

30 Business “No No’s” (15)

It is a “No No” to be unconcerned about shoddy and cheap work!

Leaders who know their business and care keep a sharp eye out for the shoddy and cheap, for who among us can be trusted to be always diligent and honest?¹ Solomon

*Care and diligence bring luck. **Thomas Fuller**²*

Know your business and care

Be an expert

The first step in doing business is to know what is you do and are offering. I have heard hundreds of presentations representing hundreds of businesses and most of them are unsure of what they are offering. I love it when I hear a business person talk that knows their business.

Knowing your business means knowing people. Every business needs to know who needs what they are offering. These people are your target. Develop a profile of the person who needs your service, and then do your best to get yourself in front of them.

Being an expert means you are able to deliver your service with diligence and excellence. Once you have your target and you understand how to sell it, you will need to be able to deliver what you provide!

I remember being asked once to put some wood shutters on a home in Fort Lauderdale, Florida. I had no idea how to go about it. I measured the windows. I marked the holes and then labeled each piece of wood that I cut so that it would fit easily over the windows. I was only asked once because as I went along I realized I had under bid the job and had little understanding of how to cut and drill the holes. I had to buy metal “legs” to put into the concrete walls, the drill bits to do it, and the hardware to hold the wood on the windows. I didn’t bid any of that out. As a result the work cost more money and took more time than I thought. I had to pass the extra cost on to the owner. I wasn’t an expert at what I was doing and in the end it really cost the customer. I was only asked once, and I was not recommended to anyone else. I missed a ton of details.

Be concerned about the details

*Diligence is the mother of good fortune, and idleness, its opposite, never brought a man to the goal of any of his best wishes. **Miguel de Cervantes**³*

“It’s the little details that are vital. Little things make big things happen.” John Wooden⁴

Be diligent about the details of your work. I have recently been reading a book called the **Creative Leader** by Ed Young. Ed is the Pastor of Fellowship Church in Dallas, Texas. One point he keeps making in his book is to be diligent about the details of your speaking and your services. If it is your job to speak be diligent in working to make your speaking impactful and excellent. Excellence is found in those details that are often overlooked by others and that can make a huge difference in your profitability and impact. As you serve your customers concern yourself with the details of your business. Take the time to consider what their FAQ’s will be? Give them everything they will need to use your services, and then be available to assist them.

Keep a sharp eye out

Mr. Jones was known far and wide as a hard-nosed boss who watched his employees like a hawk. He was making one of his regular tours of the factory when he spotted a young man leaning against a pile of boxes just outside the foreman's office. Since George, the foreman, wasn't around, Jones stood off to the side and watched to see just how long the young man would stand around doing nothing. The young man yawned, scratched his head, looked at his watch, and sat on the floor. He took out a nail file and began cleaning his nails. Then he stretched, yawned again, and leaned back on the pile of boxes.

Jones stepped from his hiding place and walked up to the young man. "You!" he boomed. "How much do you make a week?"

The young man looked up indifferently. "Two hundred and fifty dollars," he said.

¹ MSG: Proverbs 20:8-9

² <http://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/keywords/diligence.html/> July 9, 2009; 9:55 AM.

³ Ibid 2; 9:58 AM

⁴ <http://thinkexist.com/quotation/it-s-the-little-details-that-are-vital-little/261763.html/> July 9, 2009; 11:30 AM

Jones swooped into the cashier's office, took \$250 from the cash box, and returned. "Take it," he said, "and get out! Don't let me see you around here again!"

The young man took the cash, put it in his pocket, and left. Jones snorted at his lack of remorse, embarrassment, or any other feeling. Then he went looking for George. When he found him, Jones was red with anger. "That idler in front of your office," Jones said. "I just gave him a week's pay and fired him. What's the matter with you, letting him stand around as though he had nothing to do?"

"You mean the kid in the red shirt?" George asked.

"Yes! The kid in the red shirt!"

"He was waiting for the twenty dollars we owe him for lunch," George said. "He works for the coffee shop around the corner." (<http://www.cleanbusinessjokes.com>)

Creating a process for diligent work

"The leading rule ... for the man of every ... calling, is diligence. Leave nothing for to-morrow which can be done to-day." **Abraham Lincoln**⁵

I think in business the first thing we look for in creating a process for diligent work is the desire to work. We all are living in a culture of "entitlement". It is getting more and more difficult to find people with a desire to work and with the skills to do the work. Keep a sharp eye out by recognizing this attitude in those that you have and in those that you may hire. Laziness or a "lack-luster" attitude is detrimental to you as an employer. Your service and customers will suffer from workers who leave something undone today that could have been done. The Leader must be diligent because workers aren't always diligent. The process for diligent work begins with the desire to work.

Creating standards for workers

I never could have done what I have done without the habits of punctuality, order, and diligence, without the determination to concentrate myself on one subject at a time. **Charles Dickens**⁶

3 standards for workers:

First, be on time for work. Tardiness is unacceptable in the work place.

Second, there is a way in which we go about doing our work which gives "order" to the day. The way that you want your employees and staff to go about their work should be consistent with the values and vision of your company. Your expectations should be clear and stated publically.

Third, get the job done in a timely fashion. There should be an expected time of completion for the jobs that are assigned. It is the job of the leader to define the time line for completion of a job.

People do what we inspect and not what we expect. Diligence in work is the responsibility of the leader. His work is to make sure others are doing their work well.

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⁵ <http://thinkexist.com/quotes/with/keyword/diligence/> July 9, 2009; 10:04 AM

⁶ Ibid 3; 10 AM

