

Small Differences; Big Results

Written by Steve Marr
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The movie, "Founder," covers part of the story of how Ray Kroc started the McDonald's Corporation. Ray sold milkshake machines and a restaurant in San Bernardino, California ordered six machines. With them they could mix six milkshakes at a time and significantly increased their business. Ray drove out to see why the restaurant was doing so well.

You probably know the story that Ray Kroc ultimately franchised McDonald's and became a billionaire. What was not covered in the movie is included in the book, Grinding it Out, covering the formation of McDonald's. It is a story about how Ray Kroc discovered how small changes produced big results.

Consider what happened when Ray had established his first restaurant and was ready to open. He was testing everything when he discovered a problem with the french fries. In spite of following the same procedure as the McDonald brothers had used in the California burger joint Kroc had franchised, the potatoes just didn't taste the same. Without those scrumptious potatoes, the whole restaurant concept could unravel.

Kroc contacted the Potato Association and consulted with a scientist. After research, the scientist understood one key difference in the process Kroc was using. In California, the potatoes were placed in wire baskets before cooking where the dry air created a natural curing process for the potatoes. When potatoes are harvested, they are mostly water. However, the natural curing process changed the water into starch, enhancing the flavor. The specialist from the Potato Association was able to help design a process that would duplicate the natural cure, allowing Ray Kroc to create the same wonderful potato taste.

Years later Ray Kroc credited this action as being the key linchpin that resulted in the success of his first restaurant. Without that small change, the restaurant would have been a failure.

Often a seemingly small change may make a tremendous impact on a business. When I work with business clients, I help them identify several critical success factors. They are key items that ensure the business' ability to move forward. In most instances we can count these factors

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on one hand. For McDonald's it was getting the potatoes correct. In your business it will be something else.

Scripture counsels: "Remove the impurities from silver, and the sterling will be ready for the silversmith." (Proverbs 25:4, NLT) A critical success factor for the silversmith meant removing the impurities from the material to obtain quality silver. The same is true in all business. Remove what hinders quality and success follows.

I encourage you to identify those factors in your business. Consistently monitor them. Ensure that those who work with you and for you execute them correctly day after day. Small differences, maybe; but watch for big results to help your business grow.

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