

BUSINESS RULES




Insights to Transform Your Language Business



Part 2: The Importance of Resilience

Nathalie Danon

Turn your love of languages into profit



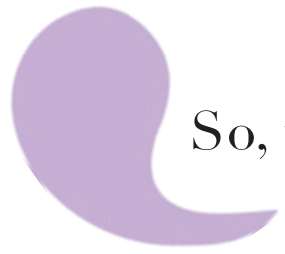
“Hi, I’m Nathalie. I’ve spent over 18 years in the language industry, and this is part 2 in a series of online guides intended to help you take your language business to the next level.

If you’re going to succeed with your business, you’re going to need to be tough. Having faced my fair share of knocks over the years, I can tell you from first hand experience it’s so important to be able to get back up, dust yourself off and keep on going. So today we’re going to tackle the subject of resilience: what it is, why it’s important and three traits of those that are good at it.

Thanks for reading! If you enjoy this issue, you can find Part 1: The 3 mistakes everyone makes here :

nathaliedanon.co.uk/contact/





So, what qualifies me to be talking about resilience anyway?

When I arrived in the UK nearly 20 years ago, I had just failed my law degree. I didn't know a soul in the country, had no job prospects and no money. But I was full of ambition – even if I wasn't quite sure where to begin. And by voluntarily putting myself in this position, I had marked myself as someone willing to make being robust part of my personality.

After a few false starts (even serving gravy and mushy peas in a fish and chip shop at one point!) I realised I had a huge untapped commodity in my bilingualism, and I was teaching French to children. Before long I formed my first language company and within six years was working with 625 students every week. Two years after that I opened The Vici Language Academy - now in it's 11th year. In 2012 came VICI Language Dynamics, our corporate arm. 2019 brought the opening of our French office.

Listing it like that makes it sound like the successes came easily, but believe me, I've experienced plenty of setbacks on my way to get where I am today. And - because there's no better teacher than the school of hard knocks - since 2018 I've been coaching the coaches: applying my experience and putting my knowledge to good use, helping language professionals get their business to the next level.

My objective isn't to tell you how strong I am because of the tough start I had! It's to make sure you know that in business, sh*t happens. I want to set you up for the times when you feel like you're on your knees, because if you're going to succeed, half of you always has to be strong enough to get up and fight.

I've learned a lot about resilience on my journey, and today I want to share some of the things I've learned with you.

Let's get started: What is resilience?

The American Psychological Association defines resilience as, "the process of adapting well in the face of adversity," and as such I believe it is an essential skill for those looking to start or grow a business.

To be clear, resilience is a quality that is often misinterpreted and underestimated. The ability to handle disruptions, resolve unexpected issues and keep on going... that's just survival! Resilience means thriving in spite of these disruptions, obstacles and losses!

True resilience is the ability to overcome challenges and change them into something productive. Because the truth is, the times you really grow as an entrepreneur are the times you're faced with difficult problems and thorny decisions.

A wake up call for the dreamers

Starting and making a success of a business is hard work – did you know that 60% of new small businesses will go under within three years of starting up?

Search your heart and ask yourself if you've got the right character for the journey ahead. Someone can be a truly excellent employee, an inspiring manager or a fabulous second in command, but if they can't be the key decision maker, devise overarching strategies or cope with a crushing weight of responsibility while keeping motivated, they might not be cut out for the task.

If you decide you've got the skills, on top of everything else you're going to need to be resilient to succeed – read on to find out more!



Why is resilience important?

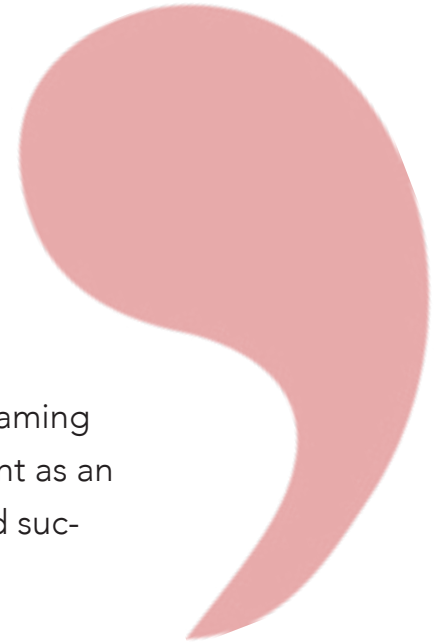
Many who start down the road of running their own business underestimate how hard it can be. It's easy to go overlook the amount of time spent with your family or friends that you'll have to sacrifice. Or the fact that there may be times you don't know if you're going to be able to pay your monthly bills. Being able to cope with these things requires a certain hardiness – but that's not quite the same thing as being resilient.

