



Karen McIsaac Project Managers, Inc. In business for: 11 years

**Pro advice: *Stick to your business.
Don't try to be something you're not.***

You probably haven't seen any advertisements for Project Managers, Inc. That's because Karen McIsaac's niche consulting firm operates on word-of-mouth marketing alone. Through persistence and good business management, McIsaac has kept her company buzzing in the minds of corporate business people for more than a decade.

"Ours is a business that is very dependent on the trust of the client," said McIsaac, who helps companies drive major business changes from mergers to rolling out new projects. "You don't advertise trust. You cultivate it through long-term relationships."

McIsaac said her business continues to excel because it stays within a niche, where her staff can excel at a particular service instead of stretching themselves too thin.

"We'll always be a niche provider; we want to make sure we know every client very well. We stick to our core business while still being agile and flexible in changing how we do things and improving our procedures," McIsaac said.

By starting up right around the dot-com boom (and then seeing its collapse), McIsaac said she learned a lot about managing a business during tough economic times. She found that it takes three key things to keep a business afloat: persistence, a good team and perspective.

"If you have a good team of people, you can leverage that team because they could have more and better ideas than you," McIsaac said. "Sometimes we get caught in the weeds and we don't have a chance to look up to the goal. Make sure you are running your business, not in your business."