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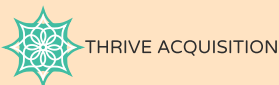
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Content is due on the 5th of each month for the following month's issue.



Dear CONNECT Readers,

As the colors of spring begin to bloom around us, I am pleased to introduce the April issue of **CONNECT**, our monthly business magazine. This season brings with it a renewed energy in the business world, and our team has worked tirelessly to capture this dynamic spirit within the pages of our latest edition.



In the April issue, you'll find insightful features on emerging trends, innovative strategies and success stories that epitomize the resilience of businesses. We're dedicated to showcasing the fresh perspectives and collaborative approaches that define the ever-evolving landscape of entrepreneurship.

As champions of local companies and communities, we are especially excited to highlight Momentum Center this month and the remarkable story of how they are making a significant impact in our area. This issue emphasizes the importance of supporting local businesses, fostering connections and building a robust foundation for sustainable growth.

Our commitment to providing valuable insights remains unwavering, and we hope the April edition serves as a source of inspiration and knowledge for you. Thank you for being a cherished part of our community.

Wishing you a season filled with growth, prosperity and the invigorating spirit of spring!

Warm regards,
Patrick Avery
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Momentum Center: A Lifeline of Hope and Joy

By Lucy Reynolds | Photos by Barbara Lee VanHorsen



MOMENTUM
The VOUS Café



Barbara Lee VanHorsen,
Founder, Momentum Center

Photo by Junebug Photography

Impactful... Brave... Collaborative... Relational... Stigma-Free.

Those are the five best words to describe Momentum Center, a beacon of hope and community support shining brightly throughout Ottawa County. Founded by compassionate mother and community activist Barbara Lee VanHorsen, Momentum Center is not just an organization, it's a lifeline for those seeking connection, understanding and joy.

With a mission to create a community where every person is fully visible and connected, Momentum Center has been making a significant impact in West Michigan since its inception. The organization's journey began in 2015 with Community Conversations, sparking discussions about needs and identifying service gaps. Mental health emerged as a recurring theme, leading to Town Halls on Mental Illness and the formation of the Mental Illness Task Force.

"That work led to the first meetings of the Momentum Center in Barber School in Grand Haven in 2017," Barbara explained. "Momentum Center provides social and recreational activities for teens and adults with mental illness, addictions and disabilities."

Momentum Center later moved its meetings to the Ferrysburg City Hall office, and from there, to another location on Columbus Avenue in Grand Haven. Excitingly, Momentum Center was able to open a facility in Holland in 2022 (the organization is actively looking for a new Holland location) and a new permanent headquarters and meeting space in Grand Haven in 2023. "Both of these were great moves for Momentum Center," Barbara said. "With two locations, we have more visibility, accessibility and flexibility in our programming."

One striking aspect of Momentum Center is its inclusivity. Membership costs just \$1 per year, and no diagnosis or referral is required. This approach reflects the organization's commitment to breaking down barriers and creating a space where everyone is welcome. "We actively practice



Momentum Center Headquarters on 7th Street in Grand Haven



Prom with a Purpose



Civil Rights Road Trip Group

inclusion,” Barbara said, “and we value radical diversity. We champion equal access and equity of opportunity through the intentional celebration of all people.”

Community engagement is at the core of Momentum Center’s activities. The organization continues to facilitate Community Conversations and hosts Town Hall meetings, fostering an environment where diverse perspectives can be shared and relationships nurtured. “Community Conversations are important opportunities to bring together people who have different feelings and beliefs to engage in conversation,” Barbara described. “Ground rules establish a safe environment where people are free to share their own thoughts and experiences and hear from others. The objective is not to prove someone right or wrong but to create and nurture relationships.”

The signature Momentum Center event is their annual “Prom with a Purpose,” a fundraiser as well as an accessible event to bring together people of various backgrounds for an evening of fun and dancing. “We were still meeting in the Ferrysburg City Hall offices when we had our first Prom with a Purpose,” Barbara remembered. “It was held on a Friday night during football season, and people had trouble finding our location. We were on-site in the gymnasium, but only about two dozen people showed up. It was a complete financial failure—we lost money—but everyone there had the best time! There was lots of dancing and lots of joy.”

