

# STRATEGY

A W2W Ventures Newsletter

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results@w2wventures.com • www.w2wventures.com • (571) 344-9901

## How Big is Your “But”

*I used to be a really good rower. I have not rowed in a long time. In the next few years, I would love to start rowing again.*

I tell people this and they think of me as a rower. If I say:

*I used to be a really good rower but I have not rowed since 1997.*

we never talk about rowing again.

The difference is the “but” that we use to qualify who we are or what we do. We hear it all the time:

Q: What do you do?

A: Oh, I used to ... but now I'm at home with my two kids.  
(How long after leaving the work force before you stopped saying this?)

A: I work – but I'm only part-time.

You meet hundreds of people each year, any one of whom may be your next employer or client.

Coach Cathy's article this month focuses on your “talk”. Use your talk to meet your goals. You may not want to return to work for 3 years, but by describing yourself in a way that sets you up to achieve your goals, you've increased your odds.

Don't feel diminished, don't apologize and don't give someone else a “but” for you. Good luck!

*Karen Sheehan*

karensheehan@w2wventures.com

## Fortune 100 Benefits for a Company of One!

In an effort to reduce the barriers to getting back to work, W2W Ventures entered into a partnership with MyBizOffice the premier supplier of Portable Employer of Record (“PER”) services. What is a PER? In short, MyBizOffice removes administrative headaches for individuals who work as consultants or contractors by serving as a virtual back office. MyBizOffice does all of the billing, record keeping, supplies access to 401-K plans, medical plans and other services you would receive as an employee for a large company.

<http://www.mybizoffice.com/w2w/>

## Follow the Boomers

Often the discussion of flexible work (part-time, flex-time, contract arrangement, etc.) is that “it seems to make sense”, shortly followed by, “...but why would companies design flexible work jobs when there are people willing to work full-time?”

While there are many arguments as to why flexible work makes sense, there is also a frustrating challenge. You cannot get a flexible job if it is not offered, and many companies will not offer them until necessity dictates it. The tables are about to turn as cold, hard economic reality sets in. As *Business Week* recently reported, “Fully 43% of the workforce is eligible to retire in the next 10 years, and the next two generations are each at least 15% smaller.” What does that mean for women looking to plan a career that includes a period of flexible work? Forward-looking companies are already starting to react with innovative programs that promote flexible work options to keep talent.

Both *Business Week* and *The Wall Street Journal* reported companies such as Westpac Banking, Deere & Co., Principal Financial Group, Borders Group, Pitney Bowes and Home Depot have programs to convert their positions to part-time or flexible work schedules. While many of these programs are explicitly targeted at seniors, others in need of flexible work will benefit. The new economic reality: good companies need good people and are willing to make changes in traditional work practices to keep them.

### What are Executives Thinking?

The Society of Human Resource Management recently conducted a survey in which they asked executives which business trends will most affect their company's human capital strategies. The results:

Rise in health care costs - 37%

**Demand for flex work – 31%**

Economic uncertainty – 29%

Talent retention – 24%

Exporting U.S. jobs – 22%

### Coach Cathy's Corner

#### That's My Story and I'm Sticking to It

*...but do you have the right story?*

You will need different "talks" for different people. How you present yourself to others — peers, new acquaintances, other moms, and soccer-field dads is how they will remember you. *How do you want to be perceived? What do you want them to know and to remember about you?*

Let's focus in this article on a future potential work relationship. It could be another mom who is a consultant, or a corporate connection.

1. Start with explaining what your focus was or is— who your target market or client was, and do so even if it was an internal client.

2. Then say what they needed and what you did for them.

3. Close off by saying something unique about yourself—even memorable.

Here's an example, "I spent the last 10 years offering financial and auditing support to F500 CFOs. They really needed our expertise, particularly in light of Sarbanes-Oxley, so I became an expert in that area. When I was a teenager, I helped my Dad run the family business — it gave me a love for business and the numbers."

Here's another example focusing on internal staff experience:

"Working in the human resource department of a fast growing company gave me a broad view of the human capital challenges of today. Because of my experience and my formal training, I led the company's diversity training effort. From what I am told, it really made a difference in our company's view and practice of managing diversity in order to gain a competitive advantage. I love the study of people and actually spent time abroad in China. Since I've left, I've made a point of closely watching China's growth and how its companies handle their people strategies. It is fascinating."

These talks can be shortened. But start with something like this and begin to put it into a more conversational style. Then, practice it in front of a mirror. Become comfortable talking about yourself. This is not bragging. This is just "telling the facts," as they say.

Remember, it is not only what you say, but also how you say it. About 80% of how we communicate with people is non-verbal. So when you do deliver your message, remember to be confident, smile, be clear and relaxed. The more it flows, the more credibility you will have with the people you are talking to. Ultimately you will leave them with the kind of impression that you want them to have. Being yourself, being real will be as important as what you say.

*Cathy Lange is an Executive Coach who focuses on developing executive level leadership skills and career strategies. Contact her at [cathy@w2wventures.com](mailto:cathy@w2wventures.com).*

"Did you know? **Sandra Day O'Connor 'opted out'** and was a stay-at-home mom. From 1960 to 1965, after the birth of her second son, she decided to leave her legal practice to be home full time... O'Connor was concerned that her decision to stay home would render her unemployable. In order to keep her foot in the door, she realized she had to do something in the legal field, even if it was volunteer work. She graded bar exams for the State of Arizona, which kept her current in the law. She set up a lawyer referral plan for the local Bar Association, which enabled her to meet other lawyers. She took a position on the county planning and zoning board, became a juvenile court referee, and accepted some small bankruptcy appointments." - *Boston Globe*, 1/23/06