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SMALL BUSINESS

My Gal Friday meets a practical need

By Judy Busack
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What started as a way to make ends meet until she landed work has now turned into thriving business for Sharon McRill.

McRill, owner and founder of My Gal Friday, a full service personal assistance/concierge business, started her company in 2003 after her position at Borders.com was eliminated.

While she was looking for jobs, she started My Gal Friday to supplement her income.

“My first job was for my mom. I wallpapered and cleaned out a room at her home. Then a friend of my mom’s said ‘while you are cleaning out your mom’s house, you can come clean out my house’. I ended up helping her.”

The jobs kept McRill busy enough to have her friends ask her if she was working because she was never around. When she told them what she had been doing, their response was to ask her to come and paint their house.

“I have always been very handy. My parents are entrepreneurs and my grandfather owned a hardware store. I always thought they worked so hard I just wanted to work in somebody else’s business. I saw firsthand how much time it takes to work in your own business,” she explained.

But McRill couldn’t escape her family background. It really came down to doing what she really enjoyed, she said.

“Doing practical jobs for people. I never expected that people would be so excited and happy that there was somebody out there to do this. I thought they would depend on friends and family, but a lot of people don’t want to impose on friends and family. There is some place (My Gal Friday) to call that they don’t impose on anybody.”

My Gal Friday will plan parties, business dinners for associates, weddings, pet and plant care, dog walking, vacation assistance, return phone calls, answer correspondence, schedule appointments, coordinate a move, accept deliveries, be available for service calls, pick up dry cleaning, groceries, even have your car serviced or detailed.

The list goes on to organizing a person's life to household projects that might have been put on the back burner for the summer.

“When we plan parties we have a checklist and make sure that we give them the best party they can have for the budget they have,” said McRill. “It may be a small children's birthday party or working with a bride planning her wedding. We have also done corporate parties.”

Currently there are five staff members, but McRill is planning on franchising the business in the next year, keeping Ann Arbor as home base and opening offices in the West Bloomfield area and Detroit suburbs.

“We can do a little bit or a whole lot,” said McRill.

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