

8 SUREFIRE STEPS

TO GAIN MOMENTUM
AND GET YOUR
BUSINESS UNSTUCK

WHEN YOU HAVE ADHD

MARCIA HOECK

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of the letters 'MH' in a stylized, cursive font, with a small red dot below the 'H'.

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8 SUREFIRE STEPS TO GAIN MOMENTUM AND GET YOUR BUSINESS UNSTUCK WHEN YOU HAVE ADHD

Hey. You own your own business. Stop and think about that for a minute, and how awesome that is. You stuck your neck out, you made something out of nothing, where a business didn't exist before, even without a safety net. Or, you took over something someone else had started—you stepped up and you did it. Even when you didn't totally know what you were doing. Think about how amazing that is! Not everyone can do that. What you did scares the poop out of people who punch a time clock.

Which makes you totally awesome.

I'm a lot like you in that I absolutely love following ideas. I tried doing the 9 to 5 thing for someone else for a few years, and it didn't work for me. But what I learned after 25 years of being in business for myself is that loving ideas isn't enough—you also have to *love your business*, and you have to work on it, too. It has to be a project of yours. You cannot simply “do your ideas” and make a go of it.

So here you are. You have your great, big, terrific ideas—ideas that could revolutionize your industry. Your work is important to you. And you do wonderful things for your customers.

And, you have ADHD.

So a few of these things may have also crept into your business:

- a lack of confidence (a big client-attraction killer)
- a habit of under charging, or forgetting to invoice at all
- a struggle with marketing

- an aversion to the financial end of your businesses
- a lack of direction and focus
- stress, and
- a lack of momentum—because you don't really know where you're going. You get stuck.

The following 8 Surefire Steps for Gaining Momentum and Getting Your Business Unstuck when You Have ADHD are for you. Study them, take them to heart, and follow them, step by step—and you'll take your business where you want to go.

Step #1

Make sure your business is geared toward something you absolutely LOVE. When you have ADHD, this is a must, no exceptions. Your brain won't work if you're not doing something you're really interested in. If you're not red hot in love with your product or service, make sure you're in love with the way you deliver it, or something else about the way your business ticks, or you will be fighting an uphill battle every day. If you're not in love with your work, your brain will just not release the chemicals needed to get things done. Non-ADHD folks can punch a time clock and do things that don't interest them because their brains release the chemicals they need on cue—ours don't. See me describe this further in this youtube video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Qe2RIN2NpIM>

Step #2

Decide where you are going. If you just get in your car and sit there, it won't take you where you want to go. If you turn on your GPS but don't program your destination, you're going to be driving around in circles, and you're probably not going to like where you end up. I'm not saying you have to write a business plan—heavens no. Formal business plans were devised by bankers and

accountants and don't work for ADHD business owners. Personally, I went running for the hills with my hair on fire when asked to write a business plan by my advisors, and I never could finish one. But you can draw a flow chart or a mind map, or put together a vision board that shows your goals and what you'd like your business to look like. I know you've thought about this stuff, so just put it down on paper in whatever way you can—that will make your destination more real, and more likely that you will get there.

Step #3

Shore up your confidence. Oh yeah, easy for me to say, right? Well, hang on here a minute. I know it's not as simple as saying "just be confident," but it's not that difficult, either. To your clients and customers, if you show a lack of confidence, it looks like a lack of competence. Did you get that? If you don't look confident, you don't look like you can do the job. And I'm talking about authentic confidence, not fake confidence. I'm not going to ask you to fake it till you make it.

Without a doubt, showing confidence is the most important element in getting new work. But you don't have to be born with it. Rosabeth Moss Kanter, Harvard Business School professor and authority on the power of confidence in sports and business, has reported extensively on the four levels of confidence and the practical steps you can take to build yours, authentically.

I've been working with my clients and teaching confidence, and I agree that consistently building these four levels will help you build your confidence in practical ways:

a. your mindset—this level has to do with your own understanding that if you've done something before, you can do it again. What have you done before that gives you confidence you can do it again? What are you doing to build your mindset?

b. collaboration—this level emphasizes the importance of reaching out, having people to bounce things off of, such as peer groups, masterminds, coaches, and mentors to get validation, opinions, accountability, and support for your ideas. What kind of collaboration do you have to build your confidence? If you don't have it, can you get it?

c. systems & processes—this level has to do with putting elements in place to support your work so you're not reinventing the wheel all the time. Documenting and fine-tuning successful actions makes it more likely that you'll have success in the future, and structure gives you confidence that you're following a proven plan. What processes and systems have you put into place, and how are you fine-tuning them as you move forward?

d. external feedback—this level helps you know if you're moving in the right direction. What kind of feedback are you getting? Did your clients like it? Did you get comments, emails, registrations? The feedback you get helps you design next steps and avoid missteps in the future. What are you learning from the external feedback you get?

