

- [Front Page Article](#)
- [MARTA Connector Archived Issues](#)
- [MARTA Business Opportunities](#)
- [Announcements](#)
- [MARTA Information](#)

ANCHORS AWEIGH: *Launching Out into Nontraditional Territory*

There's nothing to fear but fear itself. Adopting this Rooseveltian paraphrase could provide the impetus for smoother sailing in unfamiliar waters in just about any area of life. And what a mantra it can be for businesses fighting for solvency in particularly cautious consumer times—if they would but only believe.

Refusing to let apprehension hobble steps in a new direction can take entrepreneurs to the threshold of enterprise-saving ventures. Certainly not the safe bettor's choice, striking out despite foreign risks has proven ideal for a number of businesses throughout the years. Even with the anxiety that novelty and bias often produce, across the country mold-breaking undertakings have won notice in many industries in recent years. "*Boutiques Take on the Big Guys*" (*Adweek* - 01/02/06) underscores this trend in the advertising world. "The aura of newness and the perception that they are doing business differently has become the new wave's most powerful calling card."

Whether spawned by necessity, curiosity, opportunity, tedium or accident, eyebrow-raising forays into nontraditional areas are not for the fainthearted or the impatient. Choosing to navigate uncharted seas that call for significant commitments of capital, human and time resources entails grit and resolve. Without these steeling factors, naysayers and detractors can penetrate the soft spots of any dream. Also, not governing your dealings in accordance with a faith-sustained system can run your ship aground.

Heralded as "the opposite of fear," faith seems to work miracles in the nontraditional business realm—especially when it incorporates the following five-step plan.

Filter the facts.

Assess your readiness.

Investigate preparedness-enhancing options.

Tear down barriers to entry and continuance.

Heighten your strengths.

When conversation turns to "the nontraditional," visions of caricatured, stereotyped or nightmarish experiences are bound to surface. No matter if someone's considering breaking into an emerging market or cutting an altogether new industrial path, outside challenges to logic—and even sanity—can dry-dock the endeavor in its infancy. The same is true for employing inventive media, adopting uncommon methods and using revolutionary materials. Generally, they're all lightning rods for potentially derailing controversy.

Thus, any mission's buoyancy is dependent on *filtering the facts*. Through the sieve of knowledge and wisdom, passionate businesspeople can sift through statements and statistics abuzz with hype and discouragement alike. Regardless of the temptation to validate or refute every piece of information that lies between them and their efforts, they sort, toss and keep them as their purposes and vision dictate.

If an unconventional venture beckons you, taking inventory of where you are versus where you need to go is a must. Particularly when facing the challenge of atypical pursuits, *assessing your readiness* is vital to success. This foundational step, rooted in the concept of treating yourself like you're your own valued customer, involves surveying your standing with a magnifying lens. Examine every corner and delve beneath the surface of your organization. Analyze team members' initiative, responsiveness, and innovation—prime predictors of how well you might negotiate the tests that await you.

Then with an honest picture of your company's capacity to meet obligations and handle challenges, you'll be able to *investigate options to best prepare you*. In addition to enrolling in pertinent training courses and developing mentoring relationships, actually explore the depths before you launch. Take informal "fishing expeditions" (ranging from casual conversations to trade conference attendance) into your customer target pool. And don't just marvel at the wonders you hope to net one day, be a sponge. Enrich these under-the-radar excursions by fully engaging all your senses as a learner.

With training and first-hand knowledge of prospect needs, wants, likes and dislikes, you will have equipped yourself to *tear down barriers to entry and continuance*. But the key will be using your tools effectively and consistently. Although connecting to and remaining mindful of "what the customer wants" is a fundamental entrepreneurial principle, often both external circumstances and plain old habit jeopardize shop owners, service crews and even consultants' success. That's why gambling on seemingly farfetched notions can really pay off. "*Fresh Ideas*" (*Nation's Restaurant News* - 07/30/07) discusses the continuing need "to be more in tune with the times and to cater in a more timely fashion to consumer demands that did not exist...some 75 years ago."

The threat of billowing winds, crashing waves and lurking sharks can weaken your trust in maps, compasses, and rudders when you're making your way through the deep. So, *heighten your strengths* at every turn. Remember, complacency idles; continual improvement advances. Confidently fortify yourself and go forward! Alternative strategies and courses can lead you to refreshingly profitable destinations.

[back to top](#)

MARTA Connector Archived Issues

- [August 2009 - MARTA Connector](#)
- [July 2009 - MARTA Connector](#)
- [June 2009 - MARTA Connector](#)

MARTA Business Opportunities

[Click here for current bid opportunities](#)

The procurement and contract opportunities noted below can be found on the Internet at www.itsmarta.com. Because dates for noted events are subject to change, you should contact MARTA's Contracts & Procurement and Materials Division at (404) 848-5131 for verification.

NAME OF BID/PROPOSAL	CONTRACT NUMBER	BID/PROPOSAL OPENING/DEADLINE DATE (Eastern Standard Time)
Procurement of Government Affairs Services (State)	RFP P18246	September 1, 2009 at 10:00 AM Pre-proposal Conference
Printing Paper for Authority-Wide Use	CP B17522	September 9, 2009 at 2:00 PM
Concrete Girder Renovation of CN915 & CE 530 Aerial Structures	CP B11612	September 16, 2009 at 2:00 PM

Procurement of Government Affairs Services (State)	RFP P18246	September 23, 2009 at 4:00 PM
Train Control & SCADA Systems Upgrade	RFP P15120	September 30, 2009 at 4:00 PM

Prospective vendors are urged to visit MARTA's web site for weekly updates.

[back to top](#)

Announcements

WEDA WORKSHOPS

The Women's Economic Development Agency (WEDA) offers various workshops to small business owners:

- September 9, 2009, 6 to 8 pm - Credit Management Workshop
- September 19, 2009, 6 to 8 pm - Grant Writing Research
- October 8, 2009, 6 to 8 pm - Patents & Trademark Issues

PRE-REGISTRATION IS REQUIRED FOR ATTENDANCE!

For registration information contact WEDA at (678) 904-2201 or <http://www.weda-atlanta.org/registration.htm>

The Edge Connection at Kennesaw State University offers several workshops and classes for business owners. Visit their website at TheEdge@Kennesaw.edu for the schedule of upcoming events. For more information call **(770) 499-2338**.

The Small Business Administration (SBA) has a refinancing program. The American Recovery & Reinvestment Act of 2009 includes debt refinancing and business expansion. For more information, visit www.sba.gov/recovery or www.recovery.gov

[back to top](#)

MARTA Information

All public events (i.e., bid openings and conferences) are held at the MARTA Headquarters Building, 2424 Piedmont Road, NE, Atlanta, Georgia 30324, unless otherwise indicated.

Most solicitations may be downloaded free of charge and are available via the web at www.itsmarta.com. Solicitations with drawings may be ordered for the above noted contracts via telephone by contacting MARTA's Documentation Control Branch at (404) 848-5580 or other sources as indicated.

The MARTA Connector is published by the Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority, Office of Diversity and Equal Opportunity, 2424 Piedmont Rd., NE, Atlanta, Georgia 30324. All comments and recommendations are welcome.

[back to top](#)