These days, Prom with a Purpose takes place at the Trillium Events Center in Spring Lake, where around 500 people gather for a night of dinner, dancing and

joy. The event is always held on the third Saturday in May, so the next Prom will be held on Saturday, May 18, 2024. Tickets are \$35 per person, and formal wear is not required. Adults 18+ are invited to come together in community to celebrate Momentum Center with lots of food, friends and fun.

Not surprisingly, Momentum Center’s approach to social integration is two-fold: fun and food. “We help people have fun,” Barbara emphasized. “It’s what we do! The other way we help people socialize is through food. In Holland, we have MOO-Mentum Ice Cream Parlor, and in Grand Haven, we’re preparing to open The Vous Café. These avenues not only offer delightful treats but also serve as hubs for building connections.”

➤ Continued on page 6



Pumpkin Picking & Painting



A fun outing on a beautiful fall day



Cartoon Drawing



Bingo!

In addition, Momentum Center offers monthly Free Dinner and Movie nights in Grand Haven and Free Popcorn and Movie nights in Holland. “The Free Dinner evenings in Grand Haven provide a free hot meal to anyone in the community,” Barbara said, “and a purely social opportunity. All of these activities at both centers are open to the community as well as our members, so they also provide an opportunity for social integration of our members into the wider community. And this year we’ll also be holding our first Homecoming Celebration in Holland as well.”

One aspect that truly sets Momentum Center apart is its tangible effect on its members. “We are having a statistically significant impact on member depression, anxiety, loneliness, social connectedness and feelings of stigma,” Barbara reported. “We are giving people hope, meaning and purpose. We are literally saving lives. Families and caregivers tell us our members are gaining confidence, learning skills, and becoming participative in the community at large—including finding meaningful employment. For every dollar we receive, we create a \$4 return in community investment.”

Barbara’s personal connection to the cause adds a profound layer to Momentum Center’s story. With a son who faces schizophrenia, she understands the vital role of human connection in maintaining and regaining health. Her son’s journey from being a Momentum Center member to actively contributing exemplifies the transformative power of the organization.

“By the time we found the right medication to stabilize my son’s life, he had lost all his friends,” Barbara shared. “He desperately needed human connection, but how does someone like my son even begin to do that? He became one of our first Momentum Center members, and now he gives back by grilling the hotdogs and hamburgers at our Dinner and Movie events.”

Barbara is passionate about Momentum Center because she sees how it makes a real difference in people’s lives—not only her son’s, but many others throughout the West Michigan community. She has been blessed, too, with the support of friends and neighbors who serve as donors and volunteers and as participants in Community Conversations and other events.

As Momentum Center’s work is normalizing the conversation around mental health and decreasing stigma within the community, the organization is also an agent of social change, breaking down barriers of race and culture and building genuine relationships through their Cultural Immersion programming. “We offer three types of cultural immersion trips,” Barbara described. “I lead international trips (to different countries) that also serve as fundraisers; then we have our Civil Rights Road Trip (within the USA) and our Across the Bridge program (local—between Grand Haven/Spring Lake and Muskegon). These trips provide people with opportunities to learn about other cultures, near and far, on a person-to-person level.”

As Momentum Center continues to grow and make waves in the community, Barbara invites everyone to join the cause. Whether volunteering or attending events, there are a myriad of ways for individuals to contribute and be a part of this impactful movement.

“There are so many ways people in the community can participate at Momentum



Shaving Cream Painting



A Town Hall Meeting

Center,” Barbara said. “We need people to lead classes and share their hobbies, interests and skills with members. We need people to be listeners and just be a witness to someone else’s lived experience. We need people to help with events, stuff envelopes and serve on committees. We need people to attend our events, to participate in Community Conversations and Free Movie events. We need people to serve ice cream, help with construction and drive our bus. There are so many ways

people can serve, and they can do so as often as they like.”

In a special message from Momentum Center to the community, Barbara offered a reminder that help is available for everyone. “How are you doing?” she asked. “If you are struggling, you are not alone. There are people who care, and resources are available.”

Momentum Center stands as a testament to the power of compassion, community

and genuine connection. It’s not just an organization...it’s a lifeline, a source of hope and a catalyst for positive change.

The two Momentum Center locations are found at 401 N 7th Street in Grand Haven and 345 W 14th Street in Holland. For more information or to get involved, visit www.momentumcentergh.org, email hello@momentumcentergh.org, or call (616) 414-9111.

