



Patricia Bryan, Bryans Insurance Agency & Financial Security Office Inc.

Why did you become a business owner and what significant factors led you?

I became a business owner because I wanted to make it mine. This is all I know. I started working at an Allstate Insurance Agency in 1991 downstate as a secretary. I obtained my property and casualty license and became a state of Michigan licensed insurance agent. I left my friends and family behind to move to a place I have never been; Traverse City, MI. I moved up to northern Michigan in mid-1992 to work in another Allstate Insurance agency as a sales producer. I obtained my life and health license from the state of Michigan and continued to work under an Allstate Insurance agent until 2006. At that time the Allstate Insurance agent made me an offer to purchase his book of business. I was excited that he gave me the opportunity to continue to grow the relationships with customers that I made. Significant factors that led me to become a business owner are, as previously mentioned, is that this is all I know. Starting out as a secretary at an insurance agency in my teens to being in business owner with the same firm, it's amazing. The other factor is also so important. To love your job is half the battle. I truly love my job.

What prepared you (or didn't!) for business ownership?

The knowledge of the business and the relationships I've established with existing customers have prepared me for becoming a business owner. I never thought that I would get so many congratulations and open arms with the change. I was told I would lose over 20% of my book of business with just the name change. To my surprise, my retention went up.

What or who inspired you?

My husband, Ron, for never letting me forget my dream. My ex-boss, Brian Taylor, for reminding me of all the hard work I have put into this business to grow it and now own it. My first Allstate Agent, Carolyn E. Johnson, for reminding me that in my first interview I had with her, she asked why I wanted to work at her agency and my reply back in 1991 was to become an agency owner.

What do you enjoy most about business ownership?

The freedom. Being a Mom, I have the opportunity to stay home with my son, Reed, when he needs me.

What surprised you most?

The support I received and still receive from my customers.

Who or what keeps you motivated?

My Mom and Dad. My Mom has severe dementia and my dad has stage three lung cancer. They each tell me in their own ways how proud they are of me. My drive is for them. The other motivation comes from my family, Ron and Reed. They sacrifice a lot for me to live my dream. I hope one day I can look back and say it was all worth it. Each day is a new beginning.

What advice do you have for women considering or in the beginning stages of ownership?

One thing I want to emphasize in business ownership is make sure you love what you're going to be doing. Even though you may love what you are doing the bumps in the road only make you stronger. Keep your head and move forward, don't get discouraged. Think positive.