

GREAT BUSINESS PLAN

Tip came from Jacqueline Barton of Annapolis, Maryland. Below, with her permission, I've reprinted her entire email. Read it. You won't regret it.

Here's a tip that's really been great for me. I didn't realize at the time what a good thing I was doing, but it has served me very well :

"I spent a lot of time in the corporate world helping organizations developing their mission statements. Talk about a nightmare. But those missions were important and effective when they were well worded; they helped every employee feel that they had a clue what the organization was about, and the really good ones helped employees make autonomous decisions .

"So, I wrote one for my business. It has its purpose. But it doesn't turn me on. So one day I realized I needed something that was just for me -- not something to show a customer about what my business does or how it does it, but a beacon for me to stay focused on why I do what I do and how I want to do it. So I wrote a list of the "why's and "how's and it reads like this :

- I will wear pajamas to work
- I will have a commute of 30 feet or less
- I will work with a window open
- I will love to work as much as I love to play
- I will take conference calls from my hammock
- I will say no to work on ugly projects or from ugly people
- I will make a difference
- I will take work personally

"Now, might sound a little goofy, but everything on this list is very important to me. It has helped me make decisions. It has helped me say no to work that would have brought me more misery than money. It has helped me remember, in the toughest times, why I work for myself. It gives me strength, a reminder, solace, and a laugh. So I highly recommend that every free agent put on paper why they are doing what they're doing, and how they want to do it, and then post it where they'll read it every day. It can be silly, frivolous, funny, serious - it doesn't matter. As long as it's honest it will work."