



THE LONG TIME THE REPEAT THE ONE DAY THE SOLO THE MOM THE MILLION DOLLAR

ENTR EPRE NEUR



NO MATTER WHAT STAGE OF BUSINESS YOU'RE IN, THIS BOOK IS DEDICATED TO THOSE WHO HUNGER FOR MORE. MORE PURPOSE. MORE PASSION. MORE IMPACT.



The Founders of The Edge Agency didn't grow their business overnight. They started small, without investors and one step at a time. They faithfully stepped towards the next right thing little by little as they felt led by the Holy Spirit. Entrepreneurship may sound glamorous to some but any entrepreneur knows that's not always the case. It's a lot of hard work, late nights, self-doubt, great gain, and then back at the cycle all over again.

The decision to become a business owner is not just a professional one, it's an emotional one that impacts every area of your life. The goal of this book is to share tangible tips and advice that helped us grow in our first 3 years of business. If you don't feel qualified or equipped for entrepreneurship, we hope you're inspired knowing that anything is possible with belief beyond boundaries.











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FINAL WORDS

As high school cheerleaders, Lauren and I were fast friends. We lost touch after high school but stayed connected through the magic of social media. We reconnected over brunch during a trying time of divorce in our 20's. In that meeting, the topic turned from ex - husbands to business. We bonded over our similar entrepreneurship endeavors and recognized much alignment between our two businesses. We immediately began partnering together on small projects & created a rhythmic work flow with Lauren overseeing projects and processes while I established & managed new client relationships. With God's will at the center of our hearts, we made the prayerful decision to merge companies and leap into a new venture together! Virtual Executive Solutions and Edge Marketing Company merged creating a new entity, The Edge Agency in June, 2017. The Edge Agency's revenue has increased 53-110% year over year since inception & remained stable through the global COVID-19 pandemic and continues to rise while maintaining healthy profit margins and company culture.

Written by Alexandra Radford

This is our story

Swaw BEGINNINGS

Do not despise these small beginnings, for the Lord rejoices to see the work begin.

ZECHARIAH 4:10

CREATE ADVOCATES

From day 1, we treated the business professionally & were expectant of significant growth. We started with a few clients and treated each one like our biggest priority! We knew early on that quality service and a satisfied client would result in a long term partnership & referrals. Not only were those clients long-term, but they became advocates and ambassadors for our company. As a new business, you may not have all the answers or years of experience, but a FIGURE IT **OUT ATTITUDE** and transparency will get you far when it comes to creating client advocates.

ESTABLISH PRICING

When it comes to pricing your services, consider market value. And then, know your worth. Consider your education level & years of experience. Then, consider the unique value that you offer above & beyond your competitors. As you increase in knowledge, experience, staff, service offerings & overhead, prepare to raise your prices. Don't be afraid to let go of clients who aren't willing to pay your price. Your ideal & target audience will stick with you through price increases as long as communication and value are provided.



Join COMMUNITY



Community is defined as "a group of people living in the same place or having a particular characteristic in common." Find business & networking groups to learn from and network with as you grow your business. One resource we used is called Small Business Development Center. It's a funded business consulting service that lends support to businesses that are preventure needing help with business formation all the way to multi million dollar businesses selling to investors. They help with everything from pricing to contracts to mergers to marketing to trademarks, business planning and more! They're your knowledge resource.

Join a group of like-minded business professionals to lean on for support and advice. You'll quickly learn that few people understand the unique challenges of an entrepreneur. Surround yourself with people who have walked in your shoes and find a safe outlet to share challenges. Be teachable and always look to those coming behind you to pour into them in return.

Cash is KING!

Let's start with the difference between an accountant and a Chief Financial Officer. An accountant looks backwards at your financial history to reconcile the money coming in with the money going out. A CFO manages the duties of an accountant AND looks to the future to forecast your budget according to your growth and goals. This is one thing we wish we would have done sooner. Utilizing the expertise of a CFO will streamline cash flow, analyze trends and margins while forecasting projections. If you haven't heard it yet, you'll hear it again: Cash is King! Cash in the bank provides safety and flexibility in a shifting market, security through revenue ups and downs, opportunities to hire the best talent and invest back into the business in ways that will propel you forward.



