

It's Time to Reinvent Yourself

It happens every year about this time. I reinvent my business (and myself in the process). Most often I do it because of my desire to grow my business and make a greater difference in the world, rather than because I'm unhappy with the way the past year went. The process is rejuvenating and inspiring. It's a great way to enter the new year with enthusiasm and rekindled energy. It motivates me to examine the various parts of my business and my life, and it sparks a flood of creative ideas. This process of self-examination, inspiration, and creativity allows me to set new goals, develop new plans of action for the coming year, and set in motion new initiatives.

This isn't a formal process. However, I can share some of what I do each year so that you might also experience the same benefits that I do. In fact, in the years when I haven't spent the time to reflect and reinvent, my business has languished and it shrank during that next year.

Each year, as the year comes to a close, I begin by looking at each aspect of my business. I examine how well each revenue stream performed. With some streams, I just take an overall look at performance. With other streams, I do a more detailed analysis. I'll examine the results of various marketing efforts and review feedback from clients. I'll compare them to the goals I had set for each revenue stream. After I look at how well (or poorly) a particular aspect of my business did, I then look at 1) whether I did a good job in marketing it, 2) whether I did a good job in delivering it, and finally 3) whether there was, and is, a demand for what I offered. In truth, one has to answer the marketing and delivery questions first before the demand question can be answered. In order to properly evaluate your marketing performance and delivery performance, you need something to compare them to. One of the best ways to gauge whether you've done an excellent, average, or mediocre job is to be a student of marketing and delivery. Become a student of marketing. Study how others are marketing their products and services. Stay on top of new, innovative ideas that come across your desk throughout the year and keep tabs on how well these new ideas performed. Generally, especially towards the early stages of one's business development, having good technical knowledge doesn't get new clients - it may keep them, but it doesn't get them. Marketing gets new clients. Commit to becoming a professional marketer. In addition, learn how others are successfully delivering their products, their services, and their business. Commit to delivery excellence. Be open to different ways of conducting yourself and your business. *"Insanity is doing the same thing over and over again, and expecting different results."* Look for ways to set yourself apart - to differentiate yourself. Become aware of what you aren't doing. Become aware of what you are doing well. And become clear as to what you're doing that could be improved upon. You don't need to implement every marketing and delivery idea out there. But it is important to be aware of as many ideas as possible so you can refine and embellish what you do. Once you're aware of what is possible, you can then more accurately assess how good a job you do in marketing and delivery. You need to be aware of how others are successfully marketing and delivering their services. (By the way, make sure you're learning from people who are having success and not from folks who just like to hear themselves talk.) It's critical to continue to educate oneself with respect to marketing and delivery throughout the year.

Once you've fairly evaluated how well you've been doing, you can decide whether to implement new ways of marketing and delivering your products and services. You'll be able to refine current approaches to be more effective. You may even decide to re-think whether or not to offer certain existing products and services altogether. You'll come up with new products and services to offer, and new ways to offer them. If you've been studying what others are successfully doing in your field or a related field, you'll no doubt come across products and services which you don't presently offer. Reflect on whether any of these other products or services could be worthwhile additions to your business. If so, develop a plan of action to implement and market them.

By examining what you offer, how well you market, and how well you deliver your products and services, you will reinvent your business and yourself. You'll breathe new life into them. You'll bring a new level of professionalism to your business and yourself. You'll discover new levels of energy. You'll find greater enjoyment and satisfaction in your work. And you'll reach new levels of financial success.

It's December. It's time to reinvent yourself.

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