**Retailer Newsletter**

**December 1, 2020**

**Tom’s Business “TIPS”**

***“To Improve Profits”***

**RE: Time Management & Organization**

**(Eat the Frog)**

**Hi,**

**With the new year on the horizon and as we begin considering New Year’s resolutions, I thought a timely resolution would be getting better organized and improving the management of your time.**

**Do you spend your day in a frenzy, a blur of activities and wonder why you have not accomplished what you wanted to? Managing your time is especially important in small business where you find yourself performing many difficult tasks and jobs during the day.**

**When I had my stores, I used to wonder how some managers seemed to always have everything running smoothly and didn’t complain about not having enough hours in the day. Then others always seemed to be in a hurry, running behind, never with enough time to get caught up. Literally out of breath. It didn’t take me too long to realize what kind of owner/operator I wanted to be.**

**Which of these kinds of manager are you? Do you feel the need to be more organized and more productive? Do you wonder why you are behind, not getting accomplished all you wanted and needed to do?**

**Organization and managing your time are especially important for successfully managing a small business.**

**Take a couple of minutes and complete the *Time Management Activities Analysis* form we have posted on our website, (Forms & Reports for your Business).** [**www.tsmanagementservices.com**](http://www.tsmanagementservices.com)

**This can be an important step in helping analyze how and where you are spending your time during the workweek.**

**How did the Time Management Analysis turn out? How are you spending your time and how many hours a week are you spending on the job? Is there enough time to get everything done you wanted to do in a 40, 50 or 60-hour week?**

**There are two kinds of time: clock time and real time. Clock time, 60 seconds in a minute, 60 minutes in an hour, and so on. The time passes equally in clock time; but in real time, all times are relative. In real time, all time flies by when we’re having fun, but seems to drag by when we are balancing a checkbook or waiting for the phone to ring. Every minute wasted in frustration over late reports or being late for appointments adds to our disturbance and increases the chance for errors, resulting in additional do over time and effort.**

**No matter how organized we are, there are only 24 hours in a day, and we can’t change that. All we can manage is ourselves and what we do with the time we have. As an individual, we perceive and process in different ways. We manage our time in different ways. *No one style of time management fits all.***

**What is your organizational style, how do you use your time?**

**\_\_ Do you use a daily, weekly, and monthly planner?**

**\_\_ Do you usually confirm appoints?**

**\_\_ Do you let phone calls go to VM, to avoid disruption of your concentration?**

**\_\_ Do you try to return phone calls and emails within 24 hours?**

**\_\_ Do you have a set place where you keep your keys or fob?**

**\_\_ Do you have paper and pencil next to your office phone?**

**\_\_ If you were unable to go to work tomorrow, could someone handle your work responsibilities?**

***The more “yes” answers the better organized you are and the better you utilize your time.***

**\_\_ Have you missed the deadline for paying a bill during the last three months?**

**\_\_ Have you missed an important meeting because you forgot?**

**\_\_ Do you take work home more than twice a week?**

**\_\_ Do you make copies of every email and documents you sign?**

**\_\_ Do incoming emails ‘ding’ your cell phone?**

**\_\_ Do you work beyond your regular hours more than twice a week?**

**\_\_ Do you often avoid returning phone calls if you don’t particularly like the caller or the material makes you uncomfortable?**

**\_\_ Do you have slips of paper with phone numbers, and addresses accumulated around your office or in your pockets and forget what they mean?**

***“Yes” answers here reveal factors that result in time you can lose.***

**When you manage your time more effectively and efficiently, you reduce stress and frustration, you become more confident and more productive in your work.**

**Here are some typical issues that affect our ability to be organized and better manage time:**

* **Time wasters and distractors**
* **Not delegating tasks**
* **No prioritized “To Do List” of tasks**
* **Self-discipline**
* **Procrastination**

***Time Waisters/ Distractors***

**I found there were times when time wasters and distractors interfered with my concentration and completing what I was working on. After being distracted it took time to get up to speed on where I was on the task I was working on. Here are some examples of time wasters and distractors. Telephone calls, texts, e-mails, dealing with employee issues, daydreaming, trying to contact suppliers, computer glitches, and loud noises. I am sure you can think of other wasters and distractions that you deal with. Do not allow your incoming emails to ‘ding’ your phone. This is a constant source of distraction throughout the day. Schedule time during the day when you handle telephone calls and return e-mails.**

***Delegating Tasks***

**I found that delegating tasks to a staff member or two can have a big impact on improving your efficiency and giving you more time to focus on higher priorities and not get bogged down that depletes your time and energy. I always felt delegating to various staff members made them a more valuable contributor to the success of our team and the store’s performance. I tried to identify which person would be good for which assignment. Many years ago, I heard the definition of a manager, “Getting work done through the efforts of others.” I identified key aspects of my job and would decide who could assume some of those responsibilities in my absence. I thought this approach would help them be better prepared for the next step.**

* **Who has the capacity in terms of time and workload to handle the duty, which assignments?**
* **Who has the skill and experience level best for the job?**
* **Whose capabilities did I want to expand?**
* **I started delegating day-to-day functions. Here are some examples of how I chose tasks to delegate.**
* **Handling routine customer problems**
* **Compiling data**
* **Composing regular administrative reports, preparing work schedule.**
* **Training new employees.**

***Procrastination* *(Eat the Green Frog)***

**Procrastinating is something we all must deal with every day. I found that having a prioritized list of tasks to complete each day and putting one or two of the most important or something I didn’t like dealing with at the very top of the list helped my organization and self-discipline. Some examples of top of the list tasks are returning a call to an unhappy customer or disciplining (or firing) an employee. Don’t wait and don’t give yourself any excuses, “Eat the Frog” each morning. By that I mean take the one or two most difficult or uncomfortable tasks for the day and go to work on it early. Everyone has a Green Frog or two every day. “Eat that Green Frog” and you will not have to think and worry about it the rest of the day. If you have two Frogs to eat, *eat the ugliest Frog first.* After you complete eating the Green Frog you can look forward to a much more pleasant and productive day. 😊**

***To Do List***

**Something else I did that helped me be better organized was having a prioritized “To Do” list. The last thing I did each day was put together my prioritized “To Do” list for the next day. That way I was ready to start the new day with my plan in place and did not waste time wondering where to start. I found there was just not enough time to complete my “To Do” every day. However, but by focusing on the most important tasks and making sure they were done, I had successfully eaten the “Frog”. I used to carry a pocket recorder in my car and during my drive home, I tried to prepare my list.**

**On another topic, I recently became aware of a new service some c-stores are signing up for; *‘Safe Shop Assured’*. I don’t know much about it at this point, but you might investigate. If anyone had any experience (good or bad) please let me know. Thank you.**

**Don't be a victim of the 5 Dangerous Words –**

***‘Maybe I’ll Do It Tomorrow’***

**Do it today because tomorrow (~~could be~~) will be too late!**

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***“Our business is making your business better!”***