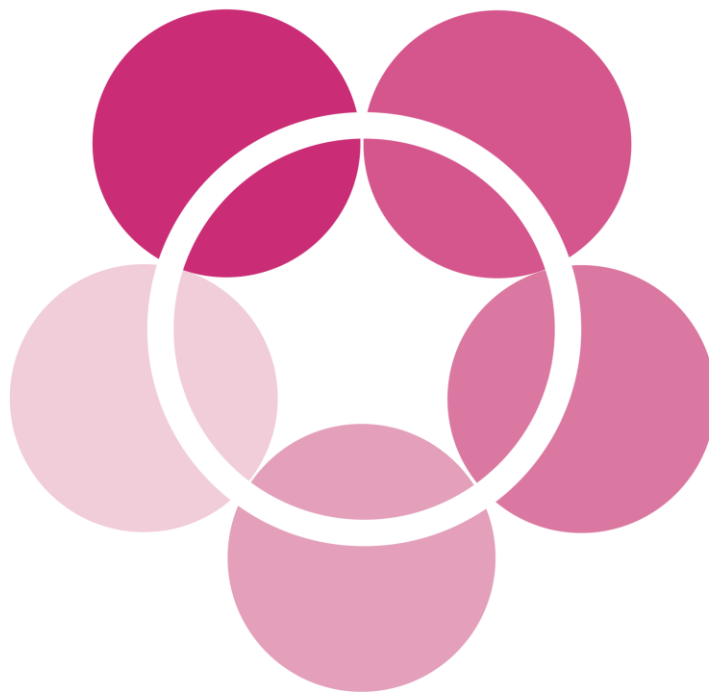


# **Start-Up Success Recipes**



**for**  
**Business Women**

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# Ordinary questions most business start-ups would ask

Starting up a new business can seem scary. We should know, we've all been there!

To help you on the road to success, we've put together a set of helpful tips, our "Success Recipes", which we have based on our own experiences of starting out on our own. You may identify with some of these questions/concerns:

**"What is social networking – help I'm confused?"**

**"I'm not really photogenic; can I manage without a photo?"**

**"I know I need to use the internet to market my website, but I don't know where to start, it seems really difficult."**

**"I tried to write something interesting about myself but it reads like a job description. How can I liven it up?"**

**"I know I'm good at what I do but how do I make sure that people choose me over the competition?"**

**"I know I need to get out there and meet people but quite frankly, it's scary. What if I don't know what to say?"**

**"How can I regain the support and advice I got working for a corporation, without giving up my dream?"**

**"How can I make sure I get paid on time?"**

We hope that by following these recipes, you will see that starting up a business really is easier than it first seems and that you will soon be sharing your own tips with the next wave of aspiring businesswomen!

**Good Luck from Success Network's Inner Circle Business Club members!**

# Know your market

Defining your market is easier than it might sound. First, ask yourself, **“What do I sell?”**

This will help to identify your Unique Selling Point (USP):

- Look at what you offer from the point of view of the person buying;
- Think about how your product/service will make their life easier (benefit);
- Keep it simple.

**Next, ask, “Who is my client?”**

This will help you in all aspects of your business planning, including whom to pitch your USP to!

- Create a mental picture of the person you want to talk to;
- Be very specific;
- Talk to them using their language not yours.



**Hélène Cooper is a successful accredited business coach-mentor who specialises in Marketing and can be contacted on 01635 873 070 or 07876 044498**

# Choose your words carefully

Just like meeting someone for the first time, making a good first written impression is vital.

The great thing about writing, whether for a website, networking site or CV is that you do get the chance to consider and refine your message, so once you've followed these simple tips, don't be afraid to publish!

- Make sure that your opening statement tells your readers why they should work **with you and nobody else**. Biographical information should be kept for the "About" page and then, only if relevant.
- Put yourself in the shoes of your reader. Ask yourself, "Is this holding my attention? **Am I inspired to read to the end?**"
- Whilst the Internet has changed the way we write, making it altogether less formal, it is still important to use good grammar, especially when it comes to spelling. It is always worth asking somebody you trust to proofread/edit your client-facing communications before they go out.



