



Doug and Suni at Fiore di Italia Boutique, La Jolla CA

Introduction – Opening Thoughts and How to Use This Book

Congratulations!

By downloading our course, you made a very good choice: to make a positive change in your current situation and take the first step towards your dream of business ownership. By doing so, you may have made one of the most important decisions of your life, so you should be very excited and proud of yourself for having the courage to do that!

But before we get started, I wanted to talk a little bit about how to use this course, to get the maximum benefit from it.

As you proceed through the ebook, you will get information and resources for every aspect of getting your boutique off the ground, successfully.

We have done our best to place the chapters in an order that would make sense to do the steps contained in the chapters. But, keep in mind that not everything in life is a “linear progression”, nor does it have to be. You may find you want, or must, do some steps in a different order, while others may not apply to your situation.

Even more likely, you will find yourself needing to start doing several steps **simultaneously**. As an example, you may spend 2 weeks researching products and suppliers, and during that same period, you may also be doing research to find a retail space in the area you are interested.

In any case, whichever step you start first may not be complete until weeks after other steps, simply because of the realities of life, the schedules of people you are working with (including your own,) availability of products, commercial lease space availability, you name it.

So, **don't get caught up in the particular order or sequence of working through this book.** My suggestion is that you read it through once, with your note-book in hand to jot down important concepts or things that stand out and trigger ideas for you.

But you don't have to approach it that way. This isn't a novel that you have to read cover to cover; it's more like a reference resource, so use it that way. Then, decide on the order in which you will proceed, start working through the various processes, and refer to whatever chapter that applies to the reality of your situation.

Related to this, we included a step-by-step checklist for the action steps involved in opening your boutique. This is organized in a way that makes sense chronologically, but it is **not set in stone** – feel free to modify the order in which you proceed, based again on your individual situation. Now, lets get to it. You bought this course because you have a dream, and you want to turn that dream into a reality. More specifically, you have a dream of creating **your own boutique** and making it a **success**. With this course, we have provided the crucial steps and information you need in order to accomplish that.

And we bring you this information and guidance from the perspective of first hand experience, as boutique owners that started with **nothing more than our personal vision and a concept we believed in**. We know you can do the same, and we wish you every success as you start your journey towards **opening your own unique boutique!**

Wishing You All the Best as You Pursue Your Dream!

Doug and Suni
Owners, Fiore di Italia
La Jolla, California.

Chapter 1 - First Things First!

If you know (or think you know) exactly what you want your boutique to be about, with some idea of how to get there, then congrats. You are one very big step closer to manifesting your dream.

One "law of success" that is universally accepted, by people that have experienced success in any and all areas of life, is this: the more **clear and**

specific you are about **what you want** and **how you will get it**, the quicker you will **reach your goal**.

On the other hand, your goal may be slightly “ambiguous”. In other words, you know you want your own business. Even more specifically, you want to have your own boutique. You want to express your unique vision and creativity through your boutique and share it with others, while earning a good living.

But perhaps you don’t know exactly how it will take shape. This is perfectly fine for now, and perfectly normal. Just keep in mind, you **must** define it, as concretely as possible, in your mind, on paper, in every conceivable way, before you begin to create it.

You need to be able to visualize what you are setting out to do, concretely in as much detail as possible. If you do not, what you end up with is being left to chance – and won’t necessarily be what you want.

So, if your goal is “narrowed down” to something like “I want a really cute boutique with great clothes and a fabulous look and feel”, you are not quite there.

That would be roughly equivalent to going to a restaurant and telling the server “I’m in the mood for a really good tasting main course with a couple of healthy sides.” There could be a million possibilities for what you are served; with a good chance you won’t like it.

By the way, if this doesn’t apply to you, you have 2 choices: Skip ahead to the next chapter, or stick it out and try out the following exercises. If you do try them, who knows, maybe you’ll fine tune your vision, or discover an idea that would compliment the one you have now. Anyway, it’s your choice.

