

THE VALUE OF YOUR TIME

We come into this world with one currency only—TIME—and we leave it when it has run out. It is important to manage time carefully and not waste it or misuse it.



There is no glory in working long hours. The glory is in achieving success with less working hours and enjoying life in the process. The adage “work smart, not hard” is good to remember.

It’s not difficult to create a time management plan but it does take discipline. For example, if you made an important appointment with a client, would you miss it? Would you show up late? You probably answered “no” to both questions. What about your partner, your wife or your children—do they rate higher than a client? If answered yes, remember that, the next time you make a promise or a date with them.

Learn to maintain a calendar, either electronic or paper based. Keep it handy and updated at all times. Create your weekly or two weeks’ tasks and appointments in advance and make sure that the last call or task ends at the same time each day, allowing enough time for yourself, family and friends.

Let me stress it again—discipline is important. Unless it’s a fire or flood emergency, don’t answer phones while working on a task. Stay focused and if possible, stick to the time you assigned for each task. Clearly communicate to employees that you do not want interruptions. As you get used to the process, you will find it easier and easier.

Time is not renewable. Once it passes, you’ll never get it back. When your time runs out, what questions will

AVITAN TradeTalk

The first Trade Talk of this year, held at Avitan headquarters on February 18, was a roaring success! The attendance was fantastic, representing a wide spectrum of trades from masonry to roofing. The “Sales & Marketing” themed meeting was conducted by Amos Avitan and Mike Sanderson whose lively styles made for great interaction and dialogue among attendees.



The feedback after the session was very positive and everyone left with a feeling of time well spent, and their tool belt full of sales & marketing tools.

Next Trade Talk will be held in Edmonton, AB, on March 10, 2011 in Radisson

Hotel South, starting at 8 am. For more details and to register, visit our website at www.AVITAN.ws and click on AVITAN Trade Talk.



Contractors gather in the reception area after a morning full of sales and marketing advice.

Are you addicted to stress?

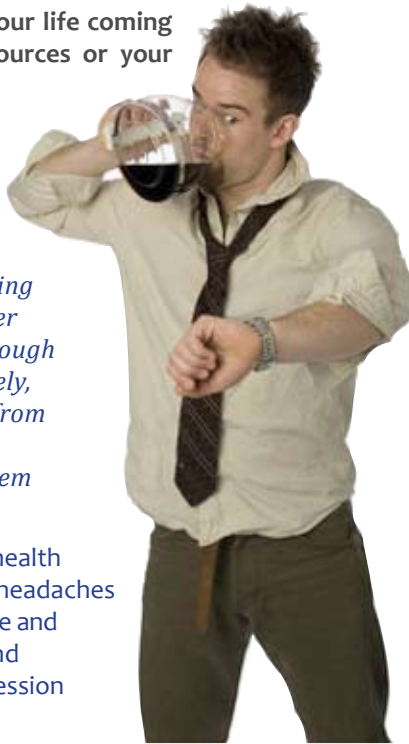
Go to our “Stress Test” on page 2 to find out!

you be saying to yourself? “I wish I worked harder?” Or “I wish I had enjoyed my life more and spent more time with my family?” Managing your time is one of the best skills to develop in your business. Don’t wait till it is too late to realize this.

ARE YOU A STRESS ADDICT?



Is the stress in your life coming from external sources or your own doing?



“It is possible to get hooked on stress—even without knowing it,” says Eli Bay, stress expert. “We may be praised for working nights and weekends or never turning down a task even though we’re swamped. Unfortunately, when our self-worth comes from juggling stressful situations, we may ultimately create them for ourselves.”

Too much stress can lead to health issues—both physical (from headaches and back pain to heart disease and weakened immune system) and emotional (anxiety and depression to name a few).

So are you your own worst enemy when it comes to stress? Answer the following questions. More than 4 “yes” responses could mean it’s time to take a serious look at how you are creating stress in your life...and make some changes.

