

Monday Morning

Motivation 2/28/2011



THE POSITIVE PLACE. SALES MOTIVATION AND PERSONAL GROWTH

Keeping your goal in sight

I don't want anyone to rush right out to your local feed store and buy a set of "blinders," used to keep horses and mules on the straight and narrow. One, they'd look strange in the office (of course, in today's office environment, people are already wearing some pretty strange things), and second, I hear they itch a bit.

But wouldn't it be nice if sometimes, we could use something like a set of blinders to keep us focused and on track?

For those of you who didn't grow up in an agricultural community, blinders are small flaps that keep the horse or mule from seeing the environment around him or her. They limit the animal's ability to see around them, and as a result, they purportedly keep the animal from getting skittish or distracted from other horses, snakes, cougars, and glue manufacturers. I believe Lady Godiva may have used one on her horse, but I could be wrong.

Anyway, most of us have the occasional distraction that comes up during the work day, and distracts us from whatever we are trying to accomplish. It could be people coming in the office, phone calls, computer problems, bathroom breaks, Facebook, news events, or the guy snoring in the next cubicle. Whatever it may be, it's usually enough to throw us off track -- sometimes, it will throw us off track for most of the day.

I don't know about you, but it's quite common for me to be in the middle of something, and someone comes into the office, or something blows up (figuratively, of course), or someone sends me an email that just needs to be taken care of right then and there. After a while, with one distraction piling on top of another one, I'll get back to the computer and pause while I try to remember what the heck I was doing. Usually it comes back. Sometimes, I'm unhappy that it comes back. Sometimes, I find myself praying for another distraction, when I remember what the original project was.

So how can we keep ourselves on track? We can't likely shut ourselves up in a vacant room somewhere -- although a former acquaintance did that for his software company; when it came down to crunch time on the software, he'd take his programmers and

they'd go to Las Vegas, rent a hotel room, and code all day long (we won't consider what they did during the night).

The easiest way I know of to accomplish this is to use an old-fashioned task list. Make a list, write down what you need to accomplish that day, prioritize the list, and then check the items off when you've worked through them.

Even in our tech-savvy world, I still find that to be one of the most beneficial methods I can use (sure, I use the task list in Gmail much of the time), but it's still a task list.

Second, I keep track of essential deadlines with a calendar application. I use Google Calendar, because it integrates with the phone in my pocket. I use it to keep track of deadlines, birthdays, anniversaries, and I use the Google contact manager to keep track of the contacts I need. My rule is that if I have called them more than once or twice, or have been called by them more than once or twice, their number goes in the contact manager.

Third, sometimes, I will find myself working early or late. It's amazing how much more I can accomplish when there aren't a lot of people around. I bet you're similar -- if you haven't tried it, give it a shot.

Fourth, I remember that first and foremost, I keep my main goals in mind in dealing with all these things. I don't try to do things that don't make much difference, and try to concentrate on the items that mean most to me. With me, that's home and family first, but for you, it may be something else entirely.

When I follow these short rules, I find that my life goes much better. There are the occasional problems that make my life difficult, but at least I don't have to go to the feed store and buy the blinders. When I do these little steps, I find myself to be a lot more efficient. When I ignore them (which happens more than I would like to admit), I accomplish a whole lot less, and spend a lot more time doing it.

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