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Journey from ‘desperate housewife to PR diva’

It’s February — a time of full hearts, love and gratitude. That’s why — after writing this column for four months and bringing what I hope are useful tips, resources and suggestions to help you put publicity to work for your growing business — I thought I’d take a moment to tell you a little about my own humble beginnings as a business owner and how that experience factors into my work and service to you.

I often quip that I transitioned from desperate housewife to PR diva in nine life-altering steps. My public relations, publicity coaching and information products business was born in February 2001 out of a desire so simple that it might surprise you: I wanted to earn money to buy better groceries.

Up until May of 1997, I worked my way up the corporate ladder in a variety of marketing, promotion and advertising positions that required creativity, resourcefulness and decision making to influence bottom-line results. When my son was born, I left the work force for a year to learn how to be a mom and serve as the chief domestic officer of our household.

Among my many duties was figuring out how to make our household budget stretch to meet all of our needs with half the money. I wanted to buy Nabisco brand Wheat Thins for \$2.99 a box but chose to buy two boxes of generic brand wheat crackers for 99 cents instead. What I soon found out was that the savings didn’t compensate for the lack of flavor. My public relations business was my ticket to buy better groceries.

Today, I’ve got wonderful clients with great stories to tell, a regular newspaper column to share my expertise and wonderful prospects. And, I’m too busy to cook. This just goes to show that you can make your way in the world doing what you love if you just have the courage to pursue your passion.

I’ve been giving a lot of thought to why business owners want publicity in the first place. It occurred to me that business owners don’t want publicity at all. What they want is to be seen, heard and celebrated in their own back yards.

As business owners, we all make great sacrifices. We work long hours. We worry about a million things that make us long for our days as employees when things were so much easier. We wonder if our businesses will ever achieve “going concern” status, or if we will forever be destined to worrying about how to make a go of these businesses we’ve started, likely on a hope, a dream and a prayer.

When you earn recognition in the hometown media for your hard-won business success, expertise and community contributions, more of the right people show up so you can do more of what you love to do. This is perhaps the most powerful benefit anyone can hope to enjoy from the credibility and impact that editorial coverage provides.



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When I started my business, I wanted the chance to dance with clients who would give me the opportunity to tell their stories to the local media. Soon, I was dancing as fast as I could to juggle multiple engagements and deliver “big ink and air” to clients whose success or failure depended on attracting and selling to the right clients. Their success escalated, and mine grew, too.

Once business was booming for my clients, my PR services weren't as crucial. Clients were booked solid with plenty of quality leads in the pipeline. It was a beautiful thing. Referrals from satisfied clients flowed because I earned the reputation as the PR expert who could bring them into the spotlight and help make their dreams come true. Clients were happy because they could re-deploy dollars formerly allocated to public relations to other, even more pressing, business initiatives.

What I've learned on my own entrepreneurial journey is that life is the sweetest and most rewarding when I get to spend the majority of my time doing work I love to do. As business owners, we owe it to ourselves to do the work for which we are most qualified and passionate for the customers who need and want what we have to offer.

Nancy S. Juetten owns Nancy S. Juetten Marketing Inc. and is the author of the Media-Savvy-to-Go Publicity Toolkit, which helps business owners from Main Street USA get heard, seen and celebrated in their own back yards. Subscribe to her free Media-Savvy-to-Go e-zine by visiting www.mediasavvytogo.com. Get in touch with your media relations questions at nancy@nsjmtg.com or 425-641-5214.