

[close window](#)

Independent Thinking

Working with Purpose

by Daria Steigman

Patricia DiVecchio believes that too often, we're operating under old business models that are better suited to the industrial revolution than the technology revolution happening all around us. The old models are just not sustainable, she says. To address this problem, she has developed Purposeful Business Circles to bring entrepreneurs together to transform the way they live and work, in the process "heightening purpose, potential, passion and profit."

[Discuss this article](#)

Her strategy gives business owners a new way to think about their businesses, and offers a potential model for training budding microenterprise entrepreneurs around the world.

DiVecchio, founder of International Purpose LLC in Arlington, Virginia, believes that "we need to stop thinking so much about what we do in the world and start to consider who we are and what our passions happen to be." It's a more internally focused model that starts with the individual—rather than the product—and looks at how we can package ourselves for the marketplace. Her 12-month process involves examining seven distinct elements:

- Our belief systems (including preconceptions we carry with us)
- Our skills and talents
- Our internal foundation (the skills and tools we have that both help us and hurt us)
- Our fears
- Our wisdom (and how to make wise decisions about our business)
- Our vision (what we want and how to achieve it)

The seventh and final step, says DiVecchio, "is putting everything together to make sure your actions are coming from the beliefs you hold and the future you have chosen."

DiVecchio graciously allowed me to sit in on the morning session of her April entrepreneurs' circle. Part coaching session and part business strategy meeting, DiVecchio asks participants for progress reports on their business to-do lists, guides them through a discussion around one of the seven elements of her process, and then the group settles into a discussion of each participant's specific business challenge for the day. At the end of the day, they're supposed to think about partnering and others ways they can help each other's businesses thrive.

Her current entrepreneurial clients include the owner of a successful cleaning service whose motto is "cleaning with integrity," a travel agent focused on sustainability and a technology firm CEO whose focus is on custom programming and improving software usability. Their challenges range from how to handle picky clients, to how to successfully market their businesses. The group jumped in with questions and ideas about the organizational changes TeraTech President Michael Smith needs to make so that his new market strategy can reap the most profits. Afterwards, it's up to Smith to summarize what he learned and post his action steps for the next two months.

From a purely business perspective, DiVecchio's process is not that different from other coaching strategies. All are designed to get people motivated, focused and moving forward. What is different is her focus on sustainability—and passion.

"There is a strong desire for sustainable work models with a triple bottom line of people, profits and planet," says DiVecchio. "And a quick fix is no solution. What people need is a re-evolution that results in new mental models of work that advance our head, heart, soul and pocketbook."

DiVecchio's process isn't for everyone, and indeed her current and former clients seem to be self-selected from those with strong faith or spiritual foundations of one kind or another. But the concept of evolving one's self and one's business is also not so different from Jungian theory on the collective unconscious or Joseph Campbell's famous line about following your bliss, "and doors will open where you didn't know they were going to be."

I first considered writing a column on DiVecchio's business and methodology after meeting her at an IABC/Washington event and talking with one former entrepreneur circle client who felt that the process had helped her reinvigorate her business and think about growth opportunities in new ways. As independents and small business owners, we're so often figuring out everything on our own that I'm always interested in learning about strategies to help us.

Equally important, I was intrigued by DiVecchio's interest in taking her model to the international level. She told me that she sees the entrepreneur circles "as a means to economic development." Having lived in parts of the developing world and written about numerous projects designed to empower local communities, I think she may have a formula that's applicable at the microenterprise level. After all, many of the projects being operated by development agencies around the world are intended to provide business skills, opportunities and a new path forward.

If DiVecchio can implement her model in the developing world, she will indeed have succeeded in leveraging her own success to bring success to others. In the meantime, her purposeful business circles are spreading her "my success is your success" strategy around the Washington area. And anyone who believes that we're all more collaborators than competitors is more than OK by me.

Daria Steigman runs Steigman Communications LLC, a results-oriented public affairs and strategic communication firm that helps position companies, nonprofits and international organizations for success. She is also a past president of IABC/Washington. She can be reached at +1 202.244.7651 or daria@steigmancommunications.com.

© 2008 International Association of Business Communicators.
One Hallidie Plaza, Suite 600 San Francisco, CA 94102 USA
+1 415.544.4700

[Terms of Service](#)