



THE TERMITE EFFECT

25 Common Business Mistakes and Their Hidden Consequences

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1ST MISTAKE

YOUR BUSINESS IS NOT ORGANIZED

“In business, organization is an absolute necessity, not an alternative.”

- - Larry Burkett

When I was a child I wanted to grow up to be a fireman. Little did I know that when I became a business owner and entrepreneur, I would spend the majority of my time fighting fires. If you operate your own business, more than likely, you can relate to this. Let’s face it: running a business is NOT easy and it requires skills that many of us do not possess naturally.

At the heart of feeling unorganized is usually a lack of systems within your business. No matter how sophisticated a business owner you may be, invariably you are ‘winging it’ in some area(s) of your business. You may have a well-oiled machine in your back office but when it comes to marketing and sales, you are just going through the motions, or vice versa. Every area of your business needs a system – marketing, sales, human resources, customer service, inventory, operations, leadership, financial, etc.

If you are a small business, or a solopreneur, do not let the word “system” intimidate you. As a business coach, I spend much of my time helping my clients develop systems, which typically results in them being

more organized and taking a more deliberate approach to running their business and being less inclined to “shoot from the hip.”

The real problem with lack of organization is the distraction that results from it. Think about how much brain capacity you use when you must scramble to locate a customer’s file or you lose a sale because you failed to follow up with a prospect. It becomes a distraction and it derails you from running your business. The result of being more organized is less stress and a feeling of being in control.

Quick Exercise:

Circle the answer that most closely describes your situation after reading each statement below:

- I feel in control of my time. **Yes | No**
- If I were absent from my business for six months, the business would continue to grow (Three months?, Three days?).
Yes | No
- I have an Operations Manual. **Yes | No**
- I never forget to follow up with a prospect or customer.
Yes | No
- I have identified all tasks in the business that could be handled routinely by systems. **Yes | No**

How do you feel about your responses? Is there room for improvement or do you have everything under control?

The Termite Effect:

“I just want to get organized!” is a consistent mantra that I hear from my coaching clients and prospects. This means different things to each individual, but the need for help is clear. They are truly saying: “HELP me get my act together!”

Building systems within your business is the key to getting organized, but it is not necessarily complicated. It can be as simple as improving your time management skills or instituting a customer follow up process. It can be as complicated as drawing conclusions from your financial statements or installing a new computer system. Systems simply refer to the development of processes that you apply consistently to the same situation over and over again.

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business.**

This Mistake can be measured in degrees. On one end of the spectrum is the business owner with no systems in place. He just wakes up every morning and hopes for the best. As you move down the spectrum, you will find owners who employ a handful of systems such as a marketing calendar, a sales script, or a document outlining how their employees deal with an inbound call. On the far end of the spectrum is a franchise, where everything is documented. It is my personal opinion that business owners are best served by moving as far down the franchise end of the spectrum as possible.

Franchise

A Few Systems

Winging It



Let's see if I can help you connect this Mistake to your business by identifying areas within your business where you feel most vulnerable to mistakes:

Quick Exercise:

1. What activities do you dread most? _____

2. What part of the business gives you a sinking feeling in the pit of your stomach?

3. In what business activities do you procrastinate the most?

Possible Solutions:

Make the **commitment** to get organized, build systems, and stop winging it!

- **Delegate** some of the tasks identified in the previous exercise to someone on your team or hire help – administrative assistant, bookkeeper, sales rep, marketing consultant, virtual assistant.
- Create an **Operations Manual** so everyone on your team understands exactly how things are done in your business. Document all systems and processes within your business.
- Develop **functional organization charts** that make it clear to everyone what function(s) they fulfill in your organization. For those of you running small operations, you will put your name on every block in the organization chart. There is nothing wrong with that. It just demonstrates very clearly what functions need to be filled once your business gets off the ground and becomes too much for you to handle personally.
- Understand that **systems run businesses and people run systems**. As the owner, your sole focus should be on creating systems within your business and hiring people to run those systems. If you are able to make that paradigm shift stick within your business, you can reach the pinnacle of business owner success as defined by author Michael Gerber – the point where you spend most of your time working **ON** your business, not **IN** it.

- **Know thyself.** As noted in the Introduction, one of the strongest pieces of advice that I can offer you is to understand yourself. You must understand your strengths and weaknesses before you have any chance of getting organized. I encourage you to investigate the style or personality tests mentioned in the Introduction - Extended DISC, Kolbe, and Myers-Briggs. With this recognition comes the ability to surround yourself with people who will complement your strengths and compensate for your weakness.
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Your Take-Aways:

- _____
- _____
- _____

Book Recommendations:

- Getting Things Done, David Allen
- Take Back Your Life, Sally McGhee
- Eat That Frog, Brian Tracy