All of these levels work together to build your confidence. So if we know this, we can actually deconstruct these areas and work on them to build them up individually. And it gives us a much stronger leg to stand on. All of this gives us much more confidence, naturally and authentically.

Step #4

Understand, document, and talk about your difference and why people should work with you. There are lots of small businesses out there, and, no offense, but why should anyone want to do business with you? Sure, you're unique, but can you articulate your message? Do you know how

to talk about your true value in a way that makes the right people say, “*I need that!*”? Do you know who the right people for you are, and that you can’t just offer your work to everyone and expect to be heard above all the noise and hype out there? I understand that you don’t want to exclude anyone, but that fear is unfounded. Research has consistently shown that the more you narrow your market, the more people will respond to you, and the more successful your business will be.

Being able to focus on and understand your exact target market and their true needs—precisely who they are, and what burning challenge keeps them up at night—will help you define how you can help them with that, and why. Just letting them know you understand that need is a great first step. There’s a reason why specific people should work with you—what is it? Who are they? And why you?

Step #5

Get out there and let people find you. I know, this is hard, too, and something I struggle with myself. Wouldn’t it be easier if we could sit at home in our p.j.s and a steady stream of customers would just buy from us? But this step is every bit as important as the other steps, maybe more. Your customers have to know how to find you, or you’re out of business.

Yes, we’re talking about marketing here, but it doesn’t have to be icky, pushy, or salesy. I remember trying really hard to find a high quality yarn shop when my first grandchild was born. I didn’t want to bother knitting for him if I had to buy the yarn at a big box store—I wanted really special yarn. When I finally found a really nice local store, I wanted to lecture the owner—it had been so hard to find her! I had searched the internet as well as all the offline methods and her store was very difficult to find. You might be losing business too if you don’t make an effort to help your customers find you. Look at it this way—there are people out there right now who want, need,

and are actively looking for what you offer! Are you making the best use of both online and of-line ways to get the word out, depending on your business? And are you doing it consistently?

If you do this correctly for your type of business, and you do it consistently, at some point the momentum builds, and then you just might be able to occasionally sit at home in your p.j.s and people will just buy from you. It's possible. :)

Step #6

Be effectively productive. I know, you're screaming at me right now. I can hear you saying, "*I would be more productive if I could!*" You may be in the habit of chasing things down every rabbit hole. You may be a perfectionist and can't make yourself move on to the next urgent thing until you get what you're working on just right, even if it takes you all day. You could be so overwhelmed, you can't see straight. You could have the best idea in the world, but putting the pieces in order and making them work just eludes you. I understand. And so you might want to try a different tack.

If you know me at all or have worked with me, you know that one of my favorite mantras is "with structure comes freedom." Many of my clients want it the other way around. They want the freedom to work on things without the structure. They want to work "when they feel creative," because they didn't start their business to become a slave to time or schedules. You may feel this way too. I guess that's okay if your business isn't serious and you don't want to make money.

Ouch. That probably sounded harsh, didn't it? I'm going to be hard on you here for a minute. The definition of a business is "*the purchase and sale of goods and services in an attempt to make a profit,*" so obviously money is a big part of it. And you can't make money if you don't have reli-

able systems with which to do so. Really, you can be creative just to be creative in your free time. During business time, you have to set up structures to be productive.

You may say it's boring to work by a system, and as an ADHDer, you don't work well with boredom. That's true about the boredom part. But my experience with ADHDers is that without systems, ADHDers run amok. Without systems, you miss a wonderful boost to your productivity, a boost that will cut the anxiety and make you feel great. And while systems may sound boring, after they're set up, they can be a great source of comfort, focus, and productivity—as well as adding to the confidence factor mentioned in #3, above.

You can set up systems to:

- make the best use of your time,
 - make sure you're working on things that matter,
 - move you closer to your goals,
 - make routine things happen automatically,
 - keep you focused,
 - sustain momentum,
 - shore up your weak memory,
 - keep you from reinventing the wheel,
 - keep you more organized,
 - prioritize your work load,
- etc.