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Let the Snowball Roll!

By Mandi Brower

It is officially the second quarter of 2024, so it's a fitting time to reflect on the goals we set at the beginning of the year. In January, I wrote about the concept of "Commit and Move On," urging a reconsideration of the traditional approach to goal-setting. Often, we find ourselves burdened by the weight of daunting goals that we set year after year—goals that seem to consume our emotions and brain power without necessarily leading to the fulfillment we desire.

At the beginning of a new year, we often get excited to set ambitious goals—lose weight, advance in our careers, save more money, learn a new skill—the list goes on. However, as the months pass by, we may find ourselves struggling to keep up with these goals. We feel demotivated or inadequate when we encounter obstacles or setbacks. We feel the weight as we are constantly thinking about each goal. The steps to get where we want to be seem to be out in the distance.

Have you heard of the snowball effect? The more the ball rolls, the bigger it gets...

the more momentum the snowball has. In life, unfortunately, too many think of the snowball effect in a negative way. However, the positive snowball effect can be just the start you need to make your goals more of a reality.



Take one small positive step this week to accomplish one thing you have been trying to achieve. Looking to read more? Then read one chapter. Looking to exercise more? Then take 20 mins to walk one mile. Three days later, do it again. Three days later, do it again. Two days later, do it again. Keep it going. As small of a step as it is, just take it. Just keep moving, little step after little step. The momentum will propel you forward

and the small steps will take you to your goal.

I was working on a new Leadership Talk, a review process for our Leadership Team. I have been contemplating it for months, writing phrases here and there and struggling to put it all together. I felt it had to be 100% before anyone saw it. That was my goal for 2023, yet here we are in 2024 and I never finished it.

So, in February, I started by just defining three parts of the review. I let it sit. Then I went back and added three questions as I thought of them. That triggered more thoughts, and I wrote them down. It snowballed. Within one week, my thoughts compounded and the vision of the review became clear. I started to show a few people, took some feedback, and now we are about 97% ready to launch!

Remember, you don't need to be at 100% to accomplish your goal. Just get started. It will continue to grow. Jump in and let that snowball roll!

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For many, Hospice is not just a job—it's a purpose.

By Denise Stancill, Sr. Director of Operations, Hospice of Holland

These days, the specialty of Hospice is one commonly requested by healthcare professionals for their patients' suffering from an advanced illness. What started many years ago as a small grassroots initiative to improve the quality of life for terminally ill patients is now viewed as a vital part of today's healthcare continuum.

Over the years, educational institutions have developed fellowships for clinicians who desire to specialize in this aspect of medical care. Individuals have the ability to become Board-certified in the specialty of Hospice and Palliative Care. Colleges and universities now include some exposure to hospice care in the curriculum they offer to incoming students entering the field of healthcare.

Those electing to pursue a career in Hospice often cite having had a previous personal experience with Hospice. Undergoing their own loss of a loved one was a primary motivating factor for wanting to help others face their own experience of this with their loved ones, knowing all too well the sacredness in those final days for someone who is facing end of life and for those closest to them.

Additionally, those drawn to the Hospice profession find purpose in being able to bring comfort and relief to those they serve amidst the many challenges that come with delivering this complex level of medical care. Hospice caregivers understand it is an honor and a privilege to share the space of someone who is terminally ill. In return, those engaged with Hospice allow Hospice professionals



to share some space throughout their journey and learn what makes them want to live.

The importance of ensuring each patient is given the best care possible is a significant aspect of the specialty of Hospice care. Having the ability to help someone come to terms with their mortality, the ability to ease the burden of decision-making, and the ability to help people find peace with their prognosis is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for each patient that Hospice caregivers serve.

Hospice providers want you to know that the care they take of ensuring everyone receives the best care possible is intentional. Purposeful. The Hospice delivery of care is not motivated by a paycheck. The understanding in knowing that each patient and family experience matters combined with the opportunity to walk alongside others so they do not have to face their final days alone is what fuels the Hospice team. Helping people who are at their most vulnerable to feel comfort, dignity, and care is the purpose of Hospice.

The decision to engage with Hospice may feel difficult and overwhelming. As a Hospice provider we choose to walk alongside those who need us, no matter how difficult their journey may be or how overwhelming their circumstances may feel.

