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Billionaire Richard Branson's Advice to Russians: Say 'Screw It'

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Richard Branson (L) at the Synergy Global Forum at Moscow (Anton Novoderezhkin / TASS)

British billionaire Richard Branson says Russians will need to have a different mentality if they want to be successful in business.

Speaking at the Synergy Global Forum in Moscow on Monday afternoon, Branson drew on his own past to describe how Russians might learn from him.

“I literally risked my life to get my business off the ground,” he said, referring to his attempted flight across the Atlantic in a hot air balloon to promote Virgin Airlines.

Learning to say “screw it" would be the first step, according to the British tycoon.

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> muscovites welcome richard branson by chanting “virgin”
> pic.twitter.com/gvhaNNmSWc
>
> — Evan Gershkovich (@evangershkovich) November 27, 2017

“Russians historically have a fear of failure," he added. "I hear that this might be changing now, and that is important."

Branson has a long history of doing business in Russia. In 2012 he launched a $200-million investment fund to back energy-efficiency projects with Rusnano chief Anatoly Chubais.

Late last week, the business daily Vedomosti reported that Trivon networks, co-owned by Branson’s Virgin Group, would launch a mobile virtual network operator in Russia.

Branson has also been politically outspoken. In 2014, after Western countries imposed sanctions on Russia for meddling in eastern Ukraine, Branson wrote an open letter calling for a resolution of the conflict and warning against a return to Cold War politics.

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