

The Lies of Independence

The joys of being an independent business operator aren't always all we envision when we opt for the entrepreneurial path. The dreams of freedom and security often become cloudy as reality prevails and imposes itself. But we're not here to extinguish any flames of business passion. We're just here to give an overview of the good, the bad, and the ugly of being in business for yourself. Hopefully by knowing what to expect, you can be better prepared when reality strikes.

The Good

When it's good, it's great. Consider the following:

- You Wake Up Every Day Excited About Going to Work
- You Realize That Your Success is Dependent Solely on You
- You Have the Potential to Earn as Much as You Can
- Your Business Provides You With a Challenge and Creative Outlet

All of these are the factors that have been the engine driving capitalism. The very notion that one can achieve without boundaries is an exciting and enticing proposition. In fact, few feelings can match the sense of triumph when your business starts to succeed.

The Bad

Is there any nice way to say it? The entrepreneurial underground is full of lies. Consider the following:

- You'll Be Your Own Boss
- You'll Have Freedom
- You Can Choose Who You Work With
- You Can Control How Hard You Work

What? Who came up with this stuff?

Truth is, not only won't you be your own boss, but instead of one boss, you'll now have many, as every one of your customers will, in effect become your boss.

And Freedom...Like the Eagles said, "that's just some people talking". While it's more than just a word for nothing left to lose (I'm on a rock 'n roll here), it is also elusive to the private business owner. You may in fact have more freedom that you did at your 9-5 job, but because the business is yours, it is dependent on you....meaning you need to be there to make it work.

Thinking you can choose who you work with is like thinking you can select the members of your family. As a small business you are going to work with whoever is interested in working with you, even if you don't particularly care for their personality. Sure there may be some negative customers that you'll opt out of working with, but all in all, unless you're a real people person, you're going to find yourself feigning joy as you service a customer you would much rather be choking.

Okay, on some level you can control how hard you work. If you want to be there for your child's school play you can simply get up and go (and you should). On the other hand, it's all on you...all the responsibility, the need to produce income, and the need to grow the business. This means you'll be working pretty hard.

The Ugly

It's the secret no one tells...and yet here we are, Tudog, about to reveal the truth about The Ugly. There is tremendous pressure on the independent business. Let's face it, the banks don't want to lend you money, the larger service providers don't want to provide you with service (they prefer a fee schedule you couldn't possibly pay), and your larger competitors are using their size to box you out of deals and drive you out of business. Whereas the United States once embraces the small business, these days everyone wants standardized products and services, and the small business has to struggle to reach standards that the larger companies reach through economies of scale and other efficiencies.

So there you have it. The good, the bad and the ugly. The lies of independence revealed in all their aching glory. Sure it's tough being an independent business, but the challenges somehow only make it more appealing. As for Tudog, we wouldn't have it any other way.