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An Eye For Details

For a myriad reasons, exciting tasks always get priority in any office. Boring tasks get assigned to lower echelon personnel and rarely do those various mundane systems ever get scrutinized --carefully -- by owners/principals.

Just like scope creep, boring tasks--the *lesser* family of details--quickly get outdated and out of hand. For instance, when a database reaches 5000 no one wants to take the time to review each contact line by line, much less think about the global repercussions of an out of date, or worse, irrelevant database. No one wants to input new business cards in a central place and a few fear theft of "their" clients if the database could be managed and accessible to all. While most modern organizations have an integrated platform, many firms don't and most employees still keep their own individual Outlook contacts. This mind boggling occurrence happens so often that it's hard to understand. The ongoing rationale seems to be that the effort of combining and up-keeping the current system frustrates even the most hardened professional. So better to turn a blind eye and ignore.

In addition, there might be a need to revamp or create a brand standards book where detailed accounts of how much gets ordered, from whom to order, the mandated corporate logo, the right fonts, paper types, and correct corporate colors reside. There should be a notebook with hard copies of every item ordered including marketing brochures and holiday cards. The electronic versions (with retired editions relegated to the archive folder) also need to be cleaned out and paper copies inserted into the book for posterity and review by new employees. That might mean double checking office hoarders; those people who insist on using some easy access version on their personal hard drive that had been put to rest years ago. A company's consistent brand

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image counts and should be treated with respect. However, if no central place exists with the current and proper graphic versions, and if employees aren't reminded during their annual reviews of the need to use the best of these applications available to the firm, then a well designed system can easily break down and get destroyed--and it can unravel quickly.

This family of unattended boring tasks can slow down business development and marketing on so many fronts. That's why it's important to peruse lists that hold upcoming opportunities for award submissions or speaking engagements. Sadly, inaccurate or out of date tracking devices can often result in the important loss of missed opportunities.

Systems fall apart if not regularly maintained and reviewed. The further lists and tracking systems deteriorate, the more monumental they feel and are in reality more difficult to fix.

Why should principals take on the magnifying glass to review these various tasks? Wouldn't their time be more wisely spent finding new business? Isn't this in the category of micro managing? Don't they pay intelligent people to take care of these tasks? No!

Principals/owners have a level of caring that surpasses entry level personnel. Although, when owning a business we often pass things off to others whom we can trust (such as our accountants), we still review our tax documents or architectural plans, right? It's the same, but more so, with anything that ultimately touches the client or might help in business development. If a database contains misspelled names or dead clients, then that can sour a relationship or point to a less detail oriented organization. Finally, it is principals who can instantly feel/smell if these various lists accurately reflect the company's current business development direction or if the lists have become stale and still target an audience long left in the dust. A company's growth can depend on current tracking sheets that let principals know when an award or speaking engagement is due, or which events to attend -- before the day before.

The reality is no one knows where the next project will come from. What we do know is that advertising works. The advertising umbrella includes more than specific ads, it embraces a well planned cycle of electronic newsletters, good old fashioned hard copy collateral direct mail, and seeing a firm's employees at various events and conferences. To get the most from these efforts the support systems must be accurate and up to date and they have to be reviewed by the principals.

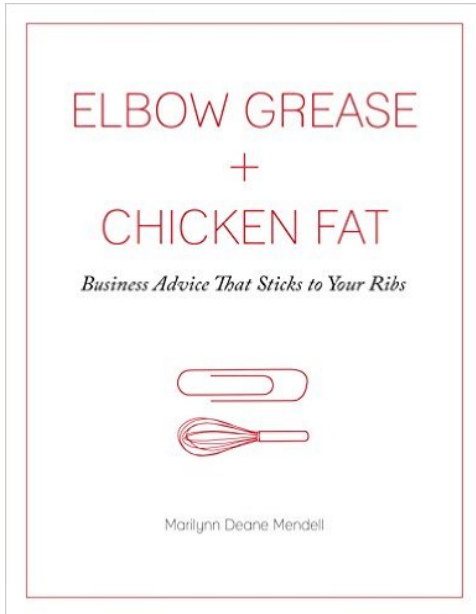
It takes ownership to bother with that kind of examination. That's the truth. I promise the effort will pay off in numerous ways every day. Really.

What Good People Do--They Give



I must say this book tops the list for best book read in a million years. It's a read before bed every night, or when you're down, or if you have clients that are non-profits, or if you raise money for a charity, or if the elections make you wonder if we still have people who do extraordinary things for the world. It's simply inspiring what billionaires and ordinary citizens do to help elevate humans, animals and our planet. A must read!

The Almanac of American Philanthropy.



For those of you not familiar with my book I was once the best and largest off-premise caterer in Western New York. For years I have paired business acumen with my fabulous recipes to help cement business concepts for my clients and that teaching idea became the foundation for my book. The book conveys my story of how to achieve the American Dream; where anyone in this country can become whatever they want with hard work and a never-give-up attitude. Hence the title:

Elbow Grease + Chicken Fat
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