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UP & RUNNING

Focus pays off for service biz

By Roger Pierce
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There are plenty of organizations out there that need your help. All you have to do is figure out what they want and deliver it. "I saw a market niche that fit perfectly with my background," entrepreneur Jenny Faucher says.

Faucher owns Managing Matters Inc. (www.managingmatters.com), a boutique association management firm that provides on-demand support services for professional, industry and trade associations; for example, an association of young entrepreneurs would hire her firm to manage its database, organize member events and keep accounting records current.

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Faucher followed the advice frequently given in this column to start a business that fits with her background. "It was an opportunity to use my years of experience in association management and event planning to support boards of directors and executive directors. I know how associations work, what they need and how to create smooth-running infrastructure."

She says many entrepreneurs start out supplying some sort of support service such as graphic design or bookkeeping, but often stumble because they don't focus on a particular market. "If you hone your services to support a certain type of customer, you'll get known as an expert in that area," Faucher says. "People understand what we do and who we serve, so our focus is paying off."

Faucher is further sharpening her company's marketplace position by focusing on "turn-key" association support services. "Change can happen quickly within organizations, so we offer fast and responsive on-demand services so a client operation won't miss a beat," she says.

She believes getting the word out about your service business is best done through business networking. "I think people are more likely to do business with people they already know," she says. "Attend select networking events and try to make meaningful connections with like-minded people."

-- Entrepreneurship expert Roger Pierce trains people on how to start a small business in the Up & Running Biz Launch Program.

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Jenny Faucher keeps organizations running smoothly with her association management firm, Managing Matters Inc.