

Creating Opportunity: Building Doors

“If opportunity doesn’t knock, build a door”

(Mendel "Milton Berle" Berlinger, 1908-2002)

by Eva Blaskovic

Whether you wanted to make a new kind of living or couldn't get a job in your field, you've already built a door and created your own opportunity by starting a business that fulfills a need in the world. As you develop your business, you may find that in order to succeed in it, you need to build more doors and keep walking through them.

Following is a list of tips to keep your business moving forward, as well as challenges you may face.

Feature your business

- Talk about your business.
- Get a web presence.
- Go to events.
- Send a monthly newsletter.

Develop your business

- Look for new ways to promote your business.
- Keep a track record and get testimonials.
- Ask for referrals.
- Educate yourself.
- SET GOALS.

Challenges

- Getting enough clients
- Seasonal trends
- Dealing with slow times

The big one: convincing people they need you when they have a tight budget. When the economy changes your prospects' priorities, or your prospects under-rate the value of your product or service, you may need to find creative ways to convince them otherwise. And usually money talks. But it's up to you to present the scenario they can't see, which involves some kind of cost-benefit or return on investment. Depending on your product or service, appealing to *emotion* may be the key. People will often pay for what they *want* even before they acquire what they *need*.

Other challenges

- Bookkeeping and taxes
- Losing faith

If you're overwhelmed with bookkeeping, accounting, and taxes, hire out if you can afford it.

If you start to feel hopeless, call your business buddies for a coffee. This is one of the great benefits of attending Anderson Career Training Institute: you make contact with other self-employed people who may be facing similar challenges. Another option is you can play Anderson's two-minute version of *The Secret* to boost your spirits. And don't forget to review your successes! Write them down.

Ideas

- Watch for trends.
- Know your features and benefits.
- Stress benefits to prospects and clients.

Protect yourself

Sometimes only experience or some pro-bono work will alert you to unexpected things that could go wrong, such as time involved for a project, hidden costs, and client changes. Beware of clients who insidiously add on services or expand a given project without you getting compensated for what can amount to many extra hours. Also have a cancellation policy in place.

How?

- Create contracts for clients.
- Get legal advice.
- ADD IN TIME for travel or back-and-forth communication on e-mail or the phone.

Be clear with your expectations

- What exactly will you do and for what price?
- Under what circumstances would a client have to pay more (what's included, what's not)?
- Payment terms: How long does a client have to pay for services rendered?

Final words

- Keep your contacts updated about what you're looking for.
- Place ads where they will have the greatest results.
- Join associations that make you more credible, offer information, and connect you to people in your field.

- Be flexible. You may need to alter your product or service.