

A Narrative Essay

I have been in business for more than ten years. I have seen crises, success, failures, tears, sweat, and hard work everywhere. Nevertheless, each time it was also about opportunities to grow both as an individual and as an entrepreneur. But I had one that was particularly memorable emotionally. This is a story about creating a business with a friend. I worked in various fields, and I started four of my companies with friends.

Years ago, I was in a protracted search for something else to do. One day, my friend and I were driving in a car, and he shared with me his anger about the organization of work in his field. One crucial thought was the following: in his business, a team of plumbers earned, conditionally, 100 dollars per day, while in the niche of climate equipment, the same team earned this amount in 2 hours. I immediately suggested to a friend: "Let's break into this niche and take a leading position in it." My friend had good technological skills, and I specialized in marketing and management.

The advantages of doing business with friends are apparent: you know the person, you trust him, you help each other. There are also disadvantages... but everyone thinks that this is not about this particular case. That a common business quarrel with friends is not about us, everyone thinks. Who even thinks about failure when they start a business?

After the first month of work, we went into an operational plus. The profit was small, but it was a profit. My friend was skeptical about the result because, in his parallel project, he earned 5 thousand dollars in a month. He did not strive hard to get that money; at the same time, it took him two years of work to earn them. Unfortunately, I did not pay attention to this moment at the time. Using simple marketing tools (at that time, it was enough to create a good website, set up an online marketing campaign, and create a sales department – because the market was weak),

we managed to achieve success. So, for the second month, we doubled our profit.

This was a real victory because we began to win orders in rival with large competitors in two months. I, extremely inspired, came to a friend to tell about these results. What the friend said changed everything. He said: "Now we need to take this 5 thousand dollars and divide them in half? No, it is not fair. After all, I worked for two years to reach this figure, and you want to get it in two months". I don't remember what we talked about; I only remember that my head was spinning with thoughts that my friend did not appreciate me and did not recognize my contribution to success. Why did he even start a business with me if he could not share the financial result? If he did not believe that the positive outcome would be, why did he begin in principle?

Three weeks later, I opened my own company, already alone — the same one, in the same market. A year later, it ranked second in the region in sales. A year later, I sold it to that friend. We did not stay friends after that.

That situation made me emotionally stronger; now I am ready for something like this; it will no longer be a blow from the dark as in the first time. That incident forced me to formulate specific rules that are important when working with friends. A good guy is not a professional. Having a good time together is one thing, but being a good specialist is another. It is necessary to agree on the terms of interaction immediately: roles, shares, etc. Nevertheless, absolutely everything could not be considered and legally fixed. But I learned that I need to discuss everything in advance and prepare escape routes, too, because sometimes friends are not your best partners in "crime."