**Catherine Osborn is a freelance writer who offers a unique combination of creative flair and commercial expertise to take the pain out of generating well-written, compelling copy. Read her blog at [www.catherineosborn.com](http://www.catherineosborn.com) (no 'E' in Osborn!)**

# Add a little photo genius

In the UK at least, most CVs don't require a photo. However, many social networking sites do and if your customers are greeted with an ugly silhouette or another random image, they may wonder what you have to hide.

If you hate having your photo taken, you're not alone. But don't worry, just like the old saying about novels, there's also a great photo in everyone – you just need to find it!

- Wear more make-up than usual, but don't go for a complete image change. This goes for hair too.
- Make sure that the clothes you are appropriate for your line of business and remember that your new style may be different from the 'uniform' you wore for your old job. Avoid busy patterns if possible.
- Ask someone else to take your photo: self-portraits are quite easy to spot from the raised shoulders and startled expressions!
- Consider using a professional photographer; the price may be lower than you think. Tell them how you plan to use the photo so that they can offer you a package that includes an electronic copy of your photo and appropriate usage rights.



**Alison Crown is a professional photographer who specialises in corporate and family portraits.**

**See more at:**

**[www.alisoncrownphotography.co.uk/blog](http://www.alisoncrownphotography.co.uk/blog)**

# Social Networking is the way forward

People buy into people both online and offline and using social media to help build your network enables real people to have real conversations and create trusted business relationships.

- By networking and connecting in a sociable way, the conversation isn't forced, relationships form and sales follow naturally.
- People need to feel they know you, creating and maintaining your personal brand and reputation is the first step.
- Once you are known your network and visibility naturally increases, creating a wider circle of people who may become customers or may tell others about you.
- Then you build real and trusted business relationships which lead on to new opportunities and your business grows.

By demonstrating your approach, personality and capability using professional and social media, people get to know you and if they like your approach they will make contact, without the hard-sell and without you having to attend any uncomfortable networking events.

And within your social network you can ask around for recommendations, information and news from your trusted sources.

Now that approach sounds really good to me!



**Melanie Mackie has extensive social media marketing and project management experience and works as a Managing Consultant at Scarletta Media supporting and teaching business owners, solopreneurs and SME organisations how to be social and integrate social media marketing into their business. [www.scarlettamedia.com](http://www.scarlettamedia.com)**

# Connect to get your name out there

Nervous about networking? The following tips will help:

- Before attending a meeting, practise a short description of what you do, so you sound natural and confident.
- At meetings, don't be afraid to start a conversation by asking someone if they are a new too. If they are, they may be glad to have someone to speak to, and if they aren't, they may help by introducing you to someone they know.
- Ask people lots of open questions, and show you are interested in them. Make the conversation about *them*, rather than *you*. You will have opportunities to explain what you do.
- Listen carefully, to help you understand the other person' s needs. You may be able to help them, you never know!

Good Networkers recognise that networking is about building long term trusted business relationships, rather than selling!



**Ute Wiczorek-King is owner and founder of Success Network, a business support organisation for women.**

**Ute helps women to be more focused and effective, and their business to be more profitable.**

**She provides Inner Circle Business Clubs for start-ups and established businesses, as well as training, coaching, mentoring and large motivational events.**

**Her Top 10 Networking Tips can be downloaded from [www.successnetwork.org.uk](http://www.successnetwork.org.uk)**

# Invest in personal development

There is so much to learn when setting up a new business - marketing, planning, products and finance. All of which are very important, however it's equally important to look after the people in the business. Usually in the early business stage that means only one person – YOU! Always invest time in your own personal development.

- Find yourself a coach or mentor, ideally someone who has already run a successful business and is willing to help you and your business grow. Choose someone who will challenge and support you and offer constructive feedback too. All of this will provide great learning for you.
- Create your own personal development plan. Think about what am I really good at? How can I use this more? What are my areas for improvement? How can I develop these areas?
- Always build on your own skill set, for example speaking in front of a group of people? If this is something that scares you consider joining a local speakers club.
- Do attend different business meetings and exhibitions in your area. This will provide you with opportunities to meet other business people hear their business stories and give you an opportunity to share your business story. We learn from listening to other people's business experience too.

