

Missed Milestone

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I have been so busy lately that I didn't even notice when a major milestone passed. As of July 22nd, I have been self employed for five years.

I have been busy enough with work and travel that I missed the milestone completely. My workload has been full for more than four years and my client roster has been stable in that time.

So, what is the secret to my success?

I honestly don't think I have any secrets. To the degree that I have been successful (that is, gainfully self employed), I think it has been largely good fortune.

I do think, however, that I have done a few things right. I set some early goals with which I have been happy.

In my last job, I felt that my boss wasn't completely honest with his clients. Consequently, I decided that honesty with clients would be a cornerstone of my business model.

I knew when I decided to work for myself that I had some significant weaknesses: I wasn't a good salesman and I didn't have any talent for design.

Rather than try to learn these skills (and suffer from my lack of talent), I planned around them.

I pursued web designers as clients. This limited my hourly rate (compared to end-client work), but it meant that I would have designers involved in each project and that I would get repeat business (avoiding ongoing sales).

This also serves a counter-argument to the claim that we must all diversify (which makes sense so long as you stick with what you love and can do well).

I can't end this entry, however, without a big "Thank You" to my wife. My decision to pursue self employment was a risk. The first several months of which were not profitable. She supported my decision to work for myself and was supportive in the time it took for me to develop a good client base.

Here's to another five years! (and then, perhaps, on to something else...)