



Deena Englander

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This is the third in a series of interviews of business leaders, designed to help you grow your business.

How to Grow Your Business: An Interview with Mike Rogers of Securityhunter

Mike Rogers is the CEO of Securityhunter, a rapidly growing IT company that installs electronic surveillance systems for government sites, such as the Department of Defense, Department of Homeland Security, and other federal agencies. Mike's history intrigued me - he grew a unique and very successful business from nothing. An accomplishment that isn't simple – a lot of businesses fail or grow moderately, but his survived and thrived and took on a life of its own.

Mike kindly shared some of his thoughts about growing a successful business. Here is a summary of the 8 points he focused on:

- 1. Diversify your services.** When you start your business, you have an idea of what service you're providing. But we're not fortune tellers, and we read the market incorrectly all the time. Instead of providing one service only, diversify. See which of your products and services take off. Provide different services within the same industry and monitor which of them sell best.
Even as you continue to grow, it's still important to diversify since the market will also change. You need to be able to change with it, and the only way you can do that is by constantly diversifying your services.
- 2. Become a specialist.** Once you've identified the industry your services target, make yourself a specialist in your field. Ask your clients what you can do to make their lives easier in relation to the services you're providing. Have the resources your clients need. Your clients will appreciate you more if you meet their needs fully.
- 3. Be the best in your industry.** People tend to rate themselves in comparison to their competitors. But that's not going to make them the best – it'll just make them better than the worst, and they also have to spend a lot of time and energy finding out about their competition. Instead of allocating all your

resources to comparing yourself to your competitors, devote the majority of your energy to making yourself the best in your niche.

4. What's your best use of time? People fall into the trap of thinking they need to do everything or their business will fall apart. They don't. Playing into that fallacy means that you're not maximizing on your unique strengths – you're spending too much time on tasks that other qualified people can do.

Your role as a leader is to make sure that your business can grow and that everything else is working properly. That role is irreplaceable. Think about yourself as your company's most precious asset.

Mike shared a story about a WWII Russian spy operating behind German lines, who at the time was Russia's most prized asset. In fact, obtaining military intelligence was the most crucial aspect of their operations. In order to protect their asset, Russia sent a whole team of people to reinforce him and make sure that whatever happens, this spy would not be harmed.

Think of yourself as this spy. **You're** the subject matter expert and the one to create new opportunities. **You** come up with the strategies and the partners. **You** need to make sure that **you** hire the right people to support **you** so that **you** can focus on capitalizing on **your** strengths.

5. Make your business a machine. Your goal is to build a machine, an automated system that can work without you and grows itself. That means having the right people and the right technology. Think about your next steps - what do you need to do to make your business into a machine that works without you involved all the time?

6. Take risks. We don't know the future. We can only create good ideas. In order to make our ideas turn into reality, we need to take risks. Without risk, there is no growth. To make your company succeed, there will be risks you need to take. Risks include failure, loss of money, making mistakes, and losing time. But, if you're determined to achieve your goal and you keep trying, you will ultimately be successful.

7. Believe in your mission. If you feel strongly about your company's mission, you'll be able to invest more initiative and more of yourself into your company's growth. That sense of mission will be felt by your clients and by your employees. They'll know that you stand behind your product or service and that they can rely on you. And when growth is challenging, and things don't work out and you need to take risks, belief in your mission will motivate you to keep on growing

For Mike, thinking about what he wants to have achieved at the end of his career motivates him. He wants to protect America, and that's what pushed him forward his whole career.

Will you be able to look back and feel that you genuinely made a difference?

8. Stay in tune with your employees. Create a good rapport and environment within your company. Be in constant touch with your staff to create a feeling of care, support and teamwork. Build a good team so that they have all the strengths they need to succeed. Stay far away from micro managing. Your goal is to build, encourage and support a motivated team.