



Ask SCORE for Business Advice

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Where’s My Stimulus? by Tina Dettman-Bielefeldt

At recent SCORE counseling sessions, we’ve had several clients ask for assistance with an on-going business. Because of the recession, some owners are finding it difficult to hang on to a business that they love. Usually, it’s a business that consistently did well in the past, but is in one of the economic sectors most affected by the decline. These are tough sessions, because there are no simple solutions. We don’t know when things will improve, and predicting future income is a challenge.

One thing is certain, however. Owning a business is not easy. These owners are the backbone of our economy, yet more and more, there seems to be an attitude of resentment toward those that are successful. Federal and State governments are looking to increase income taxes, capital gains taxes, health insurance contributions, and the minimum wage. At the same time, they are proposing cuts in business deductions.

“How many hours do you work per week? 80 or so?” I asked a SCORE client “That would be a good week,” he said. “I’ve had weeks where I’ve worked over 100 hours.” When I looked at him, I noted the tired lines under his eyes and the sacrifice he has made. And, I wondered how people could think this man owes more of his business profit to the government.

“I came in today to find out how the stimulus package can help my business,” another owner said. “Where’s my bailout?”

After explaining that there was none, the client wondered how she would be able to continue. She asked where all the money was going if it wasn’t going to help small businesses. She had gotten behind in payments, and was lectured by lenders who offered no assistance. Despite the fact that she had never missed a payment, no one was willing to help. She had turned to credit cards where interest rates of up to 30% were dooming her business.

You may be wondering what my point is. It is this. I think that there is an attitude among many that small business owners are making huge amounts of money at the expense of their workers. Small business owners are not getting the credit they deserve for working hard, creating jobs, and proving that the American dream is still alive. When I listen to these owners and see the sacrifice that they have made, I think they deserve the

respect of those that could never have the emotional mettle to assume the same risks. They also deserve to enjoy their success without the government deciding that more and more should go to them.

“What is the point of starting a business if they’re going to take most of what I make?” a client inquired. He was discouraged by the talk of higher taxation. He has a point that our legislators need to consider. I have heard the stories and understand the price that small business owners’ pay in sleepless nights and long days. Isn’t it time that we applaud, not penalize, their contributions?

If you have business questions, contact the Green Bay Chapter of SCORE. Visit www.greenbayscore.org or call Cindy Gokey at 920-496-8930 for information.

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