

The Gal With Bright Ideas, Diane Henders

When we look for women in home-based businesses to place on the cover of The Limelight, we look for inspiring entrepreneurs, those that emit the ideals of being an entrepreneur – hard-working with personality, perseverance and ‘guts’. Diane Henders is just that. A self-proclaimed “computer geek”, Diane loves people and loves to teach. As a result, Bright Ideas Personalized Learning Inc. grew from that passion to teach people about computers and make it trouble – free. She has been a wonderful asset to our organization. We interviewed Diane this month in her home office.

A: So, Diane, tell me about Bright Ideas?

Bright Ideas offers computer training for individuals and groups. We go to our clients and teach them on their own computers, with their own software. That way, they know exactly what to expect, and there are no surprises when they apply their new knowledge. We find that a lot of people are frustrated when they take a course and learn the skills, and return to their own computer. They find out that everything is set up differently on their computer, and they can't figure out how to do what they did in class.

Both individuals and corporations appreciate being able to select a training time that works for them, instead of having to wait for the next scheduled course. Also, when people book training with a traditional learning institution, there's always the suspense of wondering whether the class will go ahead or be cancelled because there aren't enough students. People love knowing that will never happen with us - when they book a session, it's confirmed on the spot.

I think the main thing that our clients like about us is that *they are completely in control of their training*. If they are doing a special project, they can have us come in and teach them exactly what they need to know to get the job done.

A: WOW! Sign me up. What a great idea! So how did you get started in this business?

D: When I worked as a network administrator in Calgary, I built computers, maintained networks, and trained people as part of my job. Word got around that I usually had answers if people had questions, so friends and family called me pretty regularly if they had computer questions. After a while, it occurred to me that this was a great foundation for a business.

A: Diane, what would you say is unique about you and *your* business?

D: Bright Ideas is unique because we are teachers first and ‘techies’ second. We understand what real people go through when they try to learn or do things on the computer. If you are trying to learn new skills, you need to be the one sitting in front of the computer. You need to do things hands-on, with someone guiding you and making notes so that you remember what you did. And you need to learn at your own pace, in your own way. We provide that experience.

A: I am sure every day is different for you, Diane. What do you find the most exciting/rewarding part of you job?

D: My favorite part of the job is when I have a client who tells me that I'll have a hard time teaching them, or that they're a computer *idiot*. Then, after we have the session, they turn to me and smile and say "*That was so easy!*"

A: OK, so now for the tough question. What is the most challenging part of your job?

D: (chuckle) The most challenging part of my job is overcoming all the bad experiences that people have had with the computer and IT industry. So many people have called somewhere for computer help, and this happens: Some 'techie' sits down in front of their computer, clicks madly in about 50 places, and then turns to them and say "What do you mean you didn't get it?" It leaves people feeling helpless, frustrated and inadequate, and they're very reluctant to try again.

A: Yes, I recall being there myself, several times, in fact. Now that you are a "seasoned" entrepreneur, what advise would you give to new entrepreneurs just starting out?

D: Learn as much as you can *before* you start - I highly recommend the book "E-Myth Revisited" by Michael Gerber. Know the basics of bookkeeping and business operation, and take your time getting started. Don't be afraid of mistakes - you will make them. The key is to be able to learn from them. It's much better to take it slowly and make your mistakes on a small scale than to dive into a huge enterprise unprepared. On a large scale, the same mistakes can destroy your business.

A: Thank you Diane – it has been a real pleasure!

Bright Ideas Personalized Learning is located in Calgary, Alberta. They provide custom computer software training. Their instructors come to your home or office in Calgary, Alberta. If you're outside Calgary, they can arrange for computer courses or seminars wherever, whenever (travel time and expenses extra). And they offer special discounts for seniors and non-profit groups/registered charities. You choose a time that works for you, and we set up an appointment to come and see you.

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