

Minnow in a Shark Tank  
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I recently headed out of Indianapolis on a weekend road trip with my family (left the dog at home) to visit my parents over the weekend. I always get a little stir crazy being cooped up in a car for 8 hours, so I try to pass the time perusing articles I should have read months ago. . . and hoping I don't get car sick in the process. This time, I took my latest copy of a popular remodeling trade magazine to read. I figure wrapping my mind around this information is kind of like an on-the-go continuing education seminar - a way to better myself during otherwise wasted "down time". Nonetheless, I was ready to chuck the whole magazine out the window before we even hit the Ohio border! How many times can a person read about the "struggling economy" and maintain a positive, progressive attitude about sales?

Instead of becoming a litter bug, I tucked that magazine away thinking that I may be able to endure a few more pages on the way home. Yet, thoughts about the economy, our supposed need for a "new business model" and how to "adapt to the new consumer", etc., etc. lurked in the back of my mind the whole weekend. I was beginning to feel like my business was a minnow in a shark tank. I couldn't help wondering, "Are we up for the challenge? Does it mean anything that we've made it this far? How long can we survive?"

Fortunately, sometimes all we need is a little R&R and a good night's sleep to get us over a hurdle. Though I don't have all the answers, I do have some. Yes, it does mean something that we've made it this far and lasted this long - being in business since 1998 is something to be proud of. And, yes, we are up for the challenge! We have already made changes to adapt to the new culture and there are more changes yet to be made. Some are just easier to implement than others. And, like fruit trees, some things just take a bit more pruning than you first envisioned.

I also realize that I can't keep dawdling around with an idea spawned nearly a year ago - our reduced-rate Handyman-For-A-Day Program. But, I actually need to get some marketing together and launch the idea and see what happens. If the soothsayers are right, there should be a proverbial fish tank of consumers out there ready to bite at the opportunity to spend a little - not a lot - to spruce up their homes and check some things off of their stressful To-Do Lists. As a person who often writes things on my To-Do List even after they are already done just so I can put a check mark by them, I can see the benefits already.

So . . . you tell me? Am I just a minnow in a shark tank? Or, are we all just a bunch of minnows learning how to swim in the new current -- a current which will make us all stronger, more resilient and even sweeter tasting in the end?