

What's My Motivation?

By Sue Jarvis

Owners often have to be self-motivating even when things get rough. Here are some suggestions to keep a positive focus.

AS BUSINESS OWNERS WE ARE CONSTANTLY MOTIVATING OUR EMPLOYEES. How do we motivate ourselves? In these economic times it is more important than ever to find effective ways to be our own best motivator. Each of us is inspired differently, but the important thing is to try not to be discouraged.

One of the quickest ways to motivate yourself is through a strong network. You may already have many friends and trusted peers, but you can always meet new ones at trade shows, through other affiliates, networking events, business groups, and much more. Experimenting with a successful networking association can also be motivational—there is no obligation to join if you don't like the group. Keep looking for one that you connect with, and share ideas while actively listening as well.

Believe it or not, the slower months can be productive for an owner. Take advantage of the slowdown by marketing and doing things you know need to be done—keep working and don't get lazy. Staying in shape and eating right are huge motivators. When we feel good we are much more on top of our game. It's easy to eat unhealthily or not get enough sleep at times like this, but you will feel so much better if you feed your body what it needs.

Motivation must also come from within, and being a student of life is a great motivator. I know that many people complain that they don't have the time, but it's so important to take that time out and recharge. It is often required that you multitask in many different ways throughout your workday, but it's equally important to give your mind a rest and focus on something else. Reading books, listening to CDs, watching inspirational DVDs, or viewing the endless educational material available on the Internet—it is all good. You never know where the next best idea may come from.

Being a company owner is often motivation enough to keep operators forward thinking and focused. This economic crisis, however, has dampened the spirits of many of us. Take some time to clear your own mind and reflect on why you joined the industry. It's easy to stray from your goals when you feel overwhelmed. Surround yourself with strong, smart people who share your goals. Talking things through with them can often inspire an idea or re-motivate you in ways you never thought. If you don't motivate yourself, no one will do it for you. **LD**



Sue Jarvis started Aristocat Limousine in the Detroit area in 1987 with one limousine out of her home. Since then she has acquired four other limousine companies and now represents a fleet of over 70 vehicles. Aristocat Limousine has been a finalist for Operator of the Year and its office manager was voted Employee of the Year by Limo Digest. She can be reached at (586) 574-0700 or sue@aristocatlimo.com.



While writing this article I talked to many fellow business owners and found much motivation for myself in their stories. Here is some of what they shared.



Diane Forgy, Overland Limousine Service, Overland Park, Kansas:

"Personally I like to think my work ethic, competitiveness, and survival instincts keep me motivated and focused during challenging times. If you only focus on the negative that is all that will manifest. My motivation right now is protecting what we have built, finding opportunities amongst the rubble, and coming out of this smarter and better positioned than ever before. There is always a lesson to learn from the challenges that life throws us. There will be disappointments. We will make our share of mistakes but we will learn from them."



George Jacobs, Windy City Limousine, Chicago, Illinois:

"I am self motivated. I remind myself that I do not have to be in this industry, that I chose to be in this industry. I am here because I love the people and the industry itself. I set what seems to be unreachable goals and have so much fun attempting to reach them. The trick is to always have some fun along with all the hard work. I am quoting a \$1 million RFP for a government agency. I told her I could use a 40-passenger bus on one part of it. She wrote back and said, 'I thought they were 39-passenger buses?' So I told her the last of the 40 to arrive had to drive. If I ever stop having fun, I will be gone."



Barbara Curtis, Two Step Limousine, Denver, Colorado:

"As a woman operator, I have a tendency to be an event planner. This works on my side with our customers. I'm always looking for fresh ideas that I can add to someone's event, and I'm motivated when a client says 'What a great idea. Let's do that.'"