



by Jay Goltz

Goltz On Business

Giving Up or Giving In?

There's a famous saying that's attributed to Sir Winston Churchill: "Never, never, never give up." I think that's a great thing to say when the Nazis are trying to take over your country; however, in small business I think there is a time where you have to evaluate your business and say, "I've done the best I can. It's not working. I need to do something else."

I've talked to several framers who have made that decision and I applaud them because they gave it a good shot. They will never wonder what it is like to own their own business, or fantasize that one day they will do it.

We are just coming out of one of the greatest recessions in quite awhile. Some of these framers might have been able to make it in better times, but business is not merciful. Changing economy is all part of the risk of going into business. Sometimes, giving up is merely making a business analysis that some previous projections are wrong, and the amount of effort it would take financially, physically, or emotionally are just not worth it. That's not giving up—it's growing up.

In stark contrast to this is giving in. Giving in is when you do something you know you shouldn't be doing but don't have the wherewithal to stick it out. You "give in" to the temptation of eating bad food, to your kids when you know you shouldn't, or to buying things you want but can't afford.

In business, giving in can take a different slant:

- You give in to the employee who wants to take a day off when you really need him.

- You give in to the vendor who gives you sub-standard products.
- You give in to the temptation to "beat" your competition by undercutting them at the expense of both your profit margins and pricing integrity.
- You give in to customers when they push for a bigger discount than is justified; rationalizing it "because they give you a lot of business."
- You can give in to your fears and not raise prices when your costs go up, or not buy that piece of equipment that should pay for itself.
- You can even give in the "artists within you" by spending way too much time doing an intricate framing job for a customer that won't pay for it.
- You can give in to your staff by allowing framing out the door that's not up to the standard that you have set—but that you've been convinced is "good enough."
- You can even give in to your pride over your intellect when a customer says something to you that you get defensive about; they don't like your design, the quality, they think your prices are way too high (who doesn't?). By getting defensive and argumentative, you are not helping your case.

I have found that one of the secrets to business is to figure out where you want to go, what it's going to take to get there, and what might stop you. Business isn't easy because much of this goes against our personal nature. For instance, let's say that you have concluded you need a great person on your staff to do framing and take care of customers. You've also concluded that they need to be competent, personable, and reliable.

You hire someone who you think is that person. He turns out to be two of the three. You keep him. You neither try to improve him to where you want him to be because it makes you uncomfortable, nor do you fire him. The difference between being a business owner and an employee is that, as the business owner, you should not be giving in to things that are not in your plan. You are supposed to be in control. If your plan is to have a top-notch employee, you should not give in until find that person. As an employee, if your boss is not everything you want him or her to be, you either have to give in and put up with the situation, or give up and look for another job.

The problem with business is if you get in the habit of giving in too often, you will most likely end up giving up because your business won't work.

Which leads me to the final question. Why do people give in so easily? Is it lack of desire? Is it fear, anxiety, security, insecurity, birth order? I believe it's resolve. You've made a commitment to yourself, knowing your abilities,

your potential, your inner strength. And you've decided you are going to do what you need to do to be successful without lying, cheating, or stealing. Don't get me wrong, it's not always pleasant. It's certainly not merciful. It's about being a businessperson. And I have found that life is absolutely not fair, but generally merciful. On the other hand, business is usually fair, but definitely unmerciful. If you do the right things, you will probably be successful. ■

Jay Goltz, Business Editor, started Artists' Frame Service in 1978 fresh out of college. AFS employs over 80 people at its main location in Chicago, IL. Goltz is also the founder of FramerSelect. He has received numerous business honors and is best known for his straight talk on how to succeed in business. He has taught at the National Conference.