Starting your own business can sometimes feel like scrambling through a never-ending assault course; a relentless path of pitfalls, setbacks and challenges. While you might not be able to avoid the struggle, the way in which you view these obstacles is crucial to your ability to succeed in the long term.

Resilience in business means reframing what seems to be a negative event as an opportunity for future growth and success.

The resilient businessperson looks past short-term challenges and focuses on the long-term mission. This mindset change doesn't happen overnight. But if you can crack it, you're well positioned to handle setbacks as you start or grow your business.

So, let's get started! What are the key considerations?



1: *KEEP LEARNING*

“Education isn’t something you can finish.”
Isaac Asimov

When your business is going through a difficult time or you find yourself in the horns of a dilemma that is really eating away at you, the last thing you feel like doing is cracking the spine of a business book, dragging yourself to a conference or listening to a coaching audiobook in the car.

But in fact, a 2013 study shows that that resilience is actually positively related to continuous improvement in tough times.

Curiosity can be a great driving force for entrepreneurs - a constant appetite for learning and knowledge sets you up for continuous growth. And our ability to learn from our mistakes and move forward is what contributes to our subsequent achievements and successes.




True story:

Many years ago, before I had really achieved the trajectory I was aiming for my business was in tough times.

It was the end of the month, and I had booked to attend a business conference in London. Financially things were very tight and I needed to balance every penny to make ends meet. I was adamant I still wanted to attend the conference and planned accordingly: I left buying my train ticket to the last minute to help keep my account in the black and even took pre-packed snacks with me so I wouldn't have to spend money on food.

Now, I would love to tell you that at the conference I met a huge corporate client who resolved all of my budgeting problems! But the actual reality is much more powerful: that conference gave me fire in my belly. I learned a lot. I met ambitious, positive and successful business owners. And I left with loads of ideas.

The price of that train ticket was worth every penny because it inspired me and spurred me, and that is the power of continuous learning: especially important for the resilient businessperson.



I'm constantly reading business books and listening to audio books in the shower! Business education should never be overlooked, it is an essential habit. And while it may seem like an easy thing to skip when faced with adversity, the truth is that continuous learning imbues you with knowledge, allows you to develop an analytical mind and helps you hone your problem-solving skill – all attributes which boost your resilience.

#2: WORK YOUR BUTT OFF

“The harder I work, the luckier I get.”

Coleman Cox

OK, you might think this one doesn't need to be said, right? It's no secret that when you start your own business you stop counting the hours you work.

But it's so important to keep showing up. Keep working towards your goal. Keep moving in the right direction.



True story:


Not long after my last story took place, an interesting thing happened. It was late afternoon, and I unexpectedly got a call from a prospective client who wanted to know more about the services I could offer. They lived 30 minutes away and wanted to talk.

Now, at the time my two children were small, so before anything else I had to run round to ask a neighbour if she would mind looking after them while I was away.

And once I'd sorted that, I had to deal with my next problem: that fact that I knew full well I didn't even have enough money to put fuel in my car because I was still waiting for another client's cheque to clear. In the end I drove to the fuel station, put £20 of petrol in my car, pretended to look for my purse and then awkwardly told the cashier that I must have left my cash at home. Fortunately the young gentleman was courteous and lovely and said it was no problem to come back and pay later (and in fact the cheque cleared that evening, so I was able to ring up and settle up the next day!)

On arrival at the prospective customer's house, we immediately connected and they booked and paid for an £840 language programme on the spot.

The moral of the story? I could have said no to the meeting. I could have tried to pitch over the phone. I could have stayed at home and lamented my financial situation. But, even though I didn't necessarily feel like it, I chose to turn up. I chose to keep moving in the right direction. And while this new contract wasn't going to change my fortunes overnight I was really happy! And that gave me the incentive I needed to keep going.



