

On Small Business: The Kindness of Friends

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When you are creating your own business, you can, and should, take whatever help is available. One friend agrees to help you with the web site, another volunteers to take photos and still another offers to answer the phone a few days each week. Great! This frees you up for "more important" work and helps move the company forward.

Eventually, though, all this help can lead to a bit of a trap. As your company grows, you need more than help, you need prompt and professional action. Often, taking advantage of opportunities requires that you respond as quickly as possible. This is where the relationship with your friends can start to break down.

In one personal example, a client needed photos on a regular basis. A friend offered to shoot some photos, which were excellent, but the client now has an on-going need for photos -- sometimes as often as once a week. Their friend can't respond to such quick demands and so he ends up waiting for weeks before his friend can "get around to it."

While his friend's assistance has been invaluable in the past, there comes a time when you simply cannot rely on "the kindness of strangers..er..friends" anymore. You probably already know that you've reached this stage, but most of us simply ignore it. We like to think that something is better than nothing, but the truth is, relationships like this one can begin to hold you back. The time has come to find a professional who will work on your time schedule with a budget you can afford. Don't let your business be slowed down by relationships that no longer meet your needs. Sure, take any help the friends can offer, but when they aren't available, you need to develop more professional relationships to ensure that your company continues to grow.

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