

# *Your Business and Your Friendly Freeloaders Setting Boundaries*

Say you have a great recipe for making ice cream. You have been making ice cream for years and giving it to your friends and family to try for free. They love how your ice cream taste so rich, creamy and full of favor. Everyone has been telling you for years that you should open an ice cream store to sell your creations. With the slowing economy and corporate downsizing, you decide it was the right time to pursue your dream of owning your own business to sell ice cream.

After opening your store, business is brisk. Everyone loves your ice cream. Your profit margins are thin but you love your business. You are your own boss. Your friends and family all come to your store to eat ice cream. They bring their friends and family. They eat for free and they eat lots of ice cream. You can't or won't charge them. You are losing money. When you raise the subject of payment, they say "friends don't charge friends or family members" and that "you are being greedy". What do you do when your family and friends don't want to pay?

Prior to opening up your store, you were making ice cream as a hobby. When you decided to sell ice cream for a profit, it became a business. If you don't make enough money selling ice cream to cover your overhead and your salary, you will starve and become homeless. There is a difference between a hobby and a business. If you cannot distinguish the two, your business will fail.

When people say that "friends don't charge friends" what they are really saying is that they don't want to pay and they want something from you for nothing. They don't want to change their prior personal relationships that they had with you. Unless you can see that your relationship with them has

changed, you will not be able to separate your personal relationships from the relationships of your ice cream business. Running a for-profit business means you are exchanging your ice cream for money. When you are not charging for your ice cream, you are not running a business but a charity. You are not placing the health and survival of your business first.

You have to be able to see why you are allowing this abuse of your business to continue. What do you feel and think when you hear people say “friends shouldn’t charge friends” or “you are being greedy”. What are they really saying to you - that they can’t pay or that they don’t want to pay? Do they see your ice cream store as a real business and you as a legitimate business owner or do they see it as still your hobby? Are you acting as a business owner who places the health and welfare of your business first?

Freeloaders increase your costs and expenses of doing business and they affect the long term health and viability of your business. Real businesses have policies and rules governing discounts and payment for its products and services. By putting your business first, you ensure its long term success.

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