

Entrepreneurship: A Heady Business

By Sherry Greenleaf

Transitioning skill sets from a corporate environment to owning and running one's own business takes focus and determination. Now think of "Build it and they will come" times two! Flushed with a successful first venture, this entrepreneur was inspired to create a second business which she eventually sold. Working with business coach Sherry Greenleaf, the Interview Doctor's founder Katherine Burik found her new experiences as CEO one of her most rewarding.

The Business/The Organization

Katherine Burik is a human resources professional with more than 25 years of experience growing people and strengthening organizational resources. Her career with Fortune 1000 companies seemed destined to rise with company fortunes until 2004, when she became an entrepreneur with the Interview Doctor, Inc.

The Partnership

National and local organizations were introducing topics about coaching and Katherine considered how coaching could help develop managers and supervisors at MACtac. In the midst of her search for more information, the company began a mass downsizing and she found that she needed to transition out of her corporate position. She decided to open a human resources consulting service specializing in helping others improve their job-seeking skills and win more interviews with potential employers.

Sherry had served as a human resources manager and then transitioned from a corporate position to an entrepreneurial position in the mid-nineties as a result of down-sizing. She joined a local training company and with her business partner helped to expand programs and services, which included coaching. Their joint success was a result of providing training with follow-up coaching.

Sherry invited Katherine to learn more about coaching as a way to expand services to clients who needed support and guidance through a very stressful time.

The Challenge

Katherine wanted to create an infrastructure of financial systems, programs and services, marketing, Internet presence, and business development. She quickly adapted her corporate expertise to strategic planning and finances. With a strong desire to meet the needs of a rapidly growing market, she wanted to test the marketplace to determine if her process and approach would work.

She met with her church leadership council and found that not only were some members of the church possible candidates, but there was a need in the surrounding community. This would provide the opportunity to refine and tweak her concepts. With the support of the church and community, she set up a no-fee program within her church to research her approach.

That left two components for growing a business—development and marketing—both critical to her strategic plan, but areas that Katherine needed to develop if she would be successful as an entrepreneur.

The Approach

Katherine developed a unique approach to coaching candidates that helped the candidate get the job. She found an Internet company that would build her platform and develop web pages, establishing an Internet presence, which gave the business legitimacy to candidates.

Sherry helped Katherine realize that the adage "build it and they will come" is only half right. Katherine had the website, the vision, and was paying the bills without a lot coming in. Entrepreneurship is a heady business. However, without sales, that's where it stays—in the head. Together, Sherry and Katherine worked out a plan to attract new clients that included a corporate base as well as individuals.

Sherry helped Katherine to recognize the power of networking by encouraging her to attend local professional societies and learn how to tell her story to attract clients. Through regular coaching with Sherry, Katherine set monthly goals that pushed her to rapidly apply what she learned about business development. She set specific goals for weekly networking and cold calling targets, wrote articles, and created an electronic newsletter, then set goals for follow-up. The networking through various avenues created relationships leading to referrals and eventually to new clients. Sherry encouraged Katherine, answered questions, and provided research ideas that Katherine could apply to grow the business.

The Value Delivered

Katherine derived so much pleasure out of creating one business, she developed a second one. Having a strong interest in health and wellness, and knowing how the cost of health benefits impacted bottom-line results for her organizations, she partnered with a fitness instructor and created a wellness program to increase the health and fitness of employees.

Following the model of her first new business, Katherine quickly applied many of the principles—developed a wellness program, built a website, met with healthcare professionals, attended and made presentations within her professional network, and targeted key corporate clients. The result was that she was able to successfully attract several local institutions to contract for her Health Initiative Project.

With two budding businesses, Katherine was able to leverage her expertise with two niches. Passionate about both, she developed a strong network with both markets and expanded her services by relying on Sherry's knowledge and professional relationships to develop a team of coaches that could handle the overflow for the Interview Doctor.

Sherry's coaching, feedback, and resources helped Katherine juggle both businesses and find time to spend with her active family. While both businesses were achieving financial success, the relationship between Katherine and the fitness instructor dissolved due to differences in style and direction. It took several months to end the partnership with many coaching sessions focused on communication, conflict resolution, and personal support.

Each coaching session thereafter focused on the many activities that Katherine wanted to accomplish to attract more clients. She continued to network and was successful in attracting a large recruiting firm that invited her to present at a conference. This endeavor resulted in attracting more attention to her interviewing methods.

The final result was that Katherine's expanded skills in networking and business development successfully helped her to sell the Interview Doctor.

The relationship between a coach and coachee works best when both people listen and bring their best experiences to the table. In this case, Sherry shared her own expertise and experience to coach Katherine in setting goals that moved her businesses forward much faster than would have been possible if she had worked alone.



Sherry Greenleaf is the co-founder of IMPACT Training & Development, Inc., a coaching and training firm since 1995. With more than 20 years of management and business experience, Sherry specializes in helping leaders connect emotional literacy with powerful leadership. More about Sherry in the [WABC Coach Directory](#). Contact [Sherry](#).