Multiple Revenue STREAMS

Look for opportunities to offer MORE to your clients. Ask yourself: What goes well with my service offering? Do you need to add fries to the burgers you're already selling? Do most of your clients invest in another good or service when they're in the market for your current good or service? Ask your clients what their pain points are to determine how you can help them kill two birds with one stone.



Choose the Right CLIENTS





LIKEMINDED CLIENTS

When we launched, one of the first things we did was create core values & guidelines for how we would operate. We identified ideal clients & the unique value we could bring to them. One of those core guidelines for an ideal client was to work with "like minded" business owners. This has become the litmus test for whether we take on a new client or not.

In early stages of business, you may feel pressure to take on every client with a pulse but as you grow, be prepared to recognize which clients are IDEAL and match your own core values. These protective guardrails will lead to 5 star reviews and repeat clients.

PROTECT YOUR CULTURE

Not only does working with likeminded professionals make your life easier as an owner, but it makes an enjoyable working environment for your team. Protecting your team in this way brings loyalty, creates high energy & the return is employee retention.

One piece of advice we got on this topic was from a financial planner who said: "If I have to cringe every time a client calls me, I'm not taking the client."

That's one way to establish who is NOT an ideal client! Give yourself permission to say no to the "wrong fit" clients so you have more bandwidth to say YES to the right clients.

Choose the Right ROLES



Our first year in business, a primary focus was to match the right roles with the right strengths and the right team members. We got to know each other very well through personality tests, spiritual gifts test, enneagram tests, integrator vs visionary tests, DISC assessments, you name it, we took it!

As a new business, you will likely wear many hats: Administration, marketing, operations, sales, accounting, janitor...the list goes on. However, as your team grows, knowing strengths and weaknesses of team members gives insight into how each person navigates challenge & how to best communicate with and understand them.

The Power of VISION BOARDS



"WRITE DOWN THE REVELATION AND MAKE IT PLAIN ON TABLETS SO THAT A MESSENGER MAY RUN WITH IT."

HABAKKUK 2:2

Simply put, creating a vision board consists of writing down, drawing or printing pictures of your dreams and goals for the future on a board & putting it in a visible location to look at daily. Vision boards are a fun way to daydream and identify true desires. By looking at the vision board daily, it triggers your brain to remember your true desires and the law of attraction does the rest! The law of attraction says that whatever you put into the universe, you attract! I encourage vision board creators to include the 7 major life areas on their boards: Financial, Career, Family, Self, Social, Spiritual & Relationships. Simply setting your intention & visualizing it, swings open the door for opportunities to come to you. Get ready for coincidences to follow you around once you put your goals out into the universe!





Accoring to PSYCHOLOGY TODAY

The same physical effects took place in a weight lifters brain when he visualized weight lifting as

Actually weight lifting.



Your turn!

VISUALIZE

What you focus on expands

Focus on a feeling
Use Images of past happy memories
Key words + themes
5 senses

es l

MARGIN

Leave room for change

Leave room to add new goals Remove items that no longer fit Update it every 6 months or so

SET THE MOOD

Create a sacred space

Music

Candles

Cork Board

Coffee/Wine

Friends

TIPS FOR SUCCESS

Make it work for you

Be specific

Dream big

Short term

Long term

Save the items as they come true

AREAS OF FOCUS

Major life areas

Spiritual

Self

Marriage/Relationship

Family

Friends

Career

Finances





Leaders are Always LEARNING

In 2017, a business conference called The Business Boutique hosted by Christy Wright brought us to Nashville to learn about marketing, entrepreneurship, financial management and more from Dave Ramsey and his team. Sarah Jakes Roberts brought a powerful word from the Lord in her session with hundreds of new business owners. It was an impactful conference where we confirmed that we were doing a lot right, left with some new takeaways and renewed inspiration for our business. With this event, came a turning point for Edge. As I soaked in the speakers messages, I was still employed by Corporate America and growing Edge "on the side." But our business was approaching a revenue tipping point that would make more sense for me to leave Corporate America - for good. As a single mom of two, this was a calculated risk I would be ready to take ONLY when it made financial sense.

