



“The traveler was active; he went strenuously in search of people, of adventure, of experience. The tourist is passive; he expects interesting things to happen to him. He goes 'sight-seeing.'” – Daniel J. Boorstin

The RemoteController

Downsized corporate consultant goes solo with Integrative Business Solutions LLC

By Kimberly Hundley

When Andrea Kranitz moved from Ohio to McDowell Ranch six years ago, she took a job as controller with a local company. In early 2009, her job was downsized following a merger. Kranitz took stock. She’s always wanted to go out on her own, and with her skill set—“the missing link between businesses and their CPAs”—working remotely from home via the cloud and other on-tap technology made perfect sense. Corporate America’s loss was small businesses’ gain. Kranitz niche is furnishing the kind of timely accounting systems and operations analyses usually reserved for corporations who dole out six-figure salaries.

Highly disciplined, organized and driven as the founder and lead consultant of Integrative Business Solutions, Kranitz appreciates the active networking and social scene the Airpark affords. While relatively new to the area, she discovered the North Scottsdale Chamber of Commerce, and now serves as the organization’s second vice chair on the board of directors.

What kind of support services have you needed?

I typically outsource marketing and web design, but everything else I’ve been able to do on my own. I can do own accounting, obviously. In terms of answering services, one of the services I offer

my clients is I’m their ‘senior management team manager,’ so they can pretty much call me anytime during business hours and get a call back in an hour.

Do you miss the camaraderie of working in an office environment?

I don’t miss corporate. I do like working in think tanks. I have maybe 20 clients, and each is different. I replaced the corporate team with the individual client teams. I stay well connected and involved in the community—and I really like the flexibility of working from home; I have a better work-life balance, although you have to be motivated and have good time-management skills.

Any negatives?

Finding health insurance can be a challenge, and I do miss not having some of the options that I was used to. I ended up on my husband’s insurance.

Would you ever go back to working in an office?

I’ve thought about it. There are days where you are trying to market and do the work and everything else and—ugh—you just want to get a paycheck. But I don’t want to give up what I’ve built.

Create Your Own Executive Forum Group

That's what Andrea Kranitz did. As a "solo artist," the \$1,000 quarterly group fee she'd paid as a corporate executive wasn't feasible anymore, so she created one from local contacts: EDGe (entrepreneurial and developing growth). The executive accountability group consists of five members who function as one another's board of directors and meet twice a month to discuss their business issues. Four of the five members are in the Airpark area. "When you are on your own and you don't have your own staff, you run into different kinds of challenges—you need four arms and six feet," Kranitz says. "I selected people that I felt had good critical thinking skills, had gone through corporate and now had their own businesses in all different industries." While a business owner wouldn't tell a client about a cash flow problem, for example, that would be a topic for a confidential circle of peers. "Finding a group like that, where you feel comfortable and you've got good resources, it's a tremendous help," says Kranitz.

Maybe in a few years I'd work as executive director of a nonprofit.

How do you split up your time?

I try to keep a routine. I see certain clients every other Monday. Wednesdays are networking days. I try to structure my days so I'm either out working onsite with clients or I'm in the office. For me, breaking up my day is less productive than spending longer periods of time focusing on one thing. Friday I usually I reserve as a workday; I'll have a meeting very early, then be back in the office by 10 a.m. to catch up and do internal stuff. If I need to, I work in the evenings. I have clients on both coasts, so I need to be flexible.

What attracted you to the NSCC?

I liked the energy in the group and the collaborative spirit. I hadn't done networking before—the accounting department tends to stay in the office. I wanted to find an organization that I could give back to, and to help grow and service the population in a better way. Because it's a younger organization—it's 5 years old—there's also room to get in there and help them get to where they

need to go. I've also applied to Scottsdale Leadership Class 27. I hope I'm one of the lucky ones who get in. I live in North Scottsdale and my business is here, and I'm interested in contributing to make it a good community to live and work in.

What's your advice for those thinking of setting up shop at home?

You can freelance and say 'I'm available,' and look for people to hire you. Or you can do what I do: create a business name, a website, a presence. Now, my business is me, so in a sense I'm doing the same thing, but I would say that if you want to make something bigger and be recognized in the community as someone who offers those services and does them well, then it does make sense to brand yourself. You have to like groundwork and spend a lot of time building relationships. There are people who work well from home, and other people who need the structure of a company. You need to know your own personal desires and limitations and use that as a guideline for which way to go. ■

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