

## **“Alarm Sirens Went Off in My Head”**

### **Is this Small Business Saboteur Preventing You from Succeeding?**

Dear Fellow Business Heroes:

I walked away from a meeting with a small business owner this past Tuesday with alarm sirens going off in my head. You know, the kind of sirens you hear coming up behind you in the car that make the hair stand up on the back of your neck. It was ambulance sirens... with a police escort.

We just finished a 4 hour meeting as a follow up to a one hour meeting the previous week. The first one-hour meeting was high-level goal setting, analysis and brainstorming and went very well.

This second four-hour meeting was for me to provide direction and samples, to reach consent and outline immediate next steps in what we both agreed needed to be a series of decisive actions in an incredibly aggressive timeline.

### **So why was I shaking my head walking back to my car?**

Not because he didn't understand what I was talking about.  
He got it in spades!

Not because we disagreed on everything from tactics to strategy.  
We had consensus on everything from concept to execution!

First, it's because the more we talked, the more he realized he hasn't been thinking like a business owner. He's been thinking like a schedule-driven, task-focused employee and that the things he and I talked about for increasing sales, profit margins and growing the business were things he might have thought about, at least to some extent, on his own- if he had time to think.

He's busy running the operations of his business and keeping his hands in everything because of the natural need to control everything, and from the necessary start up habit of doing as much as you can by yourself. And Monday through Friday he's also Mr. Mom.

While Mr. Small Business owner is doing the business thing, Mr. Mom is also preparing the family meals, carpooling the kids to school, attending board meetings, PTA meetings and driving three kids to two different karate schools and music lessons. He doesn't have time to think.

And second, we realized that even if he can find the time to think, when does he find the time to physically execute?

**The bad news is this guy's business will fail, like 65% of all small businesses do in the first five years and he is going to kill himself in the process finding the time to do all things he needs to learn or do.**

1. Define Goals
2. Develop Strategy and Tests
3. Design Materials and Processes
4. Obtain Resources
5. Define Measurements for Tracking
6. Educate employees on strategy, roles, responsibilities, expectations
7. Implement
8. Monitor, Measure and Review
9. Revise
10. Start Over

**The good news is the more we talk, the more he understands how he can skunk the saboteur and build a profitable business.**

My small business friend is realizing he has access to serious, affordable, accountable help. That there are many things he can and should be giving someone else to do if he wants to succeed. He understands that, together, we can agree about the things from the list where he really needs to be involved and the things where he can assign activities and the authority to act.

He doesn't need to experience a heart attack doing all the heavy lifting. But he does need to set aside time for critical input, review, approval and some key activities that are defined in a simple project plan. Then, he needs to let others help him connect with, and grow his audience in common-sense, practical and actionable ways.

My friend sees the possibility of new cost-effective customer acquisition opportunities and alternative business revenue cash streams.

When he sits back and closes his eyes, he sees a profitable, thriving business that is still here in five years.

Be The Hero,  
Mark

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Creating Calls-to-Action that Work!

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