So, like the chapter title implies – **First Things First**. If you are least bit unclear on what your boutique will be about, you need to focus in and define it before you do anything else. So, take out a sheet of paper or open up a word processing document and get ready to **brainstorm**.

Before you begin your brainstorming session, take a moment to ask yourself a very important question, and give your mind a few moments to generate answers.

Ask yourself “**what is my true passion?**” Be ready for more than one answer, and there no rules or limits as to how many passions you have in life.

You are about to create a business and a livelihood for yourself. As important as it is that your business targets a market with lots of profit potential, it is equally important that you base your business on a true love

or passion in your life. You will be investing enormous amounts of time and energy into this – and life is too short to do that if it isn't going to be something you love.

1.1 - Exercise #1 - Brainstorming

Start out by taking a few deep breaths, clearing your mind, and become as relaxed as you can. Don't hold any stress, preconceptions, or anything else in your mind right now. Just let go and get centered.

If necessary, turn off the phone, put out the cat, go to the bathroom, get another cup of coffee, or all of the above, to ensure that for the next few minutes you will be uninterrupted and clear. Ok, are you ready? Of course you are, or you wouldn't be here.

Start writing down (or typing) any ideas that you have about what you might want to do with your future boutique. List industries, product types, specific product lines if you have any in mind. List themes that you are interested in (cultural, regional, specific product types, etc.)

Do you want to do fashion? If so, what age group? What style? Is it fashion from all over the world, or focused on a region like France or Italy? Is your theme Vintage? If so, do you feature second hand merchandise or brand new items that are retro? Do you want a children's boutique? Pets? Wine? Hats? Accessories only? Body and Spa Products?

(Keep in mind, later in the course, you will be analyzing your market to make sure that a market exists for your boutique, and if so, how big it is. But for now, no holds barred, just list anything you think you might be interested in.)

Keep building this list until you have absolutely every possible interest that you feel worthy of pursuing for your boutique down on paper. If you're ready to stop, it should be because you are staring at the page, cross-eyed, drooling, unable to think of anything else to write..;) Just kidding! Don't make it painful, just give it your best effort.

Okay, now take a few seconds to rest your brain, and then do...

1.2 - Exercise # 2 - Refine

Go back over the list you just made. Look at your rough ideas and start to hone in. Circle all of the items on your list that you know without a doubt you are interested in. Assign a priority to them, such as putting 5 stars next to those.

Then, start picking the next less interesting items, and give those 4 stars, etc. The point here is to prioritize your ideas from highest to lowest, so that you can see at a glance where your strongest interest lie.

This all may sound “lame” or “obvious”, but once you do it, you may discover things are not as obvious as you think. Many times you’ll discover that what you thought was most interesting to you simply just isn’t, even though it was a few years ago, or maybe something occurs to you that you never gave a chance before, but now you realize you are ready to or whatever.

The point is, seeing things **on paper** really helps to **clarify our thoughts**.

Also, by writing things down and then going to the effort of prioritizing them, something else happens that is amazingly powerful – You are **committing** yourself to what is most important to you, which is key.

For some people this can be tricky. You may find that you are tempted to give everything 5 stars... but “everything” shouldn’t have a priority level of 1 – unless your boutique is actually more like a swap meet.

In other words, chances are, you can differentiate what is more important to you, but it may take some thought and effort to do that. If this is the case, do not resist it. Take as much time as you need with this exercise to really hone in on your priorities.

This is basically an exercise in discovering, or refining, what it is you want from your boutique, which is derived from your greatest **passions, interests** and maybe even **your deepest values in life**. After all, what else should your boutique, your business, be than a beautiful, shining reflection of who you are?

1.3 - Exercise # 3 – Synthesize

Ok, by now your list is refined, and you have prioritized your ideas. The next step is to look at this supply of “raw material” and extract patterns or relationships from it that might define your boutique.

