

It's Time to Re-Evaluate

I know an insurance agent in my area who, every time we run into one another, asks me if I have any good ideas as to how to find new clients without actually having to talk to people. This guy is in the wrong business. He needs to re-evaluate his life and decide to either change his attitude or get out of the insurance business. Maybe you're in that same place right now...

Don't get me wrong, I'm NOT saying that if you aren't at the level of success you want to be then you should quit. What I AM saying, however, is that if you aren't where you want to be in your business, then you need to re-evaluate your business and your life. You need to take a step back from your everyday efforts and gain clarity as to whether you need to start doing things differently or find a different occupation. Allow me to begin with a discussion of how and why to evaluate things, and then move on to a discussion about either changing occupations or re-inventing yourself and your business.

It's been said that about 65-75% of people are in the wrong kind of occupation for their natural skills! No wonder *so many* people are either unhappy in their work or achieve only modest levels of success. Let me share my own experience with this concept. I have a VERY analytical background – a couple of engineering degrees and an MBA in finance. Consequently, as you would expect, I spent the first 25+ years of my business career in analytical occupations – engineer, treasurer, controller, Chief Financial Officer, etc. I was very good at what I did, *but was always dissatisfied, unfulfilled, or just plain unhappy!* No position ever brought me satisfaction. I tried large companies, small companies, and expanded responsibilities. But nothing worked. I was dissatisfied. I made good money. I had some prestigious positions. But I could never get enthused about the work I did. What I eventually came to realize is this:

Just because you're good at something doesn't mean you like it!

After lots of reflection and self-examination, I realized that I enjoyed working with people much more than I enjoyed working with numbers! What's more, I discovered that I was just as good at it! I believe that we all have undiscovered talents. We have abilities that we don't think we're very good at or don't think we have at all. I believe that most people set out to do a good job. I just don't believe that most people set out to be mediocre. So when I see or hear about someone who just isn't performing well, I always first evaluate whether they're using their natural talents in the work that they do. And I suggest you do the same.

One of the problems we have is that we often get completely caught up in our day-to-day routine. This prevents us from stepping back from our work, reflecting on our lives and our business, and re-evaluating what we really want to do. My suggestion is to do just that. It is CRITICAL to your success and your happiness to take the time to reflect. When you get away from your office you gain new perspectives. If you know anything about my philosophies regarding recruiting and prospecting, you already know that I'm a big advocate of getting out of the office. Do yourself a favor. Take a notebook and a book to read (preferably a personal growth or business success book), and go to a coffee shop. It doesn't matter what you drink or whether you sit inside or outside. What *does* matter is that you get out of your office and take an hour or so to begin this process. Most everyone I know who does this - who gets out and sits at a coffee shop - reports that by getting away from their everyday environment, sitting down in a very different environment, and placing oneself in the middle of activity, *it somehow allows them to focus better and get new insights!*

By taking the time to gain new insights into ourselves and our business, we create an opportunity to see things in a different light – to truly see things as they are. Once we do that, we can much better determine whether we need to take a new and better approach to building our business or instead, choose a new path for ourselves. You may find that you're running hard down the wrong path altogether...

If you decide that you're on the wrong path, it's OK. It is VERY common for that to be the case. In truth, many people suspect they're on the wrong path but don't acknowledge it. They end up spending a lifetime being unhappy and/or dissatisfied with their life. Take stock of the things you enjoy doing and where your true talents lie, and then go about identifying new and different opportunities in which to apply them. Once you're in an occupation that you enjoy, life really becomes enjoyable and satisfying. You'll end up working less (mostly because what you'll be doing you won't consider to be work), and you'll achieve a much greater level of success.

If instead, you decide that you ARE on the right path, then good for you! But you have a different challenge ahead of you. Remember that old saying about the definition of "insanity"? It goes like this:

"The definition of insanity is doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results!"

If you aren't at the level of success you want to be and you've determined that you ARE in the right kind of occupation, then it probably is time to do something different. Stop conducting "business as usual". You need to become more open-minded about how to get the job done. Here's how I see it: You can insist on doing things the way you've always done them, or you can choose to reinvent yourself and your business, and start doing things differently. Even if you've been in this business a while, be open to taking advice from others. Even newer people can have good, fresh ideas. Things that didn't work years ago may now be effective - given changes in society, and given your present level of expertise and experience. Commit to investing in yourself and your development. Start reading on a regular basis. Start attending or acquiring educational programs. Even ONE new idea can take your business to a whole new level.

Re-evaluate yourself and your business. Gain clarity as to whether you should continue to build the business you're in or change occupations. If staying where you are is right, then commit to changing and growing. Be open to new ideas, even if the "new" ideas are ones you tried years ago without success. Remember, times have changed and you have changed. We are not the same people we were 10 or even 5 years ago. As our experience grows, so does our ability to succeed where we once faltered.

OK, now go get a cup of coffee...

Written by Michael Beck, "***The Insurance & Advisor Coach***". Michael, an executive coach, speaker, and trainer, helps insurance and financial professionals succeed faster and easier. He can be reached at 866-385-8751 or mbeck@theinsurancecoach.com. Visit www.TheInsuranceCoach.com to learn more.
Permission to reprint with full attribution. © 2007 Exceptional Leadership, Inc.