If we only did the hard stuff when we were in the mood for it, we would hardly get anything done! Working your butt off, showing up every day and treating each new challenge, project and task as if your life depended on it is one of the best ways to make sure you get better at what you do to take your business in the right direction.

In other words, resilience and working hard go hand in hand: to build the former, we need to work harder - and sometimes that means digging in and finding those extra reserves.

3: ASK FOR HELP

“Be strong enough to stand alone,
smart enough to know when you need help
and brave enough to ask for it.”

Ziad K. Abdelnour

Self-starters can be reluctant to ask help because it feels like the opposite of what we should be doing. We always want to project complete confidence and competence at all times.

But you can't be good at everything. If you want to succeed, sometimes you need to be able to put your ego to one side and get support. Resilient businesspeople embrace moments of vulnerability by acknowledging their situation, taking responsibility and asking for help.




True story:

For years I refused to ask for help and pretended I could cope entirely on my own for fear of being seen as weak. When I finally realised I needed help, it was almost too late. As a consequence of both bad tax advice and naivety on my part, I was on the receiving end of a monstrous tax bill. For a while it was a struggle to see how I'd get the business through it.

When I finally shared this setback with a business contact, she (with my blessing) passed my challenge on to her accountant partner and very quickly we got a watertight tax plan in place that both helped manage the short term cost and ensured future tax returns wouldn't end in the same situation.

In addition to this damage limitation, this situation bore another fruit: a blossoming business relationship with my contact.



To be truly resilient, it's vital to look after yourself physically, mentally, emotionally and socially. Don't try to do everything on your own - surround yourself with a good team. Actively seek feedback and take it on board. Find mentors to gain insight from their relevant experiences and knowledge.

There is a great deal of resilience to be gained by knowing that you can turn to others for assistance and support. Don't underestimate its power.

However hard you try, there will come a time after 1 year, 5 years, 10 years - whatever the timeframe may be - where you face a challenge and start to doubt yourself. You may have lost a key client. Perhaps your company isn't as scalable as you'd intended. Maybe staffing is an issue. It could be that you need to put in an unsustainable amount of hours to keep things afloat.

Whatever the situation, this will be a test of your resilience – and you can prevail!

The mindset and attitude you adopt can make a huge difference in how resilient you are when dealing with a setback. Maintaining a realistic but positive outlook will help you see beyond the current predicament you find yourself in.

Pay attention to negative thought loops. Catch yourself when you're reverting to stressful patterns of thinking. It's not always about positive mental attitude, but rather training the muscle that enables you to become solution-orientated that is the key to true resilience. And, on your challenging days, keep telling yourself:



It's not how far you fall... it's how high you bounce.

- Brian Tracy

About Nathalie Danon

I arrived in the UK in September 2000 after failing my degree at a French law school, with just a suitcase in my hand, a little money in my pocket and big ambitions to make the most of my bilingualism!

Six years after forming my first language company, I was working with 625 students every week and business was thriving... but I was frustrated by the limitations of being on the road, term time only sessions, and limited resources. I started to explore ways of improving learning environments through immersion and consistency, and in 2008 took the big step of evolving the company into VICI Language Academy. Now in it's 11th year, VICI is a successful and profitable Language Academy, going from strength to strength.

During this time, I've discovered success requires being open to continuous personal development and willing to ask for help when needed.

So for the last 5 years I've been providing coaching and mentoring to language professionals, drawing on my first hand experience to help people with a similar background get the leg up they need to make a success of their business.

Whether you're a language tutor needing to scale up, a language school owner looking for growth or a secondary school teacher who loves languages but is fed up with the education system, I'm here to help you turn your love of languages into profit.

My role is to help you understand where you are, to realise what you need to do to go through the different stages of growing your own business, to help reinforce some things and let go of others.

I can relate to all that you are experiencing. Let's connect!

Nat x



pro-languages.com



nathaliedanon.co.uk



Nathalie Danon Coaching



[@nd.nathaliedanon](https://www.instagram.com/nd.nathaliedanon)



[nathaliedanon](https://www.linkedin.com/in/nathaliedanon)