For more information about Hospice of Holland programs and services, to make a referral, or for answers to your questions about Hospice care, please call 616.396.2972. View www.hollandhospice.org and hear from others why care from Hospice of Holland made a difference for their loved one.

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For more information call us at 616.396.2972 or visit hollandhospice.org/purpose.



Thursday, April 4

HYP Tacos and Trivia

@Tulip City Brewstillery, 430 W 17th Street (Suite 27), Holland

First Thursday every month: Join Holland Young Professionals at Tulip City Brewstillery and unwind from 6–7pm, followed by team trivia from 7–9pm. Hang with some good friends, have fun and get to know new people—and then compete with them in trivia! Spice Boys Food Truck will be onsite with the best tacos in Holland. First drink is on HYP so make sure to check in and collect your drink voucher!

Time: 6–9pm

Cost: \$2/person

behyp.org

Thursday, April 11

Business Exchange Luncheon

@Postma Center at Pine Rest, 300 68th St SE, Building C, Grand Rapids

The Grand Rapids Chamber's most popular networking event provides members and future members with facilitated networking as well as an opportunity to leave the event with at least 14 new quality leads. Facilitators walk attendees through conversations at one table during lunch and another after lunch. Expo tables and open networking are also offered.

Time: 11:30am–1:30pm

Cost: \$45 (\$60 Non-members)

grandrapids.org

Tuesday, April 16

Wake Up West Coast

@Haworth Hotel, 225 College Avenue, Holland

Join us for an insightful discussion with Ann Harten, esteemed HR executive, as she delves into the complexities of the current hybrid work ecosystem in "It's All About Me—The Psychology of Space." Don't miss out on the opportunity to learn about adopting a human-

centric approach to shaping the future of your work space.

Time: 7:30–9am

Cost: \$35 (\$50 Non-members)

westcoastchamber.org

Tuesday, April 23

Business Growth Workshop

@Grand Rapids Chamber, 250 Monroe Ave, Grand Rapids

The Grand Rapids Chamber's Business Growth Workshops give business owners key tools to succeed by covering important topics like finances, operations, marketing, and more. Subject Matter Experts share key insights and tools to help businesses of all sizes succeed in West Michigan.

Time: 8–10am

Cost: \$35 (\$50 Non-members)

grandrapids.org

Tuesday, April 23

Social Hour with the Chamber

@Tanglewood Winery, 15811 Riley Street, Holland

Enjoy exclusive access to Tanglewood Winery as you make connections and build relationships. Our Social Hour series provides you with plenty of opportunities to grow your network, and the only cost is what you want to spend to support a local business.

Time: 4:30–6pm

Cost: Free

westcoastchamber.org

Thursday, April 25

Zeeland Network

@Zeeland City Hall, 21 S Elm Street, Zeeland

The Zeeland Network is the place to come and meet with other Zeeland business representatives and share experiences. Join us as we convene at City Hall to catch up and hear

updates from fellow Zeeland members.

Time: 9–10am

Cost: \$10 (\$20 Non-members)

westcoastchamber.org

All event information was correct at the time of printing, yet event details are subject to change. Before attending, please check with event organizers for the most up-to-date information.



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Three Reasons Why Timing Is Important for Selling a Business

By Kathy DeVries, MBA, Managing Broker

When business owners consider an eventual business exit, they are often well aware of the internal needs of their business or what they want to do next in life. However, finding a path forward is more complex than those considerations alone. Here are three ways in which timing impacts an owner's transition.

First, a business owner needs to be able to determine when market conditions are favorable for sellers. Think of supply and demand. When the market is flush with cash and people are looking for places to invest, it would be a good time to put a successful business on the market and expect to find qualified buyers. Conversely, when people can attain high-paying jobs, they may be less willing to take the risk of business ownership to arrive at the income they desire. Or, when industries are in decline, it may be difficult to attract buyers to that industry. As more business owners reach retirement age, there may be more businesses for sale, increasing supply of available options for buyers. Also, as interest rates fluctuate, it may expand or reduce the buyer pool or decrease the sale price due to the cost of servicing debt.

