

Ask Vanessa

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I've got a very good idea for a new business. Is now a good time to start a business, given that we are in a recession?

On the face of it, many budding entrepreneurs may think that starting a business during a recession is too risky and stick to their day jobs instead. However, I believe that now is a great time to start a business. Think Microsoft, McDonald's, Disney, Johnson & Johnson and Google. They are some successful examples of businesses that started during bad economic times. They were innovative and fulfilled a need in the marketplace.

With the right attitude, it could be the best time to start a business. Think about it, one of the first things that many companies do during a recession is cut back on their marketing budget. In my opinion, a big mistake strategically, but good news for you. You may well have the playing field to yourself.

And, if you start in a marketplace when times are tough, you have got an even greater chance of success when the going gets good. I have come across many entrepreneurs who have launched businesses during good times and have fallen to pieces when there has been a downturn in the economy.

You mention that you have a good idea for a business. Just because you think you have a great product or service does not mean to say that a customer will like it, buy it or benefit from it. So how can you be certain that it really is a good idea? By making sure that you put the customer at the centre of your new business and you would be crazy not to test your idea before launching it. Always check the concept out with them. I've seen too many entrepreneurs and businesses ignore this, because they think it is either too expensive or too time consuming. It is same as going into the marketplace blindfolded.

With a strong product or service idea, proper market research, a good business plan, finance, dedication and a lot of hard work, there is no reason why you cannot succeed. Be confident, believe in yourself and believe in the strength of your idea because good ideas tend to work.