

What Is The Most Important Thing For Your Business Today?

By Joann Javons

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What is the important thing you can do for your business today?

It's on your "to do" list, you say? Hmmmm. Maybe, maybe not.

What Gets In Your Way?

If you were to identify the 1 obstacle that most gets in the way of your completing your "to do" list would you say: 1) difficulty in setting your priorities? 2) difficulty in organizing around those priorities? 3) difficulty in the actual doing, or executing, your priorities?

Most people I talk with say it's #3, the executing of priorities. Typically, most of us get derailed by the number of tasks to do on our lists. Often we have too many truly unimportant items on our lists, many of which are left over from the day before or even earlier in the week.

And it does feel good to cross those things off when you've done them, doesn't it? It can give us the quick fix of immediate accomplishment but the problem is we're often accomplishing the wrong things.

Asking The Right Question

The answer to why it's difficult to DO your priorities is revealed in a question posed by Stephen Covey, author of "The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People". He asks, "What 1 thing could you do in your business life that if you did it on a consistent, regular basis, could make a tremendous positive impact on your life?"

He raises the same question for your personal life. My answer to this question for my personal life came to me immediately: Exercise. When I exercise on a consistent,

regular basis it has a tremendous positive impact on my life.

First, I keep my commitment to myself. That may not sound too important but breaking commitments to ourselves has a way of eroding our belief in ourselves, wearing down our positive energy, subtly tearing at our self-esteem.

You know those nasty internal dialogues you have with yourself when you don't do what you said you would? It's just as important to keep commitments to yourself as it is to keep commitments to others.

Secondly, I feel better both mentally and physically for the rest of the day. More energy, sharper, clearer. In short, the world looks better.

Now the same is true for your business life. But that answer may be harder to get at, especially if you think your "to do" list holds the answers.

Taking Action

Every day you are faced with things you must say "yes" or "no" to. Hundreds of things can clamor for your attention.

My email used to take up hours of my time until I came up with some solutions. I used to subscribe to 60 ezines as one way of learning everything I could about developing an online business.

Finally, I looked at the authors that most frequently captured my attention...the ones that made me THINK about what I was doing. I immediately unsubscribed from 30 ezines, set up filters in my outlook express so that 15 more ezines automatically go into a folder to read later and yes, I only get my 'top 5' that I read every time they arrive. .

Another bad habit I had was responding like Pavlov's dog every time that little envelope icon appeared in my task bar telling me an email had arrived! Looking at your inbox every 10 minutes is a very, very bad habit. I knew I had to change .

How Do You Decide Your Priorities?

Exactly how do you decide your priorities each day for your business? Based on urgency? Many people do. Based on what you didn't get done yesterday? Many people do. Based on what shows up in your in box? Many people do. But you don't need to be one of them.

I suggest that these ways are all ineffective ways to create

your priorities.

Your priorities for your business (and for your personal life too) must be the true priorities that live in your heart and mind. Not your "should" priorities, not other peoples' priorities, not your pavlovian-type reactions. Only those that reside deeply in your heart and mind.

I finally got to these priorities when I became clear on the mission statement for PeoplePoems.com. That mission statement reflects the driving force of the business: "To bring beauty and joy to others through words that acknowledge, appreciate, and celebrate people in your life". It reflects our values, it energizes, it gives direction.

That doesn't mean you should have your mission on your website or in your business brochure. But the most important reason is so that you always remain clear what you're business is about in the most fundamental and meaningful sense. Your mission for your business should be alive for you, give you energy, motivation, renew your commitment and drive your daily priorities. IT IS YOUR FOCUS.

An Experiment For You

Let's try an experiment to see how important this idea is. Please look up from where you are sitting and just look straight ahead. Now, quickly say out loud (nobody's listening, it's okay!) everything you see in front of you. Quickly. Maybe you see trees, flowers, sky, buildings if you're looking out a window or you see a wall with paintings, miniblinds, curtains. Have you done it?

Now, sitting right where you are, just pick up the nearest pen or pencil and hold it in front of you. Just focus your attention on that pen or pencil for 2-3 seconds. Stay with it, you're almost done.

Okay, when you did that, what happened to all the other stuff you saw before? Yes, it faded into the background. You were focused.

Staying Focused

Staying focused is what successful people do all the time. And they stay focused on what is truly important. Not the little stuff. There's a difference: when you're focused: the little stuff falls into the background and the truly important things are clear.

Let's go back to your business. Keep in mind your values as expressed in your mission as you answer this question. What 1 thing could you do in your business life that if you did

it on a consistent, regular basis would have a tremendous positive impact on your life?

And what about your "to do" list today? Does your list show the answers to this question?

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