There was a moment at this conference where we were told to write a letter to another woman in the room. The letters would be dispersed at the end. Ultimately, the letter we wrote was a letter to ourselves. I still have that letter and it reminds me of the moment I knew leaving Corporate America wasn't far off.



As I've weathered ups and downs of Entrepreneurship over a few years, I cherish the memory of this conference where I knew this dream would become a reality. It's such a good feeling when we allow ourselves to believe that our biggest goals are truly possible. Because they are. Take advantage of every opportunity to stay inspired.



Create

Fresh off the conference and full of passion, we focused on creating a workplace that would allow employees to thrive. We never wanted our team to dread Mondays or rush out the door drained and exhausted at 4:59PM. Through an internal company branding session, we developed our tagline, mission statement and core values. This is the foundation of our business and reflects the atmosphere we work every day to establish.





CORE VALUES

integrity.

We're honest and care about being good humans. God gives us the strength to be moral and upright! Even in difficult situations, you'll feel respected and treated fairly.

commitment.

We're invested in your business and our craft. We are always learning to be better for you, get excited!

collaborative.

We're constantly collaborating as a team to give you the BEST. Your final product will be creative and custom!

contagious.

With high and positive energy, we're passionate about everything we do. We'll keep you coming back project after project!

excellence.

We are committed to handling every opportunity with grit & grace. We're not perfect but we try our hardest, you'll see!

prayerful.

We consistently pray for our clients, our team and our business. We're about radical dependence on Him. We're always rooting for you!

intentional.

We want every moment, every decision and every design to count! We are crazy thoughtful and full of purpose, you'll feel it!

supportive.

We are here for you and we are here for each other. This is a true partnership. You will always feel important and know that we've got your back!

BRAND PROMISE

We promise to care about you and your business like it's our own! We approach every situation with the utmost professionalism. We are committed to upholding our core values and providing you with the best partnership possible.

MISSION STATEMENT

Our mission is to bring peace to like-minded business professionals through a marketing partnership. We create, maintain and oversee the integrity of your brand, design and marketing tactics.

CULTURE COMMITMENT

Always a touch of special!

1/2 day off per month Flex Vacation

Quarterly Serve Days

Work Anniversary - Paid Day Off Birthdays - Paid Day Off

Sundays OFF Annual Summer Family Day Thanksgiving Potluck

Monday Morning Prayer & Devotional Culture Committee Quarterly Team Building Personal & Professional Development Workshops Leadership Training and/or Continuing Education Philanthropy Involvement & Engagement Mental Health Resources

Long-term Employee Commitment Rewards:

5 Years: One week cruise experience w/paid time off *Set travel allotment

10 Years: One month vacation experience for one person *Set travel allotment

LISTEN TO YOUR TEAM

Now that there is a written and expressed message of your culture, it becomes a reality when it's acted out day in and day out. For us, communication has been essential to the development of our culture. We communicate through weekly team meetings, daily project support and quarterly employee reviews with expressed expectations and Key Performance Indicators. We conduct surveys so that we are able to listen to the needs of our team.

GESTALT

Gestalt communication insists that a situation is best viewed as a whole rather than by individual parts. This communication method involves listening without "giving advice" or telling someone what they "should do" or "ought to do." Instead, when presented with a conflict or challenge, team members are encouraged to share their first-hand experience on that topic to give increased insight to the situation as a whole. Beyond experience sharing, it's important to ask probing questions to make sure the challenge has been viewed holistically and open up new ways of thinking around the subject. This way of communicating leans into the fact that our brains naturally recognize patterns which allow us to make our own informed decisions confidently and prudently. Gestalt communication allows for increased self awareness, improved communicationskills and more satisfying relationships with those around us.





