

## **Baby Planner Recipe for Success**

Deciding on a career is an important decision for anyone, but especially for entrepreneurs. In this economy, more and more people are starting their own businesses. The choices available are nearly endless! How will you know if baby planning is really for you? What does it mean to be a baby planner and what are the daily realities you can expect?

### **Self Assessment**

Before we get into the nuts of bolts of the successful baby planner, take the time to think about why you want to become a baby planner. Are you a new mom? How did you plan for the arrival of your baby? Did you have help from friends or family? Were you anxious? What went well? What would you have changed if you could do it over again? These questions – and how you answer them – point to the spectrum of feelings women experience planning for the arrival of a baby. To be a really great baby planner, there are certain traits and areas of proficiency that you will need to master.

### **The Right Ingredients**

First and foremost, baby planning requires strong people skills. Simply put, you should be easy to get along with, flexible, easy to talk to, have empathy,

and the ability to build rapport. This means leaving people feeling positive and eager to continue the relationship.

Speaking fluidly and comfortably with people from all types of backgrounds doesn't come naturally to everyone. In fact, you may need to practice – perhaps talking to your neighbors or people in the grocery store. A good start is just being friendly, sincere, and congenial. With some practice, you will be doing great in no time. If you want to work on honing your “gift of the gab,” you might consider joining some professional networking groups such as your local chamber of commerce. And to improve your public speaking skills, you may want to look into Toastmasters.

As a baby planner, you also need to be an active listener. When you speak with an expecting mom, she will likely be bursting with enthusiasm for her bun in the oven. Listen carefully to try and really hear what it is that she needs – and what she might not know that she needs. One way to make sure that you've really heard what someone is saying is to repeat back to them what they've told you. For example, “Wow, from what you've said it sounds like you might want to look into creating a green nursery. Is that right?” If you can articulate to a client what they've told you and offer sound advice, you will built trust and credibility. This is the start of a great professional relationship.

Baby planning inherently falls into the service provider category so some aptitude for customer service is necessary. To be clear, this means being not only friendly, but helpful, thoughtful, resourceful, agreeable, and when needed, diplomatic. Ideally, you will already have some degree of customer service experience. Even if you haven't held responsibilities handling outside customers, just working in cooperation with other people implies a type of internal customer service. A great phrase to memorize is, "What can I help you with today?"

As you meet expecting moms, you will also be tapping into your presentation skills. You'll be talking to them about their needs and ushering them through your baby planning process, but ultimately selling yourself and your services. The first impression your client has of you will likely be your web site, followed up by either an e-mail or phone call. Each is an opportunity to present yourself and your services in a fun and professional light. Ideally, the value you can offer a client through your services will speak volumes and not require a hard sell, though you may need to make a convincing case to seal the deal. In Chapter Nine, we will go over the client intake process and some techniques for selling your services. If you are interested in learning more about sales techniques, there are countless books available on the subject.

Finally, baby planners are organized. Remember, your clients are hiring you because they need help making order out of chaos. Your planning process will include completing a Client Intake Form (Appendix I) which will contain all the essential information you need to create their Individualized Plan. Whether you choose to use physical paper files or electronic ones, you will need to create your system and stick to it throughout your business. Once your business is flourishing, you may decide to hire an administrative assistant to help you, but most baby planners prefer to manage each client themselves.

In summary, the core areas of proficiency for baby planning include people skills, active listening skills, customer service skills, presentation skills, and organizational skills. In Chapter Nine we'll study how these skills come into play during the client service delivery process. With even a little practice, you'll become stronger and stronger in these areas and be able to achieve the “wow” factor every baby planner strives for.

### **Time to Get Cooking**

If you have realistically reflected on your personality style, aptitude, and skills and are confident you want to get cooking, take a look at timing. Are you at a point in your life where you can make the necessary changes to

make room for a business? If you are currently working, do you want to quit or work two jobs until your business takes off? Do you have the time to put into starting a company? Do you have the money? Talk to your family and ponder these questions until you know in your heart what's right for you. Being honest with yourself will help ensure that when the time is right, your business launch will be as successful as it can be.

### **What To Expect**

Being the CEO requires hard work, perseverance, a strong work ethic, and a positive attitude in the face of adversity. But with the title comes plenty of the perks. In the beginning at least, you will work part-time until you build up a large enough client base. Running your own business gives you the flexibility to incorporate personal errands and activities into your day. You will be able to decide how many clients you want to take on and set limits to keep your schedule manageable. To stay truly part-time, you may want to limit yourself to 10 clients at a time. Of course you will have complete freedom to make your own decisions and grow your businesses in the direction you see fit.

With this freedom comes some risk, but not as much as you might think. You can start a baby planning business with just a few hundred dollars (and

most of this is your state filing fee). And the potential for return on your investment is huge - more on this in Chapter Six.

### **What Will I Need?**

So, what does it really take? Surprisingly, not much. Some knowledge about baby products, a client or two, a list of vendors, and the time and energy to pull it all together. Will I have to buy equipment? No, unless you don't have a computer, printer, and phone. Should I rent office space? No, you can use a simple accordion filer and your computer desk. Do I need to hire staff? Unless you have clients lined up outside your front door, you should be find on your own.

In Chapter Four we'll look at how you set up your company.

### **What You Put Into It**

As the owner of a small business, you will have to manage not only your time, but also stay on top of accounting and finances. Remember, you ARE the boss. In Chapter Four, Setting Up Your Business, we will go over incorporating your company, writing a mission statement, and creating a business plan. Having your goals in writing will be a tremendous asset in keeping you accountable to yourself and the business.

Once you have incorporated, you will need to launch your marketing efforts. While marketing is an on-going necessity, the most work will come at the very beginning. We'll go over some strategies of traditional marketing in Chapter Seven. To give your business a kick start, though, you will want to dig into some of the technology tips in Chapter Eight.

Being a baby planner means signing on new clients, delivering your services, and following through to the clients' satisfaction. To this end, we will walk through the service delivery process in Chapter Nine.

### **What you Get Out Of It**

If this sounds like a lot of work to you, you're right – it is a lot of work! But the rewards are hard to pass up. You'll be your own boss and be able to make business decisions without someone looking over your shoulder. You'll have the freedom to chaperone your child's field trips without feeling anxious or guilty about missing work. And remember, you're not selling snake oil, you're helping people plan for one of life's most fulfilling journeys. In other words, your hard work will be paid off in spades with benefits most people only dream about while slaving away in an office cube.

As if all these perks weren't enough, what could be more satisfying than working for yourself and helping people, while making money? How about

being a pioneer, ahead of the times. Baby Planning is a new industry with only a handful of professionals in the US. That means you could open your doors for business and become a founding industry member. With a year or two of hard work, you might be considered an expert! How exciting is that??

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This concludes the free chapter from "Your Future As A Baby Planner." The full ebook is organized into ten chapters covering the following: the full range of baby planning services, how to start your own business, marketing basics, advanced marketing (including internet marketing), pricing your services, service delivery, client relations, vendor relations, and more!!

You can [pick up your copy today](#) for only ~~\$97~~ \$47. That's right, I'm offering my guide at a low low price for a limited time to celebrate my launch and get it into as many hands as possible. Once the dust has settled, the price will go back up to \$97.