

Against All Odds

WITH THE THANKSGIVING season upon us, my wife Christina and I wanted to do something different for this month's article. Bear with me while I give you a little background during the last eight years. I was working as a restaurant manager, and my wife was home raising our three children. I had worked every holiday and most weekends for years while Christina and the kids did outings alone for the most part. We were both ready for a change.

When we started this company in fall 2008, we were hopeful despite a dismal economic climate. We knew that this business was our calling, so we took our life savings, leveraged all we had, and plunged into a new career.

The first few months were challenging to say the least. When you start a new business, obviously you need new clients, and we were waiting for our phone to ring. Days went by without a single call. With our savings drained and very little business, we wondered if we were going to make it. More

than once we considered putting the new business on a backburner, but we never lost faith that eventually it would support itself.

We considered taking on borders, downsizing, and taking second jobs. But miraculously, slowly, the phone started ringing. One of our first clients was a pizzeria. They were also feeling the brunt of the recession and asked if they could pay in part with pizza credit. So we ate pizza for the entire next week (lunch and dinner!) and were thankful for it.

Most of our friends and family were truly concerned for us but remained supportive. Some of them babysat so Christina could accompany me on midnight cleanings. Another friend invited us to brunch many Sunday afternoons after seeing the unfortunate contents of our refrigerator. We even received a gift card to a local grocery store that literally put food on our table for two weeks. We laugh as we look back now, but it was a truly humbling experience.

After scrambling to make ends meet, many of the prospects we had been talking to for months started calling all at once. We went from virtually "no business" to working 12-hour days, five days a week in the span of a month. We realize how lucky we are to have a thriving business in today's economy and are incredibly thankful to all of you that gave us a chance. We know that without the support of our clients, we wouldn't have a business. Thank you, Knoxville.



*John
Fitzwilliam*

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