We're hearing of business owners who were pretty happy with their business performance in 2019 and went so far as to purchase a business valuation at that time. They decided to hold a little longer, and then the market changed. Now they want to go to market



using the 2019 valuation only to find out that they can't get the same price for their business in today's market.

In short, remember that selling for top dollar only happens when market timing is right and the owner takes advantage of favorable market conditions.

Second, a company can continue indefinitely, but an individual business owner eventually ages out. If a business owner has not planned for their personal needs, or their personal needs change, then personal timing becomes a critical issue in selling a business. In addition to their own needs, sometimes the needs of family members outweigh the needs of the business and an owner needs to sell the business to attend to more important matters.

The normal selling process for a business is often months or years. Skipping over the important activities of building the business through the delegation of key roles and responsibilities, achieving a solid history of key performance

If an owner is forced to sell before they or their business is ready, they need to have realistic expectations about the outcome.

Lastly, to sell well, the business needs proper positioning. The business that sells is priced right and marketed right. Putting out the right message to the right audience at the right time maximizes market opportunities.

Selling a business is complex, but working with experienced professionals helps increase the likelihood of a successful exit.



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The Power of Being Proactive: 5 Ways to Develop This Surprising Skill

By Tracy Brower, PhD



If you're trying to get ahead or nurture greater happiness and satisfaction in life and work, there's a trait you may not have realized is quite so important: the ability to be proactive.

Being proactive has actually been found to be an aspect of personality—and it is 40% genetic, according to research published in the *Journal of Human Performance*. When people are proactive, they take initiative to influence their environments and embrace personal agency. They are curious, confident and seek positive control. They make changes, take action and avoid passive acceptance of their circumstances, according to the *Journal of Vocational Behavior*.

Plenty of Benefits

Being proactive helps you thrive at work because you tend to be more satisfied with your work—and the satisfaction is driven by taking action and seeking growth throughout your career. When you're proactive, you also tend to get promoted to leadership roles and make more money... and business outcomes are improved as well. All this is according to research published in the *Journal of Vocational Behavior Research*, *Frontiers in Psychology* and the *Journal of Applied Psychology*.

So here's how to be more proactive.

1. Tune In

One of the first ways to be more proactive is to tune in so you can be ready to take proactive steps. Pay attention and seek

information from sources you know, and also explore terrain which may be less familiar to you. Subscribe to the news outlet or journal with perspectives or opinions that don't match your own. Challenge yourself to stay in touch with what's going on in the world, in your area, at work and in your community.

2. Make Plans

Another way to demonstrate proactivity is to look ahead. Be intentional about where you want to be, what you want to achieve and set goals accordingly. Take a "backward from perfect" strategy. Aspire for the long term and your ideal, and then work backward to establish the steps that will get you to the end game you seek.

3. Take Action

In addition to checking the context and making plans, you'll also want to take ownership and dive in. When you see problems, take initiative to recommend solutions. When you have responsibilities, follow through and complete tasks.

Seek new learning and explore new career directions. Offer to contribute on a project which is related to the career you want to develop, and take on responsibilities which interest you and on which you can add value.

4. Persevere

Another key element of being proactive is to persevere despite obstacles and barriers. Stick with things, even when they're challenging. Demonstrate grit and

resilience as you push through. And be willing to change course when you must. If things don't go as planned, reflect, learn and adjust for the next time.

5. Seek Great Leaders

Seek out leaders and mentors who give you opportunities to expand your role, allow you to influence how you get things done and empower you to make decisions. These help build your confidence and competence.

Creating Your Future

Overall, being proactive is something you can embrace, pursue and develop. Be intentional about how you take action and make things happen. When you commit to building your skills in being proactive, you'll in turn build your future and achieve payoffs in your happiness and satisfaction with work and life.

Dr. Tracy Brower is a PhD sociologist studying work-life fulfillment and happiness. She is the author of The Secrets to Happiness at Work and Bring Work to Life. She is the vice president of workplace insights for Steelcase and a contributor to Forbes and Fast Company. Her work has been translated into 19 languages. You can find her at tracybrower.com, LinkedIn, or any of the usual social channels.



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How to Handle Drinks with Colleagues

By Lucy Reynolds



It's five o'clock somewhere... and it's the golden opportunity to party with your colleagues after work. Socializing with co-workers and supervisors, including the occasional after-work drinks, can foster a team spirit and enhance collaboration. However, it's crucial to approach alcohol consumption with sensitivity, recognizing the fine line between fostering connections and maintaining professionalism.

