

It's hard to believe, but this year marks my 25th year in business! (Yes, of course I started when I was 10, why do you ask?) I began thinking about all that has changed since 1988, and thought it would be fun to share it with you. I hope you enjoy this brief retrospective of the past quarter-century at Joni Aveni Associates.

Joni Aveni Associates: A Silver Anniversary Retrospective

Twenty-five years ago, I decided to parlay my writing and editing talents into a business venture. I didn't have much in the way of startup funds, so I worked with what I had. An IBM Selectric typewriter. A handwritten list of names. And a dream. That's how Joni Aveni Associates was born.

My baby was a year old and a good napper. When she was in her crib, I'd type out envelopes, lick stamps and cross my fingers.

In my first year, I got two clients: one for writing and one for proofreading. I used a borrowed fax machine to send and receive work. I couldn't afford a second phone line, so every time someone had to fax a document, I'd crawl under my desk and switch the lines. That worked for awhile until I was seven months pregnant with my son and couldn't fit under the desk anymore. We had another phone line installed.

I "graduated" to a Panasonic word processor. Gradually, more clients found me, mostly by word of mouth. (Your mouth. And yours ... and yours. Thank you!) Our son would sit in his infant seat and gurgle contentedly as I worked. Our daughter started preschool. Eventually I had to return the borrowed fax machine and buy one of my own. Wow, I was making progress!

After about five years, I realized two things: I could actually make a living this way. And I really loved what I was doing!

Working at home was still in its infancy. Our kids started grammar school and the other parents didn't understand why I couldn't volunteer in the lunchroom during the day. Some came by and asked me to watch their kids "since you're home anyway." It's tough to be a pioneer.

In the mid-nineties we bought our first PC and entered the Internet age. As technology changed, I needed to change as well to meet clients' evolving needs. That's when life seemed to hit the accelerator. From fax to FedEx to emailing edited Word docs and PDFs. From dial-up to DSL. From websites to social

networking. Technology changed rapidly, but we adapted quickly and kept ahead of the curve, bringing added value to our clients.

Even the English language changed, though the rules have remained more or less the same. Words that didn't exist in 1988 are now a part of our daily vocabulary. And of course marketers and advertisers are quite adept at creating their own lexicon! My job is to keep up with it all.

We survived Y2K, the Internet bubble, chaos on Wall Street, and the Mayan apocalypse. But one thing has remained the same. That is my commitment to quality. Whether it's a two-word headline or a two-thousand-word brochure, a PowerPoint presentation or a corporate website, I've continued to make sure it's clearly written, easily understood and totally goof-proof. That's my promise, just as it has been since 1988.

Thanks to all of you who continue to share my commitment to quality. Here's to the next 25 years together!