

The Lone Ranger Rides Again...

By Helen Kornblum

I am a fan of old-time radio and have vivid memories of taking a pre-dinner rest with my sisters during which we listened to The Lone Ranger. Brace Beemer played the Lone Ranger who I remember. He had an authoritative voice, a take-charge attitude, and a talent for finding effective solutions by the end of each half-hour program.

For some of us, the Lone Ranger is an unhealthy model. Or at least his name is. We absorb the ethos of doing everything ourselves and forget the value of collaboration and delegation. The Lone Ranger had the reputation for operating as a solo act, but the fact is that he relied on Tonto, his trusted Indian friend. The successful outcome of many a program rested on Tonto's taking a critical message to someone on time or carrying out a clever scheme that enabled the masked man to capture the bad guys.

It is particularly unwise to be a lone ranger when you are running a small business. Yes, you have to wear many hats, especially if you have no other staff, but you can still rely on some organizing strategies to help you.

- Consider outsourcing financial services if doing your own books is a source of anxiety or error for you. Accountants, bookkeepers, and tax preparers save you time, and eventually, money, by freeing you to service your market, develop new products, and tend to marketing.
- If you have staff, teach them to take on more responsibility by preparing them to do some of your tasks. Match their talents to the needs of the office. A successful outcome has a lot to do with how effectively you delegate, the subject of a future column.
- Talk to other business people about the kinds of problems you are facing. The networks you have cultivated should give you support and information. No sense reinventing the wheel here. Others have probably dealt with a similar problem before you, and while their solution may not be a perfect fit, it will at least give you food for thought.
- Do some homework on the Internet to find possible solutions or ideas for change. Won't you be pleased to discover a product or service that was developed for precisely what you need!
- If there is just too much for you to do, revisit your priorities and master project list to identify the things you have to postpone or delete, at least for the time being. It's never a mistake or a defeat to reshape your workload to match your resources.

The Lone Ranger had a straightforward job, a sidekick, and a supportive environment in a script that mandated him to triumph in 30 minutes. We don't have a hope of getting paid

employment to match. Then again, we don't have to conduct our business alone if we're savvy about using our strengths and connections.

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