

SYDNEY JANEY DESIGN

City of Boston On-Site Technical Assistance for Small Business Case Study

By James A. Lopata, Entrepreneurial Coach, innerOvation

Sydney Janey is a top-notch, award-winning graphic designer. She specializes in paper and print designs and also creates web and other digital designs. She teaches at Emerson College. She's been in business for 12 years.

ASSESSMENT

Sydney is an extraordinarily accomplished designer. Yet, like many talented artists, she has struggled to create a sustainable business with a consistent flow of paying clients and income and profitability. While she said she has had several months in the past bringing in a couple of thousands of dollars or more per month, when she and I first engaged in April, it was not easy to immediately determine her income; some money had come in, but not much. We tracked actual income in the month of May, which came in at zero. Business was at a low. She rated her business confidence level at a 4 out of 10. She had many clients who were either behind in paying or were not paying at all. And she found it difficult to navigate the different aspects of maintaining and operating her business. She used QuickBooks, but was challenged to keep it up to date. Her Client Relationship Management (CRM) system primarily consisted of her e-mail in-box. Like most creative business people with whom I work, she was extraordinarily talented at her craft and wanted to spend more time, obviously, on her work than on having to maintain the business.

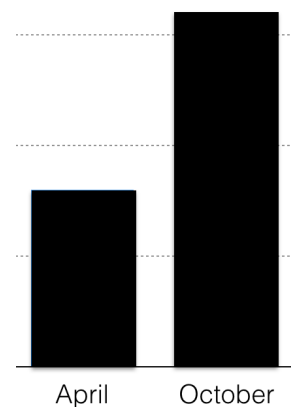


STRATEGY

We began to slowly systematize Sydney's business processes. We set her up on a simple Client Relationship Management (CRM) system from the innerOvation™ Entrepreneurial Toolkit. We populated the CRM and used it to track next steps in engaging, acquiring, and maintaining clients. We used another spreadsheet to begin tracking income in a consistent manner while Sydney worked to get her QuickBooks up to speed.

Sydney has broad and deep connections with many businesses in the city and neighborhood. We created a CRM strategy that continued to leverage those connections. While seeking ways to expand beyond. We assessed other areas of her life that were affecting her business progress, including wellness and living environment. We created strategies for improving these. We engaged in deeper personal leadership development, done primarily through a tool called The Results Accelerator™. It helped to clarify her values and to reveal and begin to eliminate deeper personal blocks (sometimes known as gremlins or inner critics) that were preventing her from reaching her potential.

Business Confidence



ACTION

Once we had systems in place for CRM — checking in on Pipeline, Prospects, and Clients — and for income and expenses, as well goals for areas of life (e.g. work environment) affecting her business, we began checking in regularly — weekly or every other week — on actions and next steps.

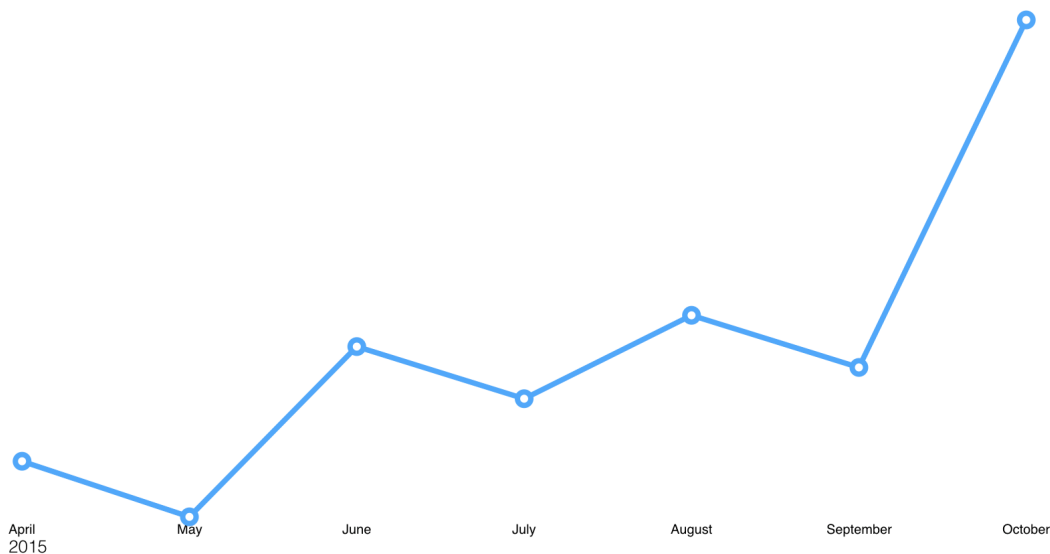
RESULTS

In the months of June, July and August, regular income increased and became more stable. She took on a client on a monthly financial retainer, which helped stabilize cash

flow. Sydney’s October income measured 7 times higher than her April income. Even better, her business confidence jumped from 4 out of 10 in April to 8 out of 10 in October. She now has a steady flow of prospective clients and some big proposals in the offing. And her personal life matters are becoming better managed, affording her more time and energy for her business. Her new challenge, as she told me last time we met, is “dealing with all these clients now!” Not a terribly bad problem to have. Take heart Sydney, the next six months there will be some regular check-ins.

Income Growth

(actual dollar amounts not shown, in order to maintain client financial confidentiality)



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