That is, you may be a single mom in her 30’s that always loved fashion and you know very well that you want a cute clothing boutique. So “fashion” has 5 stars on your list.

But, you also love your children, and for that matter, you love lots of children, maybe even all children - or almost all ;) So, you may decide that your lifelong goal of having a fashion boutique is better expressed at this stage of your life as a *children’s* fashion boutique.

And maybe "Italian" also had 5 stars, and behold, you just discovered that your real dream is to have a children's boutique featuring Italian designer fashion lines (and one of those exists in the Little Italy district of San Diego, my home town.)

That's what I mean by looking for patterns. Literally, you can do what is called a "mind map" By drawing lines connecting one of your high priority items with others that feel like they "belong" together, until you have clusters of 3, 4 , or 5 characteristics, hobbies, or whatever.

What should be emerging now are recognizable "themes" that with a little more fine tuning, could define your boutique.

1.4 - Exercise #4 – Crystallize

Just like the name sounds, this is where you take a few deep breaths, and a mental step back from the previous 3 exercises, and allow your boutique's theme to crystallize. In other words, you are about to decide what your boutique is going to be "all about."

You bought this book knowing you wanted a boutique. You may or may not have had any clear idea beyond that what it would look or feel like. By now, you should be on the verge of knowing exactly what it is you are aiming for.

If you don't know, or are feeling confused or doubtful, or simply having a hard time figuring out what you want to focus on, just relax. Go back to the previous steps and redo any or all of them as necessary to help clarify your priorities.

If necessary, stop at this point and take a day, or however long you need to clear your mind, and come back to it with a fresh perspective. On the other hand, don't take too long, or make this too difficult. Deep down, you know what you want, even if you're the type of person that has a million different hobbies and interests (like me.)

Okay, maybe your just coming back, or you've worked through to this point. Either way, it's decision time. This is your "moment of truth." Take a look at your "clusters" of priorities and see what stands out to you, what seems like it translates to an obvious theme or image that you would love to develop into your boutique.

Maybe it is casual clothing for young people, or high fashion for 40-somethings, or whatever. Don't kill yourself analyzing it, just discover what your boutique will be, identify it, and then take out a fresh piece of paper, or start a new word document file, and **write it down.**

More specifically, you are going to write in no more than 3 sentences (one is better) what your boutique will be all about. Something like "To offer the healthiest, most exquisite bath, body, and beauty products from Italy." Or "To provide unique, fashionable clothing for professional, upwardly mobile women."

This can be called a "**focus statement**" or a "**mission statement**". It's not so important what you call it, but it is *very* important that you **do these series of exercises**, even if you modify the details or the order in which you do them. The point is, you are mentally focusing your efforts, defining your image, and creating a "snapshot" of what will ultimately be **your** business – so don't cut corners here.

1.5 – Your Focus Statement

If you haven't done so already, take this moment to write down your focus statement.

Congratulations! You just reached a major milestone in making your dream a reality. You took what once was only an idea, mixed up with lots of other ones, randomly swimming around in your head, and you brought it into a physical, structured existence on your page.

As silly and simple as that sounds, there is actually a profound and powerful concept working behind it. On a basic level, your dream has just taken its first step in the process of "materializing" and "manifesting" (i.e. moving from the world of abstract ideas, to the concrete, material world.)

(You may be very excited at hearing this, or you may have no idea what I am talking about. Either way, it's okay, but trust me - this is more powerful than you may think.)

As you proceed through this course, your focus statement will effect many of your decisions, and it will play an important role in creating your business plan down the road.

Also, your focus statement will have the effect of tapping into your subconscious mind to work for you "behind the scenes", helping to guide your efforts and lead you to the right resources as you progress.

If you got all the way here in your first day, my recommendation is that you stop and come back tomorrow. This will allow your subconscious mind to do its work. When you come back tomorrow for Chapter 2, you will start working on the name of your boutique and lots of other stuff. Again, congrats and see you tomorrow! ☺