this by creating raving fans out of your existing clients and fostering a raving fan culture within the organisation.

The first step according to Jerome is to get to know your clients. “What are their pressure points? What are their fears?” he says. Put yourself in their position and see how best you can serve them.

“You must understand, anticipate, and consistently fulfil the deepest needs of your clients.”

A business’s key focus should be on the customer, not the product. The relationship cultivated should be one of worship, caring, understanding and empathy where you are constantly looking for a better way to meet their needs.

The biggest mistake that most organisations make is that they fall in love with the business or products and not their clients.

The goal should be to create a level of relationship where you have more inside insight into your clients’ needs, goals and desires than they do. As a result, you should not only understand this on an intellectual level but fully and emphatically appreciate it so that you literally feel what’s going on with them.

Once you fully embrace the strategic philosophy of not just trying to make the sale but to cultivate a long-term relationship where you are looking out for your client’s best interests all the time. Only at this point will you see the business transform.

In business, it’s often the small tweaks that lead to the largest growth. Small yet incremental changes are

more likely to lead you to business success than drastic course corrections. When business isn't going as planned it's very easy to feel as if nothing is working.

The truth is, you're likely only 2mm away from where you need to be.

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