

Simple as A-B-C

Lansing artist, entrepreneur shares business insights with new book
by Karen Cassidy

Barbara Hranilovich was 6 years old when she started her first business, *Have Dandelion Will Pick*. With business cards featuring hand-drawn dandelions, Hranilovich set out to sell her services, digging up dandelions for 5 cents a bucketful. She earned a quarter after a whole summer of work. "I've always liked money as an object," Hranilovich said. "If you like it, you make it."

Over the last 35 years, the Lansing woman has supported herself with many different jobs, including music teacher, artist, graphic designer and cottage industry worker. Now she can add "author" to her growing list of titles: She has just released her first book, "E is for Entrepreneur."



Her interest in writing on the subject started with a simple blog post. Hranilovich got the idea for the book after being asked to write an essay for a new blog site by someone she met through Ladies Who Launch, which provides female entrepreneurs with resources and connections. Hranilovich set out with a mission of writing what she wished someone had told her about starting her own business.

After her first post, "P is for Patience," she decided to finish off the rest of the alphabet, with each letter representing a different aspect of entrepreneurship. She had already completed 24 of the 26 entries before deciding to print a book.

Although it's packed with information, the book is easy to read and understand. Hranilovich's comfortable, relaxed writing style feels less like reading and more like sitting down with a close friend or mentor for a cup of coffee, while they offer personal experiences and advice. An avid blog reader, she loves the personal writing style used in the online medium, and she wanted to translate that to her book.

During production, Hranilovich was very cautious about who she let read her work before it was finished, because she didn't want anyone to influence the style or content since it is so personal to her. But when the books finally arrived, she was in Florida, so Hranilovich's husband was finally able to read a copy. "My husband called and told me the books had arrived and said, 'You wrote a good book,'" Hranilovich said, laughing.

In the book, Hranilovich writes that as an entrepreneur you'll have to be the boss and the employee, which means you'll be in charge of retaining the vision while also completing the day-to-day tasks.

Hranilovich works from home, and although she joked that she has a great commute, she touches on misconceptions about people who are self-employed in the chapter "T is for Trade-Offs." She said there's a balance between freedom and responsibility that comes with being self-employed, and she can't imagine life without it.

In "U is for Ups," Hranilovich notes the importance of doing one's homework. She said the first step for any entrepreneur is to research your product to see if anything else like it exists. Next, one must

consider if the product has potential. “The best seatbelt is research,” she writes.

When Hranilovich was developing the Beverage CADDi, a reusable beverage carrier, she told herself that if at any point the product no longer worked she would bail. Now, four years into her fiveyear plan, her product has been featured on the “Rachael Ray Show” and in Venus Zine.

“E is for Entrepreneur” (\$14.99) and the Beverage CADDi (\$4.50) are both available for purchase at www.hranilovich.com.