

What inspired you to strike out on your own and launch a company?

The desire to provide an alternative to commoditized design and marketing services.

Michael Kartakis
President/CEO
Kartakis Inc.

My former business partner liquidated the bank account; stole the inventory, max'd my credit cards and fled the state. My choices were limited.

Robert Steinmetz
CEO
Steinmetz Consulting Inc.

I saw a void in the marketplace and thought I could make a difference.

John Lessans, RN, BSN
President
Lessans Sport Health

For me, having been on the 'customer side' of the IT industry for so many years as an IT Director and CIO, realized that our "IT Value" approach to business and technology consulting was a unique opportunity to serve mid-market in a way they weren't being served at the time. We took a simple concept (IT Value) and translated it into a set of consulting methodologies. As we ventured out, more than a few people told me our concept wouldn't fly, but now, almost 10 years later, it's rewarding to know we have succeeded and that we are making a difference for our clients.

David Hartman
President
Hartman Business Technologies

In June 2004 I re-developed myself from a movement disorder that I was diagnosed with nearly nine years ago. I was working as the Director of

severe muscle spasms and twisting of my upper torso due to the disorder.

Realizing that working full time would be out of the question I still needed to remain gainfully employed as I was my sole provider. I wanted to work from my home and start out part time.

Just coming out of the mental health/addictions field I was inspired to continue to help others, now focusing on individuals with physical disabilities who were working toward finding purpose and meaning in their lives since becoming disabled. I launched a company called Portraits in Determination and work as a personal coach and mentor. Additionally, I published a book on compassion and created, hosted and produced a television show all with the intention of inspiring others to do great things with their lives despite any and all obstacles.

As my heart continues to grow, my own disability has taught me compassion, patience and love, all guiding me toward my own destiny wanting so much to share my knowledge and wisdom with others in need.

Linda M. Furiate
President/Founder
Portraits in Determination

Simple - I had it too easy and was bored in a prior career, so I gave three months (not weeks) notice and left to start this business 15 years ago. Life is just too short to be bored - I live for challenge, to learn, and to be scared once in a while, and being an entrepreneur certainly provides all three of these things in spades.

Paul M. Silber, Ph.D.
President/CEO
In Vitro Technologies, Inc.

at the mercy of poor managers. For me it was either take a risk or get in the "velvet coffin." Sink or swim, I wanted to be in charge of my own fate on my own terms.

John Davis
High Gear Training Systems

I was inspired to start my own business because I wanted to pursue my passion for seeing people find their voice and develop the courage to go for their dreams. Coaching brings out the best in my clients and me and I can't think of a more exciting profession! Seeing the light bulb go off and hearing the ah-ha's is the greatest reward! I spent 17 years in commercial real estate and getting a quarter more per square foot didn't excite me the way that this does.

Mary Ann Masur
President
Synergy Consultants, LLC

When the whole company is doing the waltz and you hear The Stones playing in your head, its time to find a new dance floor where you call the tunes.

James Astrachan
Astrachan, Gunst, Goldman & Thomas

I was 40 years old and a 25 percent owner in a communications company when I was informed there would not be any family allowed to work for or become a part of the organization. Even though my oldest of four was in the 10th grade, I felt I would like them to have the opportunity to work in the business if they chose to. I made the decision to start my own business after a two year agreed upon time lapse. I am still best of friends with the owners of the former business and all four of my children are active in my business (now, mostly theirs) with three of the four having worked in the business over 25 years. They now have controlling interest and are actually running the business. Quite successfully I might add.

Glenn Cassell
Chairman
Communications Electronics

First, I wasn't content with being a spectator anymore. If you have that relentless itching, burning drive - that thing you *have* to do as if your life depended on it - then you can't sit back

in the field of design. Lots of form without function but decoration. It looks swell, but it doesn't look productive - doesn't educate, doesn't educate, doesn't educate. The fuel that keeps

Second, I think there are many roads in life, the easy one. And as you get paying attention - you only one of the two taking. You learn that comes without risk, as you'll never know. They put under the wheels more you experience experience, the more that learning can take nearly every area of your life if I'm not learning, opportunity I've been on this planet.

I've always believed in two kinds of people: those who talk about it and those who talk about it. There are people who got to make things happen and are people who watch the comfort of the company. Interestingly enough, a lot become "critics." I have that at some point I'd like which I wanted to be.

Joe Natoli
CEO/Design Evangelist
Natoli Design Group

I was on the losing end of an internal power struggle that had a significant negative impact on my opinion of "large companies." I decided I wanted to try my own.

Chris Haug
L.C. Haug and Associates

Once upon a time, I was looking for a great company that I could stay with for a long time. I was rolling along smoothly until I was shoved abysmally written terms and conditions under my nose. When I refused to sign, it was with the owner went quick. A few months later, on my way back from my grandmother's