Circle your answer to each question:

1. Do you find you can’t start projects until the last minute? YES NO
2. Do you turn on the TV or crank up the music because you can’t stand silence? YES NO
3. Do you surround yourself with friends who always bring the drama – even to quiet get togethers? YES NO
4. Are you happy to delegate tasks because you know you just can’t do it all (nor do you want to)? YES NO
5. Do you think that all this talk about stress is for wimps who don’t care about being successful? YES NO
6. When you go on vacation do you leave your “real life” behind and truly get away? YES NO
7. When driving, do your passengers think you’re an aggressive driver (tailgating, passing every car on the road, inching into intersections before the light turns green)? YES NO
8. Do you feel that you really do your best work under pressure – the more the better? YES NO
9. Are you always running behind schedule? YES NO
10. Do you strive for perfection? YES NO
11. While you’re in line to pay for your groceries, do you get upset when other lines seem to be moving faster than yours? YES NO
12. Do you get angry about things or at people for no other reason except that you think they’re stupid? YES NO

YOUR SCORE: _____ YES _____ NO

POWER UP YOUR MARKETING

Marketing is really, really important. The success (or failure) of a business is largely influenced by two things: what it does (product or service) and its marketing. It may surprise you to learn that success is determined 80% by marketing and only 20% by the the product or service the business provides.

Recessions and economic downturns are the best times to market aggressively. At first that may sound crazy, as the emphasis shifts to cost cutting. Marketing budgets are often the easier areas to cut back, and many companies will make that mistake. Let them.

Because most companies will be cutting back, your marketing efforts will have less competition. The likelihood of your advertising or other marketing efforts being seen is higher, simply because there is less of it fighting for attention.

Newspapers, radio and other media experience a dwindling of customers, and are far more inclined to sharpen their pencils. It’s a time when you can drive a hard bargain.

Research from previous recessions shows that, when the economy recovered—companies that maintained or increased their marketing budgets during the downturn were 213% ahead of companies that cut back.

“Doing business without advertising is like winking at a girl in the dark.”

THROUGH A GREENHORN'S EYES



Frequently I hear comments from employers regarding the trials and tribulations of dealing with young employees, so I thought it would be interesting to hear it from the other side. Last week I asked a 19 year old for his perspective on what it is like to be his age, and new on a job site. His response is worth sharing.



"When starting off a guy with little to no experience there will be some confusions. Firstly, know he will be nervous yet eager to start work. Calm him down."

Good advice. Nervousness or anxiety can make it difficult to intake instructions or information. By calming them down first, you will make it easier for them to hear and retain what you are saying.

"Start by thoroughly explaining what the job entails. Give him an overview of the day—"Today we are going to (describe the job). It will happen in the following stages."

More good advice. If you describe the bigger picture, the new employee will better understand the day's objectives, and how he fits into them. Remember, everything is new to him, and he doesn't want to appear stupid.

"Be stern but not strict. Make sure they know they have to earn a place on the crew. At the same time give them a fair chance to gain that spot."

He explained that if the boss is too lenient, the guys lose respect. They want to feel that the job is important. Being overly harsh will also result in a loss of respect. There must be balance and accountability.

"If you're tired of having new employees that seem useless after 4 - 6 months, start training them properly on week one. Too many times I've seen a guy do the same b.s. job for 4 months and the employer wonders why he can't keep up. Employees want to have a sense of accomplishment. Taking the time to teach them a new skill boosts morale."

He's right, of course. At the root of most mistakes, confusion and lost efficiencies is poor or inadequate training. Patience is an essential ingredient of training. If you take the time upfront to make sure the new employee knows how to properly do something, there will be less time spent correcting problems.



"I was training to be an electrician. I suppose I got wired the wrong way round somewhere along the line."

-Elvis Presley

THE RETURN OF JOURNEYMAN-HELPERS?



Predictions for available trades workers in the coming decade indicate a serious shortfall. British Columbia survey takers expect 135,000 new openings for tradesmen by 2019 and few applicants to fill those ranks. Some B.C. mining companies are seeking to hire as many as 500 tradespersons for each new project.

Career counselors in Metro Vancouver secondary schools have an old idea that is new again: resurrect the job title of journeyman-helper.

