

You Can't Change Just One Thing

Written by Steve Marr
Monday, 07 August 2017 03:20

When you make a decision to implement something in your business, it is possible to fail to grasp how it might affect other aspects of the business. An example comes from ministry when I worked with someone who sent out fundraising appeals on a regular basis. The person responsible for writing and producing the layout for each piece would frequently change their mind after printing had been scheduled. I explained to the organization that these consistent changes impacted others. When the reserved time for printing had to be changed, that affected other projects in the printing queue. Also the staff scheduled to fold and mail the pieces had to be rescheduled. When one part of the schedule changed, it also involved revising other people's schedules as well. Sometimes when the printing was pushed back, the time conflicted with another job forcing management to determine which work came first. I counseled the organization to work through the copy writing process in a way that would maintain other parts of the time schedule. In my opinion most of these emergency revisions, which occurred regularly, could have been avoided.

King Solomon wrote, "If clouds are full of water, they pour rain on the earth. Whether a tree falls to the south or to the north, in the place where it falls, there it will lie." (Ecclesiastes 11:3, NIV) The point is that something as simple as rain alters other actions. For example, I don't need to water my garden if it rains, so I have more time for other things. If a lot of rain comes I may have to think about channeling the water someplace else. Rain can also make me change something like a picnic or outdoor plans.

In another instance I worked with an organization wanting to start a construction project before winter. Some of the site work needed to be completed before the ground froze deeply. The organization struggled with some final plans which would delay an application for a building permit. I explained to the group they if they did not apply for the permit quickly, the processing time would push the project deeper into winter and likely delay the start several months. While the organization dithered, the clock ran, the building permit was delayed and it pushed groundbreaking into spring. Rather than moving into the building in May as originally planned, the move-in date was pushed to late August. The senior staff had to reorganize their entire schedule to adjust the new move-in date.

When I need to adapt to a software change, I look at how it will affect other parts of my business. One time what appeared to be a small change affected my chart of accounts and processing of checks. I needed to adjust my process in advance rather than delay critical

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accounting procedures.

In business keep in mind that any time something changes, you must anticipate how those changes impact customers and others inside the organization. When we anticipate correctly our business will flow smoother.

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