It's important that as your business grows and develops you do too!



**Mary Fraser runs FraserHR, and works with small and medium sized organisations as their in-house HR Manager. Her areas of expertise include selection and recruitment, management and development of people and legislation compliance. Visit [www.fraserhr.co.uk](http://www.fraserhr.co.uk) to learn more.**

# Make sure your website works for you!

Many talented designers can build you a beautiful website, but that doesn't guarantee website visitors will turn into customers! For that, you need to make sure it is usable as well.

Usability means how well your website persuades visitors to do what you want them to do and how easy it is for them to do what you want them to do. That could be signing up to a newsletter, sending an email or completing a purchase online.

There are several key elements which should be present on your website to capture the visitor's interest and keep them engaged throughout that process

On every sales page:

- **Benefits:** Your customers will be asking "what's in it for me?"
- **Audience clarity:** Who is this page targeted at?
- **Differentiation:** Your customers will want to know "what makes you special?"
- **Call to action:** Quick, low risk, easy, obvious

Must be on the website:

- **Experience:** testimonials, case studies
- **Proposition:** 15-25 words that explain what you do, encompassing the benefits



**Jayne Reddyhoff of The Adword Adviser: providing business focused, measurable website marketing support, delivered in plain English; helping businesses to get their websites found by Google, and convert website visitors into paying customers.**

**Look at [www.AdwordAdviser.com](http://www.AdwordAdviser.com) or call Jayne on 0800 634 6529.**

# Protect your business financially

It's easy to focus purely on making the first sale without having the right processes in place to protect your income. Avoid payment delays or default by adopting some simple "best practice" measures:

- **Know your customer.** Use their letterhead to verify company details, carry out a free check on Companies House and make sure you have the trading and registered address. Invest in a credit check report for invoices over a certain amount or ask for trade references from other suppliers.
- **Agree payment terms, price and other terms before you supply in writing.** Set out late payment charges and interest in your terms – you don't have to invoke them but it's useful to have the right to do so. Obtain written acceptance of your terms and check that your customer's order does not suggest a different arrangement.
- **Invoice accurately, clearly and promptly.** Avoid disputes and payment delays by detailing accurately all goods or services delivered. Quote customer references - missing PO references mean "payment hold" – and address the invoice correctly as the wrong company name or address on the invoice will result in it being returned or ignored.
- **Don't be afraid to ask for payment.** The only good customer is a paying customer and if you don't ask, you may not get. For large invoices, make a pro-active call before due date to make sure all is OK and don't delay contacting the customer once payment is due.



**Rita Adams is an accomplished credit control professional who helps businesses get paid without jeopardising sales relationships.**

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**[www.armcreditcontrol.co.uk](http://www.armcreditcontrol.co.uk)**



## About The Start-Up Circle:

Running your own business can be a double-edged sword. With the freedom to be your own boss comes the responsibility for all aspects of your business and identifying the right way forward is not always easy. Inner Circle Business Clubs are small peer support groups that help business women connect with people they can trust, who are happy to share their knowledge and provide feedback, advice, or even moral support when needed.

Being a member of the start-up club has been likened to being part of a team or having your own virtual board of directors.

Inner Circle's winning format was first introduced by Success Network in 2007. **Find out more at [www.successnetwork.org.uk/inner-circle](http://www.successnetwork.org.uk/inner-circle)**

## About Success Network:

Success Network is a friendly and welcoming community dedicated to supporting women in business, inspiring them and helping them to develop and grow the business. We offer motivational training and networking events, coaching, mentoring, ebooks, a large selection of free articles, a LinkedIn Community and a Success Recipe Blog.

Apart from our Inner Circle Business Club - a small private membership club for women who wish to develop their business - there are no membership fees and we welcome all women who wish to be more successful in business.

**Find out more at [www.successnetwork.org.uk](http://www.successnetwork.org.uk)**