

Kathleen Bilderback

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Years of experience?

23 years

What's the No. 1 piece of advice you would give to business owners?

Be honest in assessing your skill set, then be proactive in finding quality advisers, employees and partners who can fill in any gaps.

What's the biggest mistake you've seen business owners make, and what advice would you give to solve the problem?

Trying to reinvent the wheel or solve a problem that is not within their primary area of expertise. If the owner wants to look at planning strategies under the new tax law, call the accountant. If the business has a legal problem, call the attorney. If the owner is spending all of his or her time interviewing, hiring and firing employees, it may be time to engage a human resources professional. Engaging your professionals early in the process frequently helps avoid added expense and aggravation down the road. If you find seeking professional advice daunting or intimidating, get referrals from other business owners that you know and trust. And if you are trying to solve a legal problem, stay away from the internet. The internet is not a very good lawyer.

Where does your motivation to help businesses grow come from?

Over the course of my career, I have been employed by several firms, as well as public and private companies. I was proud of my successes and hope that I learned from my failures, but nothing has been as satisfying as founding Affinity with my partners and growing it into a successful, thriving firm with great clients that appreciate our work and see us as their partners. I want my clients to feel that same sense of satisfaction and success.