Yeah, It IS Lonely At the Top

By Caroline Jordan, MBA

Sometimes when you run a business you feel as lonely as the Maytag repairman. Loneliness and isolation are very common problems for business owners. You sit at your desk wondering if you are steering your business in the right direction. When faced with a decision, you worry that you may be making a mistake or missing an opportunity. You get frustrated because you have no one to talk to about all the problems and decisions you have to make everyday. When you have a confidential matter you can't discuss with employees, family members, or friends you suffer in silence because you don't have an advisor to turn to. And unless your spouse is an MBA, he or she probably doesn't have the answers you need either.

Finding people you can trust to help you with your business is tough. You need someone knowledgeable. You want someone you feel comfortable with. Someone you can really take into your confidence.

Often business owners turn to their bankers or accountants for business advice. But, do you really want to tell your banker that you need guidance running your company? Does your accountant encourage you to sit down and chat about your business over a cup of coffee? Absolutely not. First of all, you don't want to look like a dope in front of other professionals. You want to be seen as the competent professional that you are.

In my early days of running my business, I felt very lonely and isolated. Who could I talk to about my business? Not my customers certainly. They were looking to me for business advice. Not my family. They weren't really sure what I do, and I deal with a lot of technical stuff that they've never even heard of. So, I spent an awful lot of time struggling. Struggling to learn. Struggling to make the right decisions. Struggling to choose directions for my business. And all the while, feeling like I needed someone to advise me but I just didn't know WHO!

But over the years, I have found the resources I need to help me move my business forward. I know who I can trust. I know who has the answers to my questions. Now it's a matter of picking up the phone or sending an email to the right professional. And almost magically my questions are answered and my business moves forward. Sometimes just getting a second opinion or a new perspective clears the fog and the confusion.

The moral of the story is that no one (even business consultants with MBA's) has all the information and knowledge needed to build a successful business. We all do better when we can "get by with a little help from our friends."

Caroline Jordan, MBA, is a veteran small business owner, accountant, consultant, trainer, and author. She is the owner of The Jordan Result, a company specializing in developing real world, practical resources to help small business owners improve cash flow and business operations. Jordan is also an accounting and business professor and the author of "Stop the Cash Flow Roller Coaster, I Want to Get Off!" For more tips and strategies to build your business visit www.TheJordanResult.com.