"I believe that everyone deserves to find purpose within work & outside of work. Many people struggle finding purpose at work & I have to ask the question: Why settle? Why not do what you love to do? What is it that your soul truly desires? Figure out your "why" & fiercely run at your purpose full force."

> LINDSEY HOGAN, MARKETING MANAGER

KPI's are Key Performance Indicators. These are parameters an employer creates to determine if a job duty has been fulfilled. KPI's vary depending on job role. However, one KPI that we incorporate for all of our team members regardless of their role is "WOW Factors." Each team member is tasked with implementing 3 WOW Factors per month. This is where they go above and beyond to add value to a client or team member. Whether it's spending a little extra time on a project to make it perfect, going the extra mile to help a teammate or leaving a lasting impression with an over the top, sincere thank you. These small details create a memory for the client.

Now Factors

Self Care

As new business owners, we were warned that burn out would follow overextending ourselves. While no one wants to feel mentally, physically or spiritually drained, working yourself to the bone seemed to be a rite of passage in the world of entrepreneurship. But the truth is: You cannot give your family or team the best version of yourself when you're running on empty. So, when your internal gas light comes on, refill your tank quickly. Take a day off if you need to. Get good sleep. Eat healthy. Exercise. Do something fun. Do something just for you. Get out in nature. My partner and I implemented "swing shifts" where we give each other 1 day off per week for rest. Your team can tell when they're not getting your full capacity. Fill your tank so you can give them your best, and they can in turn, give their best.

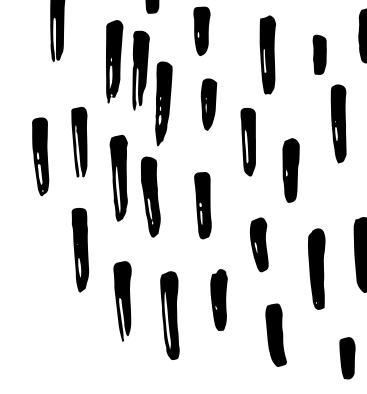
Ministry MINDSET

MINISTRY SIMPLY MEANS: TO SERVE.

Philanthropy defined is the desire to promote the welfare of others, expressed especially by the generous donation of money or time to good causes.

Philanthropy in business has the power to foster relationships with current and prospective clients, create employee engagement and build a company brand. Entrepreneur.com says, "And let's face it: good corporate citizens want to do business with others who share their values."

Knowing your purpose as a business allows light to shine through your team. We've chosen to integrate ministry into our company through philanthropy efforts, fundraising, serve days and discounted rates for non-profits. We ask our team about the causes that matter to them and partner with charities they are passionate about so they can engage and make an impact in their communities. Reaching our business goals allows us more opportunities to serve the less fortunate and creates an initiative that team members wants to be a part of reaching.



- 1 CHOOSE A CAUSE
- 2 GIVE YOUR TIME
- DECIDE HOW MUCH & OFTEN YOU'LL CONTRIBUTE
- TEAM BUILD WHILE YOU BRAND BUILD

lead with HEART



HIRE WITH HEART

We fell in love with our first hire. She was patient with us as first-time managers. She had 3 role changes and sub-par management at times. But she was exactly what we needed, and we were exactly what she needed: Strong Women Supporting other Strong Women. She became a lifelong friend to The Edge Agency and owns her own nonprofit that we partner with beyond her season of employment with Edge. Our decision to hire her was not a careless one. It was prayerful & purposeful. Since our first hire, our team has grown to 8 people and our experience has taught us that there are no surprise exits when you hire on purpose & create a culture of open communication.

VENDOR PARTNERS

Your vendors are people that are an extension of your team and should reflect the same company values as your employees. It's important to communicate about expectations, workflow, turn times and efficiency. Survey your vendors once in a while to see if there are ways you can be a better partner. These people are needed to make your business operate smoothly. Build relationships with key vendors and use them consistently.

Our primary goal as leaders is identifying

Talent & Heart

in others & choosing them as teammates, vendors & clients.

THE ESSENCE OF GREAT LEADERSHIP IS INFLUENCE, NOT AUTHORITY.

