



# Five Tips for the Aspiring Entrepreneur

Published on April 24, 2019

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Many of us hold the dream of one day becoming our own boss – and many of us ultimately do. I'm one of the lucky ones who actually got to live my dream of being my own boss. I founded Electrosoft Services, Inc. 17 years ago, and today the firm is going strong and making a positive impact on our community.

I'm not an expert on entrepreneurship, but along the way I do believe I've acquired insight as to what has helped me succeed. My thoughts aren't based on anything profound or scientific. Rather, they come in the form of a few basic tips that have helped me succeed and might help other would-be entrepreneurs.

**Tip #1: Stay alert to new opportunities.** It's easy to be absorbed by your current work responsibilities. Even if you love your present job, be aware of new opportunities. The road to being an entrepreneur is incremental, gradually building on what's come before. Push yourself beyond the comfort of familiarity and self-imposed boundaries by being receptive to new ideas and possibilities.

**Tip #2: Network.** Careers can be made or lost based on who you know and the impressions you've made. Take advantage of the workplace, events and social media platforms to establish professional relationships. You'll be surprised how people you meet today often reappear in your life later on – and are willing to help you achieve your dreams.

**Tip #3: Set goals.** Everyone, even those without dreams of entrepreneurship, should set goals. Some should be practical and attainable; others should stretch the boundaries of what seems possible. As you achieve your goals, set new ones. The high-level goals challenge us to think and strategize. Work backward from the ultimate goal and identify the steps that will move you closer to achieving it. Then, reevaluate and re-strategize often.

**Tip #4: Be kind.** Not all of us are gifted with charisma, but we all possess the ability to put others first. Be kind and helpful to coworkers. Remember, a prerequisite to building a successful company is having a talented and motivated workforce. The interpersonal skills learned today will help you create a positive work environment that motivates staff and a culture that promotes work-life balance tomorrow.

**Tip #5: Believe in yourself.** I'm often asked about being a female in a male-dominated technology field and the impact being "different" may have had on my own trajectory. Yes, I encountered prejudice, but I did not allow it to define me. Instead, I used it as a motivator to work harder, learn more and win over detractors with the quality of my work and performance. Never accept others' limited view of you or adopt a victim mentality. Prove them wrong.

Even if you do not aspire to be an entrepreneur, these tips may help to steer you toward your professional and personal aspirations. I cannot overstate the importance of always demonstrating integrity as you make this journey.