

The Top 10 Ways To Advocate For Yourself As A Small Business Owner

1. **Set boundaries** - with family, friends, coworkers, and customers. It's perfectly okay to say, "I'd love to help you, but I don't have the bandwidth right now. I'll message you a little later if I'm able."
2. **Put it in writing** - One of the biggest mistakes you can make is leaving things vague or unsaid. You may not like the outcome when you create space for someone else to fill in the blanks.
3. **Check-in with yourself first** - Sometimes it literally means asking yourself, "If I'm being truly honest with myself, free of judgment or shoulds, how am I feeling?". It can feel easier to say out loud what you need to others once you've admitted them to yourself first.
4. **Break it down** - Write your to-do lists at the top of the week. This helps you see exactly how much time, effort, and energy you need to accomplish tasks and where you have room to take on more.
5. **No is a complete sentence.** You are not obligated to say "yes" to ANYONE. Read that again.
6. **It's perfectly okay to fire a client or ban a customer.** When people are rude, unkind, or disrespect you somehow, you are allowed to let them know they can no longer treat you that way. If you don't feel confident speaking up about their behavior, add on an extra b*tch fee. It can literally be an extra dollar if you don't want to be mean. It's your own little secret.
7. **Know your worth** - If you don't know how to set your prices, start doing some research. Learn what the going rates are for your level of experience, what the going rates are for your state, and what your competitors charge, and find something in the middle. Don't forget to add more to account for taxes since you'll be paying for them yourself. I like to set aside 35-40% of every paycheck to cover the taxes and expenses I need to run my business.
8. **DND** - Do Not Disturb settings on your phone are necessary when focusing on work.
9. **Schedule meetings in increments of 10 minutes.** Instead of blocking off 30 minutes to an hour for meetings, see if you can schedule it for 10 or 20 minutes. If you go a little over, that's okay. But if you set the time expectation before you hop on the call, your meetings may get to the point sooner.
10. **Don't be scared to ask for clarifications, questions, or more information.** Speak up if you're even slightly unsure of what you're getting yourself into by taking on a new project or becoming a vendor at a new event. You don't want to agree to something that you "think" you know what they are asking of you. Instead, make sure you truly know what is expected of you. This includes the client or customer's vision, what they do or don't like (and why), a new program or app, a new process or procedure, and if they are suggesting something that goes against what your expertise tells you.