

Miniatures Marketplace - June 1999

THINGS WE SHOULD KNOW AND HAVE FORGOTTEN  
ABOUT RUNNING OUR BUSINESS

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Miniatures BY BARB

I have presented a seminar on this topic at both the CIMTA and MIAA trade shows. The response has been extremely positive. Some of the newer miniature shops were not aware of some business practices, while some existing miniature shops had forgotten the basics. Both manufacturers and handcrafters expressed a desire for more information on business techniques. Through phone calls, e-mails and notes, people who attended my seminar noted that the seminar initiated some to business practices, in others it sparked new ideas or rekindled techniques that had been neglected. My goal is to get you thinking. Research the information you need. Rethink your goals. Make some new and innovative plans for your business. If you keep on doing things the same old way you will get the same old results. Remember the world in which we are doing business is changing rapidly. We must keep informed, make changes and move ahead with imagination.

If you are new to our industry or a long time miniatures entrepreneur, there are business procedures you need to be practicing. Do you have a business plan and a marketing plan? Do you know the steps of salesmanship? We will take a look at some of the business techniques we may be neglecting. This year will lead us into a new century. Let us improve our businesses by trying some new methods and retrying some standard business approaches.

Writing a business plan seems like a daunting process. There is no need for me to go into the details of the process of writing a business plan. If you would like to write a detailed plan there are many books on the subject in your library or favorite book shop. One very good book is How to Write a Business Plan by Mike Mc Keever. There is also software available for your computer. Palo

Alto software created Business Plan Pro and Business Resource Software has Business Plan Writer, ask at your local computer outlet. There is information out there to fit your needs.

Writing a business plan does not have to be a complicated ordeal. Many of these books and programs are written so that you can just fill in the blanks. If writing a detailed plan is not something you will do don't let that keep you from planning. Take the time, when you are in your car, waiting for an appointment or having your haircut. Think about where your business stands now. Where would you like it to be? Who are your customers? What are you doing to fill their needs? What can you do better? What is your competition doing? What steps do you need to take to get where you want to be? If you have already written a business plan now is the time to review it. Are you headed toward the goals you set? If not why, and what can you do to put you back on track?

Now write or mentally plan a Mission Statement. In as few words as possible, no more than a short paragraph, express your goals. Focus on what you will do for your customer to fill his wants and needs. My mission is to "Handcraft skillfully made, creative, aesthetically pleasing, fairly priced scale miniatures and provide my customers with the support and

information they require to fill their customers needs.” What’s yours?