IEADER SHIP STYLES

As unique individuals, we have various giftings and leadership styles. One is not better than another but it's important to determine which style fits you best & remain authentic to your true self at all times.

My business partner and I have opposite personalities. She's type A, loves spreadsheets and accountability and is a detailed integrator. She's been like that since she was 15 and we were in the locker room before cheerleading practice. Yes, that's how long we've known each other!

My leadership style is that of a connector. I thrive building relationships, being creative & sharing our purpose with future employees & prospective clients. Although Lauren and I are naturally very different, we're both highly discerning visionaries with enterprise mindsets and have the ability to adapt and adjust to cover for each other when the situation calls for it.

I've heard it said that your ability to lead well is directly correlated to your level of self awareness, execution and ability to adapt.

Together, our complementary leadership styles allow us to offer a well-rounded, united front to our team and clients.

There are MANY leadership styles for MANY different businesses. Knowing your strengths, weaknesses, personality traits, gifts and passions is step 1. After that, authenticity and staying in the area of your strengths is key! It takes true humility & self-reflection to be a great leader.



Jour Prandis YOUR STORY

Branding is personal.

WHAT YOUR BRAND IS NOT

Before we get into the fun stuff like colors, fonts and logo design - It's important to know that your brand extends far beyond a logo. Your brand is what people say about you when you're not around. It's how you make them feel. It's how you're perceived. (Not how you want to be perceived). It's why you do what you do, how you do it that's different from others and specific to a target audience. It's the way you answer the phone, how you talk to clients, and the energy and vibe you give off everyday.

ESTABLISHING YOUR BRAND FOUNDATION & MESSAGE

To develop your brand identity, ask yourself why a client needs you over a competitor. What is different about working with YOU? What value do you offer that others don't? What are some words that describe you? What do you want people to feel when they work with you?

Exercise: Ask your last 5 clients to describe working with you in 1 word. That's your brand identity.

TARGET AUDIENCE

Create a persona for your ideal client: What type of person needs/wants your services and can afford your services? How do they make buying decisions? Online or by word of mouth? How old are they? Do they have kids? Are they married? What's their income? Do they live in the city of the suburbs? Are they religious? What motivates them? What are their fears? Why do they need you? Why do you enjoy working with them? Are they fun? Are they thorough? Once you answer these questions, People like this are your target audience!

Once you solidify words that describe your business and your ideal client, you should have a nice intersect between target audience and the value you provide.

TAGLINE AND MISSION STATEMENT

Your tagline should be a short sentence or word grouping that quickly tells your audience what you do in more detail than your name. The mission statement goes into FURTHER detail in addressing your audience directly and telling them what you do and how you're different from your competitors.

Because your brand is you.

CONSISTENT PRESENTATION OF A BRAND CAN INCREASE REVENUES BY 33%.



COLOR THEORY

Once your messaging is clear, it's time to develop colors based on the words that describe your business and attract your target audience through the psychology of color. 5 colors create a dynamic color scheme.

FONTS & PATTERNS

Your brand board should include 3 fonts: header, sub-header and body of text. Using the same colors and fonts over time builds consistency and creates loyalty. It can take 5 to 7 times seeing a new brand before it becomes recognized. This is why consistent representation of your brand is important in gaining awareness and building loyalty.

BRAND GUIDELINES

Once colors, fonts and logo are established, a style guide becomes the foundation of all future visual representation of your brand. This creates consistency building customer loyalty and trust. Client loyalty is important for retaining clients, acquiring new clients and keeping clients through downturns and mistakes.



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808285

C: 0 M: 0

R: 128 G: 130

R: 232 G: 194

R: 180 G: 114

TYPOGRAPHY CHOICES:

R: 206 G: 216

- SERIF

R: 1 G: 83:

Bodoni (book) **Bodoni (bold)**

This is a test of Fonts to see how it would look in real life form

Abraham Lincoln

This is a test of Fonts to see how it would look in real life form

— SANS SERIF

Heebo (Thin) Heebo (Light) **Heebo (Bold)** ABCDEFGHIJKLM NOPQRSTUVWXYZ abcdefghijklm nopqrstuvwxyz 1234567890

The Edge Agency

Making dreams come alive, one day at a time! **Plus**, we are super awesome.