Watch me describe a simple system to prioritize your workload on youtube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mkCWS6-rmdM>

Step #7

Don't try to do everything on your own. We are the quintessential "I can do it myself" people, aren't we? ADHDers think we can (or should) do everything, or we think no one will understand or do it as well as we do—so we try to do it all ourselves. This is no way to be successful in business.

I heard a story about Richard Branson, the founder of Virgin Group, which represents more than 400 companies. The story is that an up-and-coming business owner, proud of his success, was talking to Branson about the many things he did in his multi-million dollar company. Unimpressed, Branson said to the man, "You'll never be a billionaire. You aren't letting go, and you're doing way too many things yourself." I haven't been able to verify the story, but I love the message. A lot of running a business has to do with understanding what you do well, what only you can do in your business, and doing that—and *getting the rest of the stuff off of your plate*.

Are you the genius in your business? Did you start your business because you had a really great idea—and now you spend a lot of your day doing your bookkeeping (or some other task that someone else could do) instead? Aha! You do! You do realize you can get bookkeepers for a fraction of what your time is worth, right? And they're probably much better at keeping books than you are. (This is just an example. If your business is bookkeeping, and that's what you love, carry on!) Or what if a high school kid did that task you're not good at for you, at minimum wage? These are just examples, and I know you get the idea.

The point here is to start thinking about your business differently. Just because you *can* do everything doesn't mean you *should*. Make a list of things *only you can do* in your business and try to figure out how to either eliminate, systemize, shorten, or find someone else to do the rest. Then watch your business pick up speed because you're concentrating on the important stuff.

Step #8

Pay close attention to your money. Oh, boy. This is a tough one, and it's a double whammy, too. Money can be a sore spot for most ADHDers, whether you own a business or not, and it's also a problem area for many non-ADHD business owners. When you own a business *and* have ADHD, it can cause extra trouble. We need and want to make it—we often just don't know how to work with it. And sometimes, we don't even like to look at it.

Many ADHDers have grown up with money issues, and you may have your own personal money challenges and beliefs.

These self-defeating beliefs may include things like:

- It's bad to make money.
- Money is the root of all evil.
- You should just help people and not be concerned about money, that's greedy.
- Money is really hard to make, and your family never had money. Will they think less of you if you make more than they do?
- Money doesn't grow on trees, so it will be really difficult for you to make money in your business.
- Or how about this one—you just can't handle money because you're so irresponsible.

These are all mindset issues, and beliefs people have attached to money. *And a belief is simply something you give power to by continuing to think it.* You can change your beliefs about money so they stop holding you back.

When you know what money really means to your business and how to think about it, it puts you in charge. When you know where the money is in your business by tracking it and looking

at it regularly, you gain peace of mind. When you know what to measure, it becomes interesting and helpful, and you want to do it more. When you understand the exchange of resources with your clients and charge appropriately for your work, you feel better about the money you make.

So go ahead, look at your money. It's not going to be as bad as you think it is. And if it is bad, better to know now so you can fix it.

Then, start tracking things that influence your money, like:

- how many new customers you gain per month,
- how much each of them spends, and
- how long they take to pay,
- the number of incoming calls you get,
- the number of referrals, emails, social media followers, and
- anything that shows how your business grows.

Track anything that makes sense to you, and you'll start to see patterns, as well as ways you're letting money leak through your business.

Are you up to date on your billing?

Are you charging enough?

Do you have clients who are more trouble than they're worth?

You can fix these money problems if you know they're there. But first you have to pay attention to your money.

So that's it.

So there you have it—the entire 8 Surefire Steps. They may look a bit daunting, but I'm not asking you to do them all at once. Start with Step #1, and when you feel you've got it handled, move on to Step #2. You didn't build your business overnight and you won't pick up momentum and get unstuck overnight, either. But you can start to unravel your stuck-ness if you follow these steps.

Read this report often. Read it all the way through each time you work on one of the steps, and make notes of any ideas you get. It's okay if you get ideas for Step #6 while you're still working on Step #3—many of the steps overlap a bit, and you can work in a few of the steps at the same time. Just don't try to do it all at once, or you'll get overwhelmed and quit. Then you'll be right back where you started, stuck and overwhelmed again.

If you want more detail, worksheets, inspiration, and step-by-step instructions for digging deep into each of these steps, check out my “Step-by-Step Business Blueprint: 39 Success Strategies to Run a Profitable Business when You Have ADHD,” at www.marciahoeckbiz.com/blueprint.

Thanks for reading!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Marcia" with a long, sweeping underline.

Marcia

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