Career facilitators like Bev Ramsay, of Johnston Heights Secondary School in Surrey, believe that an influx of motivated high school co-op trades students would allow construction contractors the opportunity to check out the best performers and hire them.

"Why can't we have journeyman-helpers?" she asked. "They make good, reliable helpers in a system that would allow everyone to be working."

Ramsay recalled the positive experiences her electrician-father would talk about after a day's work. *"He really liked working with them and I think it would be so cool for them to come in. The students make such dedicated employees."*

Citing a current public sector apprenticeship survey, she said school career guidance professionals are being asked to provide information on how many apprentices are currently employed, as well as approaches that school districts could use to encourage the hiring or training of apprentices on external contracts (e.g. infrastructure construction, or facilities maintenance).

ATTITUDE
is the most powerful tool you possess.

"LIFE IS 10 PERCENT WHAT HAPPENS TO US AND 90 PERCENT HOW WE REACT TO IT."



SPOTLIGHT ON CLIENTS

"Do or do not. There is no try."

-Yoda



Kudos to **Active Electric** in Surrey, BC, who have committed to getting their office/warehouse thoroughly cleaned and organized. The company is 60 years old this year, and there has been plenty of 'accumulation' in areas that are now needed for workspace. We look forward to touring their new, refreshed and efficient space in the next few weeks.

Ackard Contractors in Edmonton also deserve a 'tip of the hat' for sticking to their new meeting schedule and involving employees. All part of a Team Building project, additional benefits are improved morale, enthusiasm and staff participation which, in the end, positively affects efficiency and productivity.

Congratulations to **Kengary Contracting** in Vancouver, BC, for signing on for an intensive 4-year training program with Avitan. Welcome aboard!

Time Line Construction in Edmonton, AB, is one more client to have enrolled in the Avitan Marketing Training Program that started just at the beginning of this year. Time Line's designated employee, Teresa Stange, is joining Cody Aldrich of **Aldrich Construction** in Lacombe, AB, and Shane Vis of **Tasa Construction** in Burnaby, BC, in these semi-monthly training sessions conducted by Rachel Avitan.

Heidelberg Landscaping in Abbotsford, BC, have embarked on a new marketing program. Company logo, stationery and a website are currently being developed by the creative team at Avitan.

Tasa Construction in Burnaby, BC, just reported the closing of another sale. According to Shane Vis, the beginning of 2011 has been anything but slow for the company. Talk about positive attitude!



Your Input is Always Welcome!
Got Good News? Heard a great joke?
Please share it with us!

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COOL GADGETS

Gentle Wake

Enough with blaring alarm clock. The LARK Bluetooth-enabled bracelet syncs with your iPhone to gently wake you—and only you. Pulsing vibrations on a pressure point on your inner wrist rouse you gradually over three minutes. If the shaking doesn't work, a musical backup plays.



LARK Up \$100; www.ourlark.com

Car Talk

This key-sized dongle (Scosche motorMOUTH II) upgrades any car with an audio input to a Bluetooth-enabled luxury model. It syncs with your cellphone via Bluetooth and streams in-call audio through your car's stereo.



\$80; www.scosche.com

A DIFFERENT KIND OF PIPING

This came to us anonymously—and it's too good not to share.



As a bagpiper I was recently asked by a funeral director to play at a graveside service for a homeless man. He had no family or friends, so the service was to be at a pauper's cemetery in the countryside.

I got lost on the way and being a typical man I didn't stop for directions. I finally arrived an hour late. There were only the diggers and crew left, eating lunch.

I felt badly and apologized to the men for being late. I went to the side of the grave, looked down and saw the vault lid was already in place. I didn't know what else to do, so I started to play.

The workers put down their lunches and began to gather around. I played out my heart and soul for this man with no family and friends. I played like I've never played before.

And as I played 'Amazing Grace,' the workers began to weep. They wept, I wept, we all wept together. When I finished I packed up my bagpipes and started for my car. My head hung low but my heart was full.

As I opened the car door, I heard one of the workers say, "I never seen nothin' like that before and I've been putting in septic tanks for twenty years."