

ASK ANY BUSINESS THAT HAS TRULY MADE IT. IT'S NOT ENOUGH TO START UP. BUSINESSES NEED TO STAY UP, RUN EFFICIENTLY AND GROW OVER TIME TO TRULY PROSPER. WHILE WE'VE ALL HEARD NUMEROUS STORIES OF U.S. BUSINESSES SHUTTERING THEIR DOORS OVER THE PAST DECADE, MANY SMALL BUSINESSES ARE CONTINUING TO SUCCEED IN AMERICA. BUT HOW?

For many current U.S. businesses, various rumblings floating around the industry feel like scary ghost stories being told by an open fire. "Three out of four start-ups fail." "Most new businesses close their doors within the first year." "The current state of the economy makes it almost impossible to succeed."

But success is actually what many new companies and small businesses are finding. Not closed doors. Or a shrinking customer base. Or wells running dry. Case in point: for some, those grim statistics are more like Grimms' Fairy Tales than actual facts. Which begs the question: For the companies succeeding out there, what differentiates them? Is there a secret formula? Is there some niche that's impervious to the economy? Is it about "being in the right place at the right time"? Is it luck?

We've uncovered some critical steps that four U.S. businesses have stated are key in writing their own real-world success stories.



1. John Collins, President and CEO  
*Collins Healthcare*
2. Tony Edington, Agency Owner  
*Farmers Insurance*
3. David E. Burlis, Franchisee/Owner  
*Express Employment Professionals*
4. Patrick Rydell, Owner and Director  
*Rocky Mountain Autism Center*  
Elizabeth Rydell, Educational  
Program Coordinator  
*Rocky Mountain Autism Center*



“IF YOU CAN GET PEOPLE TO WORK WITH YOU ONCE, AT LEAST HALF OF THEM WILL BE BACK.” JOHN COLLINS

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## BE PASSIONATE. FOLLOW THROUGH. REPEAT.

“People who give 150% and do due diligence in their work can be successful,” states John Collins, president and CEO of Collins Healthcare. The Orlando-based company has been in business for 23 years, and has successfully weathered a changing economical landscape during its time in business. One of the company’s “secrets” to success? Follow-through.

“The follow-through of whatever project or services you’re offering is critical. You have to follow through with everything. When someone contacts you about something, you have to get back to them—promptly and professionally. If not, people can and will go somewhere else.”

And it’s that retention-driven philosophy that’s helped keep Collins’ business going. “Your customer base is really significant. My business is 45% repeat

business. If you can get people to work with you once, at least half of them will be back. I’ve found that to really help my business remain successful.”

But starting a successful business wasn’t necessarily a walk in the park for Collins.

“I don’t have a degree in business, so it was kind of a shock for me to find out all the business requirements and operational components that were involved in starting my company. Also, marketing for me was difficult at the beginning. I knew what I wanted to promote, but I didn’t know how to do it.”

Collins got a little help from OfficeMax® on the way. “I feel like I’ve got a partner and support system with the staff members at my OfficeMax store. I do

a lot with Print and Document services. I’m in the store quite a bit, so most of the employees know me and help me. The other way OfficeMax has helped me, is that when you don’t really know what product you’re looking for and you tell them your business scenario, they can help by exposing you to products that can help your company as a whole. OfficeMax has been very supportive in that sense. They’ve helped me streamline my business for that reason.”

For those looking to start their own business, Collins offers this bit of advice: “People wanting to start their own business need to have a very strong passion. If you give a lot and are persistent about it, it will pay off.”