

Business Bullet ~

How can entrepreneurs and sole proprietors help each other?

There's an African proverb that says "It takes a village to raise a child." What does it take for an entrepreneur or small business owner to successfully raise an idea into a profitable business? Of course, there are the different aspects of a business such as technology, marketing and sales, and finance on top of your core business. Ideally, you have a budget and can hire professionals. But what if you're an "accidental entrepreneur" (thanks to Jeannette Paladino * for coining that term). What if you are suddenly out of work, or maybe you're looking for a way to earn extra income but you don't have money to invest? What if you're just testing the waters to see if there's an interest in a product that you make or you want to see if you can make money through affiliate programs or Google AdSense advertising? How can you find people who are willing to help you when you can't afford to pay them?

Well, for starters, what sort of help are you looking for? Do you have specific areas where you need help? There are so many online resources to tap into. No matter what you're looking for, you should be able to do an online search and come up with an answer or at least a forum that you can post your question to. There are a lot of eBooks and people who offer their services for reasonable fees. Are you looking for a support system?

Many of us who are finding us in this type of situation look for like-minded people. We read blogs and comment. We are looking for meaningful conversations and long-term relationships that will be beneficial to both of us. And we find them. And you will find that a lot of the people you meet through blogging are becoming your peers—your support system.

How can you find an online-support system?

- Join a couple of social networking sites like Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter.
- Follow a few blogs and join in the conversation.
- Look for posts, tweets and comments that make you think or teach you something new.
- Contribute. Offer something of value. Share experiences (both good and bad) that we all can learn from.

Talk to others that you meet at business networking events. Ask them about online-support systems and see if they have some stories to share with you. Share with them. We are all in this to succeed, so let's help one another do that. You might just find that it's worth the time invested.

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