First, it's essential to be aware of your company's policy about alcohol consumption. Some organizations have explicit rules about drinking during work hours or company-sponsored events. Familiarize yourself with these guidelines to ensure you're aligned with your company's expectations.

Next, when attending work-related social gatherings, such as happy hours or team dinners, it's important to remember that moderation is key. Choose a drink with a lower alcohol content, perhaps, and make sure to pace yourself. Keep in mind, it's a professional setting, and excessive drinking can leave a lasting impression that may impact your reputation.

Always be mindful of your surroundings and gauge the atmosphere of each individual event. If your co-workers or supervisors are refraining from alcohol, it's wise to follow suit. On the other hand, if others are partaking, feel free to join in—but limit yourself to a

moderate amount to maintain a balance between participating and preserving a professional demeanor.

Engage in conversation strategically. While socializing with colleagues, keep discussions centered around neutral and work-appropriate topics. Avoid broaching sensitive subjects or divulging personal information that may lead to awkward situations the next day. Maintaining a professional tone in your conversations is important, even in a more relaxed setting.

Additionally, be aware of your body language and demeanor. Slurred speech, impaired coordination or overly expressive behavior can quickly erode the professional image you've worked hard to build. It's vital to stay composed and maintain a level of self-awareness, even in a more casual social atmosphere.

If your supervisor is present, exercise particular prudence in your interactions. While after-hours social time offers an opportunity to build rapport, remember the power dynamics in the workplace. By the same token, take extra care if you're the supervisor in the situation. Avoid overfamiliarity—and never pressure anyone into drinking. Opt for a friendly and respectful approach, acknowledging the balance between camaraderie and preserving your professional working relationship.

There's no denying that navigating the topic of alcohol consumption in a professional setting demands a delicate touch. But by adhering to company policies, exercising moderation and maintaining

a professional demeanor, you can enjoy building meaningful connections while also safeguarding your reputation. So, cheers! Here's to fostering positive workplace relationships one thoughtful sip at a time.

Lucy Reynolds regularly speaks and writes about good manners through her business Excellence and Etiquette. Contact her at lreynolds@bestversionmedia.com for more information.



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Separating your business and personal finances is essential for growth

By John Preston, The JP Revolution

Stepping into the entrepreneurial world marks a crucial point in your journey toward achievement. An essential part of building a successful venture while having a happy home life is separating your business and personal money.

Mixing these funds might not seem like a big deal, especially for a new business. Every dime you make will usually go straight into paying the bills. However, as your business grows, keeping these finances separate is vital.

Why Separate Early On?

The main reason to separate your finances from the beginning is to ensure your work challenges don't affect your home life. This separation helps maintain a happy and peaceful personal life without work-related stress.

Imagine consulting with family members not involved in your business for every decision. This could slow your business's growth and flexibility because personal financial concerns would unavoidably influence business choices.

Building a Strong Foundation

Creating specific accounts for your business and setting aside money for business expenses does more than organize your finances. It empowers you to make critical business decisions without personal financial worries getting in the way.

Look at successful entrepreneurs like Elon Musk. Their ability to make quick, effective decisions without personal finance pressures has been crucial to their companies' success.

The Benefits of Financial Independence

As your business develops, paying yourself a fixed salary helps establish a healthy balance between your business and personal finances. This approach clarifies your financial situation and ensures you have funds available for growing your business.


It also helps prevent "lifestyle creep." Entrepreneurs can subtly increase their cost of living, often unknowingly, as their business grows. They may take nicer

vacations, buy slightly more expensive cars, or upgrade their homes after just one or two good months. These increased expenses can add incredible pressure to your finances and relationships if that high performance isn't maintained.

Ideally, you give yourself regular "raises" and "bonuses" as the business demonstrates sustained growth over time.

Adopting this financial separation strategy from the start allows you to build a future where your work and personal life are in harmony. It enables you to make bold decisions for your business, encouraging growth and innovation, while keeping your personal life stable and happy.

Separating your business and personal finances is about more than just managing money. It's a comprehensive strategy for achieving balance, fostering growth, and pursuing your entrepreneurial dreams with clear focus and confidence.



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