**Retailer Newsletter**

**May 1, 2018**

**Tom’s Business “TIPS”**

***“To Improve Profits”***

**RE: *Getting Your Hands Dirty?***

**Hello,**

**I received several phone calls and emails after last month’s *Tom’s TIPS.* Several retailers told me that they spend every day visiting one or more of their stores. I asked each one, “Well do you get your hands dirty?” The answers I heard was generally a mixture of “of course not” to “not if I can help it.”**

**As I fielded those calls, I was reminded of a TV show called, *Undercover Boss*. I watched a couple of episodes and the one that still sticks in my mind involved the CEO of Southland Corporation. Southland operates over 13,000 convenience stores under the name 7-Eleven in 20 countries. The CEO of Southland went undercover and worked at several of the company stores. Now you would have to believe, the CEO of Southland has visited more C-Stores than most of us have. He has participated in countless meetings regarding the designing, construction, and operation of C-Stores. In the episode I am referring to, the CEO was struggling with a sink, in a store, that was in an inconvenient location. He told a fellow worker that the sink near the coffee center was in the wrong place, and the worker simply smiled and told him, “It’s not exactly in the right spot, but we don’t have any choice in the matter, so we have to work with it.” After the show, the CEO told the audience he immediately made plans to change the sink location in all current and future stores.**

**So, let me repeat last month’s question, “When was the last time you worked at your store?” The Southland corporation probably had the best minds in the industry advising committees about building design for the perfect store. All those studies, discussions, and experts could not predict the error in the sink location UNTIL someone in management actually got involved and ‘got his/her hands dirty’.**

**Many of you will remember a slide I show in most training sessions -**

***“Being successful in the convenience store business is like climbing a ladder, it cannot be climbed with your hands in your pockets. You have to get your hands dirty!”* Now you know what I mean by getting your hands dirty.**

**I hope you will take this bit of advice, get involved and get your hands dirty soon. This could be especially true if you have recently purchased a new store (and crew) and you are not familiar with the inner workings at that store.**

**I saw something interesting in the back room of a c-store this week that reminded me of the old days. This store had 6-8 ‘Notices to Employees’ on the bulletin board. These notes ranged anywhere from don’t overstock a category, don’t forget to time out, check the work schedule for any changes, etc. Some notices were actually laminated so I know they’ve been up a while. It’s obvious to me that most employees don’t see or pay attention to these notes anymore because they’ve been posted too long. Here’s an idea that worked well for me; When I wanted to share any news or information with the staff, I attached a note to their paycheck. That way I was sure they read it (or at least it was in their hands), and I saved copies (with dates) of what I attached to their check. That way I could go back and show anyone, “Here’s the note that was attached to your check.” This was a more efficient way to communicate business information to all the staff, and I didn’t have to look at numerous notices posted all around the store. Try it!**

**If you have a question regarding this email or would like me to cover a topic in a future TIPS articles, drop me an email or call. I enjoy hearing from you. I generally return calls and emails within 24 hours, even when I’m traveling. If you haven’t looked at our website in a while, take a look.**

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

***‘Maybe I’ll Do It Tomorrow’***

**Do it today! Because tomorrow could be too late!**

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