

Does Your Business Serve You?

By: Bernie Heer

On a beautiful fall day a few years ago, I took an exit off Interstate 78 West to a scenic overlook. It's a beautiful spot that overlooks the hills of western New Jersey. The leaves had just turned. Really nice.

Yes... believe it or not, there are NICE parts of New Jersey...

Anyway... I was at the scenic overlook to think.

So I turned off my cell phone and started thinking...

You see, when I started my first business, I worked like a dog.

I worked like a dog some more when I started my second business.

And my third.

Somewhere along the way I began to realize that I was working a lot harder than I should be. I was hand-cuffed to my business... working 12 to 14 hour days. Clients would call me at all hours of the day, and it was tough to get time to even think about important business decisions.

I hadn't taken more than a few days off in years. I sometimes felt like I was a stranger in my own house... one who came home only to eat and sleep.

This wasn't my vision of being a business owner. Somehow I thought . when I first started out . that owning a business would liberate me... would give me freedom.

It sure wasn't working out that way.

So I went to the scenic overlook that day to escape the phone and to think about how I could turn things around so that I would have more of the freedom I had originally envisioned.

The biggest thing I was feeling that day was frustration... anger. I was so sick of feeling like I wasn't getting anywhere that I put every part of my business on the table. I decided then and there that I was either going to figure this out or sell my business.

After all, working for someone else would reduce my stress level, give me a lot more time for my family, and really not a whole lot less money in my pocket. Maybe more money.

In that moment, sitting at that overlook, I truly adopted the boldness mindset.

I began to dissect every part of my job to figure out which tasks I felt like I really needed to do myself and which I could get rid of. If you haven't done this, I can tell you, it's the most difficult work you can do.

I surprised myself by ending up with a pretty short list of things I felt that I had to keep for myself.

It was clear to me that I was doing plenty of things that someone else could be doing, or I was doing things that could be systematized and run themselves.

I took all those tasks and made notes about who I could give them to or if they had to be outsourced.

I felt a huge weight lift up off of me. I made a commitment to myself to carry through with my plan.

I returned to my office that day with a new outlook. Although it took a few weeks, I did manage to offload all of the tasks I wanted to get rid of. Just as planned, they were either given to someone else or outsourced.

Because I was focused on those activities that were of greater value, my revenues started climbing... fast.

It didn't take me long for me to start thinking I should give up some more tasks.

So I took out my notes from the day at the scenic overlook and picked a few things that I really don't enjoy all that much. Then I gave them away.

My company's revenue went up some more.

The less I was doing, the more money I was making, *and the more I was enjoying my business* again. It didn't seem logical, but the numbers were there... and they weren't lying.

Now, it's great that this change was good for my bottom line, but that's not the point of this article.

The real eye-opener for me was the realization that...

Your business can serve your lifestyle.

If your life looks like mine used to . you're working like a dog... running on the hamster wheel and going nowhere fast... you feel like you're hand-cuffed to your business... you can't take any time for yourself or your family . you need to find your own scenic overlook.

I've taken more vacation time in the last two years than I did in the ten years before that.

On the job I do only the things that I like to do. (Okay, MOSTLY I do only the things I like to do.) The thing I like most is spending time with clients on the phone. So that's what I do mostly.

It might take some creativity . and it definitely takes bold thinking . but you too can arrange your business to serve you and the lifestyle you want.

If you'd like to know more about how to do it, give me a call. I'd love to talk with you. Dial 800-346-4015 and we'd schedule a time.

Wishing you spectacular success.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Bunnie Auer". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned in the lower-left quadrant of the page.