NOW IT'S TIME TO DO SOMETHING WITH THAT

BRAND FOUNDATION!

BRAND ELEMENTS

Tagline, Mission Statement, Logo, Style Guide, Business cards, Email Signature, Website, Photography & Videography, Editable Stationary

MARKETING



Email campaigns, Mailers, Google & Facebook reviews, Website resources, Lead magnets, Videography, Calls to Action, Promotional items, Flyers, Presentations & More!

SALES

Value Proposition, Networking, Trade Shows, Cold Calling, Doing a Good Job, Referral Partners, Up-selling, Consultation, Proposal, Close the deal!

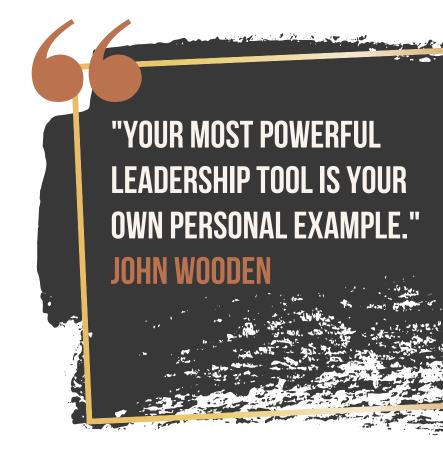


Podcasting WITH FRIENDS



TAKE THE EDGE OFF PODCAST

When we were ready to hire our 2nd employee, we wrote an offer letter in highlighter on a piece of notebook paper...to my personal best friend. She accepted the job and gave birth to our podcast, Take the Edge off. I wouldn't recommend hiring your friends to most, but it's worked out well for us! I credit this to our great respect for boundaries and desire to protect our friendship while our working relationship thrives. She spearheads our podcast where we utilize thought leadership to connect with business owners and influencers and share their stories of trial and success with our audience. This creative outlet became one of my favorite ways to bring awareness to The Edge Agency. There's an inspirational story behind all of our logos and those stories form relatable connections between consumer and brands. If you're not telling your story, start.



Partnership is like MARRIAGE

Over the last few years, our business has been thriving, so why were my partner and I in counseling together? Partnership is like a marriage. When you spend so much time together, making every decision together, talking morning, noon and night...you'll quickly see each other's flaws and weaknesses. It would be unnatural to agree on everything and it would be inhuman to not have weaknesses. Our counselor taught us a valuable lesson in communication and vulnerability. Our commitment and foundation in Christ pushed us through a tough season. It wasn't solved over-night and we still have our differences from time to time. Was it worth it going into business with a partner? For us, yes. Growth is rarely easy, pretty or fun but it's what produces maturity, patience and virtue in us. Knowing that our differences come with unique strengths that make us a well rounded duo for our company helps us to naviagte tough conversations when they arise.

If you find yourself in business with someone, we've learned this: Never assume, over-communicate, be gentle with each other and always keep resolution as the ultimate goal. BUCKLE UP, BABY! Oh, and don't be afraid to walk right into that counseling office together if necessary!

MY ADVICE TO ANYONE CONSIDERING A BUSINESS PARTNERSHIP:

IF IT'S NOT A HELL YES, IT'S A NO.



Timal WORDS

CREATE CULTURE GET A VISION DEVELOP STRATEGY HUMILITY SAYTHANK YOU BE COACHABLE EXECUTE ALLOW REST COLLABORATION SPIRIT OF PRAYER CELEBRATE THE WINS





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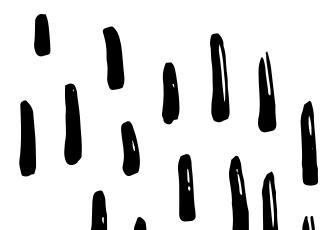
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