

## Title:

Stained Glass A2Z

## Word Count:

875

## Summary:

Lori Rehfeldt started building stained glass windows professionally and is an expert in stained glass building, design and repair.

## Keywords:

stained glass, lowest prices, a2z, tools, supplies

## Article Body:

I recently found this article on the web and thought it was interesting. Just remember that you can be all your stained glass supplies from Stained Glass A2Z. Check us out at [www.stainedglassa2z.com](http://www.stainedglassa2z.com).

Recently, one of the best stained glass supply and teaching centers closed its doors. Shockingly they were very aggressive and well run. The business was around for over a decade. I wondered why it failed. Two years earlier, the long time run business was sold by the original owner who wanted to retire to a man who had made enough money for the purchase running a janitorial business.

The new owner soon discovered that the stained glass business is different than any other business. The stained glass business is a difficult business to make a living.

When I started in the stained glass business, I soon discovered that the business was a rollercoaster ride gone wild. It was a feast or famine situation. I'd sell a window or commission and have enough cash to get another order of materials together. I never really felt I was making any money; it felt like all I was doing was just using up supplies and then replenishing. I found that running a stained glass only business was very tough profession.

I quit doing stained glass as a living for a while, but continued to take on commissions and personal work in my spare time. This is an avenue that I recommend to students who think it might be fun to get into the business. This way they can test the waters and find whether they really want to expand into the business of glasswork. Most find that doing a little on the side is the perfect avenue for them.

It is tough, and rewarding but not so much in a financial sense but on an artistic level. I beat my head against the wall trying to figure how to make a living, but simply seem to scrape by each year.

I do make a small amount of money by offering stained glass classes. But after taking all expenses and costs into account, I find that I just break even on classes. If I made enough money to support myself well in this business, I would take the extra money and expand and hire help, but so far I'm just keeping my head above water. It is my belief that the key to making it in stained glass is to offer products that will help others to enhance their stained glass experience.

I would advise anyone thinking of going into any business, that before you make a decision to get into it, work for at least 3 months in the business, 90 days seems to be the point where you really get an eye opening. The honeymoon ends and you see what you're really getting yourself into.

Be very cautious about the valuation of the business that you are looking to purchase. Remember that you are looking at retail values versus the wholesale values of the business. Figure that the cost of buying all materials and starting a business from scratch is 1/3 to 1/4 of the retail value of the business. It is rare to find that an existing business really has a built up value of customer good will, which has much, if any, value to the potential new owner. Customers are our friends and I love them, but because most people only have a limited interest in the business, their value to future income is smaller than the seller might lead you to believe.

It is true that warm glass has more to offer in a studio setting than just flat glasswork, but look at the root of the matter. The stained glass industry knows that they are working with a craft that is fleeting. The normal student has one to three projects in them and then they are done. By expanding into warm glass, I am able to offer a wider range of techniques and projects, which help to hold the students, interest longer. But what I've done is change a three-month customer into a 6-month customer. I still face a huge attrition rate. Being a lover of glasswork, I am often shocked at the number of students who start class and then drop out without even finishing their first project.

When I talk to other businesses, I often ask if they will furnish me a copy of their business plan. I hope to learn from those plans ways that I might be able to find more success in my own business. If you come up with a business plan, I'd love to see a copy of it.

One word of encouragement, people in the business are in two camps. There are

those who are secretive and afraid that you might want to steal their ideas. But the vast majority of business owners in stained glass are open and willing to share their knowledge and advice. They are those who realize that there really isn't any competition in the business. That shop down the corner doesn't create competition, they increase the knowledge and appreciation of stained glass in the community, and so they actually help your business rather than hurting it.