Since August, my family has been in the midst of a building project. My wife, youngest son and I are building a home with my mom.

Since my Dad's death in 2011, we have been spending a lot of time together and arrived at the conclusion that it would be best if we were all under the same roof. (Don't worry. We get a long very well.)

So we made the decision to place our two homes on the market and build a new home together. And thus the journey began for our family.

Throughout this process, I have learned some key business lessons for all of us.

1. Start with the plan. You never know what you really want, or how much it will cost until you sit down and make a plan. With our house, we started with one plan, revised it to our liking. We then "ran the numbers" and revised again. After about five or six revisions, we had something we could use.

In business, you have to begin with a plan. Just "starting" can lead to disaster.

2. Find the right location. Our plan wouldn't fit on just any piece of property, and the market had limited options. We searched and researched until we found the best lot at the right price within the constraints of our market.

Depending on the business, the right location can make it or break it. Be intentional about choosing where to “reside.”

3. The foundation always seems small. Once the plan was marked and the foundation was poured, we walked throughout our “house.” We were concerned it wouldn’t be big enough for the four of us to have “our own space.” We were so, so wrong.

There is nothing wrong with starting small in business. We all have big dreams, but the process of starting with something small and growing it will also grow you.

4. Expect problems. Anyone who has ever embarked on a building project knows things don’t always go according to plan. You have to be able to make decisions on the fly to keep things moving.

The same is true in business. Not every day will be sunny. Not every customer/client will be friendly. You still have to roll with the punches.

5. It takes time. This is probably the hardest part of the building process. Some days you see a ton of progress, while other day you wonder if anyone worked at all. However, the person who rushes when building can forget important items, potentially ruining the project.

In business, there is rarely an “overnight success.” Great companies were built over time — usually a lot of time.

Our house is getting closer and closer to completion. When we finally move in, I am sure it will be a surreal experience. However, the time and steps we have taken will help ensure this home will take care of us for a long, long time.

On the same note, building a business the right way can help ensure it takes care of you, your family and the community for a long, long time.

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