

TURNING PANIC INTO OPPORTUNITY

3 BASIC STEPS YOU WANT TO KNOW

I am an eternal optimist and always try to see the positive side of any event. I have to admit though, that I did momentarily panic together with everyone else when the financial crisis hit strongly last fall. My head began spinning with uncertainties: "Will my business survive? Will clients still want to hire my services? Should I suspend marketing investment?", plus a dozen more questions that remained unanswered and created undesired stress.

One day, I woke up and asked myself: "How can this situation become an opportunity?" Unlike the previous questions, this one had a very clear and positive answer: I would change my target clientele into one that was bound to suffer even more from the financial crisis than myself: sales and service teams. They now have to face even more ferocious competition with less time to make a positive impact on their potential clients. I needed to add new workshops to my service offerings to help them gain that extra competitive edge and voilà! My opportunity was born.

I truly believe that it is not the events that define your success and shape your life, but rather the way you react to them. Resistance to any event will freeze you in time and prevent you from going forward. Here are the 3 basic steps to creating opportunity:

1. **Get out of your comfort zone**

The need for security is one of the basic human needs. Once we find it, we have a hard time letting it go, even when we realize that a situation has evolved and what made sense 1 year ago doesn't work anymore. The unknown that comes along with new experiences is scary. Self-confidence is shaken. "Will people think I'm crazy? Will I stand alone with my opinion, new product or service? What if I fail?" You can go over those scenarios a hundred times, but it will not create change. Focussing on past models or future probable outcomes will not achieve quick results. ACTION is what you need and action is in the now. Creating opportunity is researching, trying out new things, meeting new people, training for a new skill, getting prepared for change. The key is to get ready every single moment of every single day because you never know when change will be required.

2. **Think creatively**

To successfully get out of your comfort zone, you need to be creative. Keep your mind open and accept to see things differently than you did up until now. Ask yourself how you can combine things differently, adapt them, eliminate certain features, reorganize, etc. Keep you eyes and ears open for a key word, a tip, or an event that will shift the way you have been experimenting with your business so far. Then start implementing the change. Have the courage to be different.

3. Believe

In order to succeed at anything, you need to believe that you are capable of achieving it. Look at Barack Obama. How many reasons do you think he could have come up with to undermine his hopes of becoming the US President? He believed and achieved. You have to learn how to tame your “Yes, but...” little voice and rather adopt some affirmation along the lines of Obama’s slogan: “Yes we can”. Cultivate your self-worth by writing down 3 achievements that you are proud of having accomplished every day. It does not have to be a ground-breaking event. It can be as simple as getting to an appointment on time if you are a chronically late person. By acknowledging your achievements, you will gain self-confidence, motivation and the BELIEF that you, too, can achieve your dreams.

Extreme situations can open doors to great opportunities. Yes, many people will unfortunately lose their jobs and end up in dire situations. But it could also mean that they now have the chance to build their own business, give a new spin to their career, or go back to school and learn a new skill set. Remember, it is not what happens to you that will break or make you. It’s how you deal with it. Accept life and move on.

Kathleen Gran is a certified Image Consultant and associate member of the Association of Image Consultants International. She trained with one of the select few Certified Image Masters in the world. Kathleen’s 10 year experience in corporate management, mentoring and training positions, early career positions as special event and marketing project coordinator, combined to her passion for the impact of people’s image on others have led to her career in image coaching. She helps people discover their authentic image and believe in their personal power.

Kathleen offers one-on-one consultations or small group workshops. You may reach her at 514.624.4863 or at kgran@chicstyle.ca.