



Dear Founder:

Congratulations on taking that leap of faith on becoming an entrepreneur. You are embarking on a journey that will cause you to expand your knowledge of yourself beyond the self-imposed constraints of your current beliefs. I remember 25+ years ago leaving a very secure position with Hughes Aircraft Company to embark on my entrepreneurial journey. I was eager, over confident, motivated and crudely prepared. What allowed me to sustain my capital equipment, systems integration based, enterprise through three recessions was my ability to repeatedly recreate myself and my business while holding onto my moral, ethical and spiritual values. I encourage you to consistently remind yourself of what's important to you; know your core values.

No man or woman is an island so I strongly recommend that you establish an advisory board consisting of legal, finance, business strategy, marketing, sales and human resource professionals that act as the lifeline of your enterprise. These are your Go To people who are not afraid to tell you No and know how to support you in meeting your business objectives.

People are your most valuable asset. Reward those who are loyal to the company and quickly remove those who show they are cancerous to your organization. One bad apple can spoil the bunch. I treat my employees as family and for the most part experienced loyal employees over the years. Learn what motivates your employees and don't assume it is always money. Giving them time off or allowing them to have a flexible work schedule not to miss their child's play or school event can be more valuable to them than monetary compensation.

You always require more financial capital than you think. What comes faster than a speeding bullet and comes more frequently than you imagine? Payroll, payroll taxes, rent, insurance payments and utilities. You may want to consider maintaining a reserve fund where you habitually put away a small percentage of your receivables to cover unexpected cash flow shortages. Cash flow is the lifeline, the blood, of any organization. Plan your cash inlays and outlays and you are essentially controlling your stress levels.

Entrepreneurship is a journey for both you and your enterprise that requires constant cultivating. There are many avenues available to you to garner the additional skills you may require to stay abreast of the various aspects of your business. I enjoy being a mentor to CSUF's entrepreneurial program whereby I am able to stay current with today's technologies and have access to the vast minds of the students. I encourage you to find a source that fits your personality and needs.

Once again, congratulations on having the courage to go after your dreams.

Most successful regards

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Derreck A. Ford', written in a cursive style.

Derreck A. Ford

CEO/Founder