

The Simple Things You Take For Granted Are Costing You a Fortune

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By Beth Schneider

Process Prodigy

Back when I was a college student, I invited my Grandparents over for dinner to see my first apartment. I made a gourmet dinner of Spaghetti and Salad using every mismatched pot I owned. I set a beautiful table with my hand-me-down silverware, poofed up my hair (it was the early 90's after all) and waited for them to arrive.

After a lovely dinner, the show began. In what was truly just a few minutes, Grandma had cleared the table, packed the leftovers, washed all the dishes (including the pots and pans) and had desert on the table. At the time I just sat there with my mouth open, dumbfounded at how fast she'd handled everything.

Looking back I realized that all her years of making dinner and doing dishes had caused her to develop a system. A process for handling the dishes and the mess. And it didn't matter that she wasn't in her own kitchen, she just instinctively followed her process and got the job done in record time with little effort.

Just like it had never occurred to me to create a system for basic things like handling the dishes, many people skip over creating systems for basic things like handling phone numbers and making follow up calls.

But skipping over these crucial systems can be costing you thousands of dollars in lost time and money. Here's what I mean.

One of my clients is a marketing guru. He charges \$250 an hour. We found he was spending an hour a week looking for lost phone numbers. Doesn't seem like much, right? Do you know how much that comes to? That comes to \$12,000 per year. He was losing \$12,000 a year looking for phone numbers. So many people tell themselves they don't have time to worry about the "little things". Just by creating a system to manage his phone numbers, he can make \$12,000 more a year without hiring anybody.

The "little" or "simple" things are defined as those things that "just happen". You know those quick little things that only take a minute. But ever notice that those little things that should only take a few minutes take 10,000 times longer than you think they should? And then you find those little simple things have eaten up all of your time and energy.

So how do you create these systems? Well I'm glad you asked. Here are 3 steps to help you determine how you do all those "little things".

Step 1: Decide What You Need to Write Process About

Think about what you do on a daily, weekly or monthly basis. Create a list of all these things to create your own job description. Most people don't really know how they are spending their time. They spend tons of time on answering email, making phone calls, looking for files. These are all the "simple things" that are over looked. Make a list of all the things you do and be sure to include the "simple things".

Step 2: Set a Desired Outcome

Technically process is defined as a sequential set of events that leads to an outcome. Everything we do has an outcome. The idea is to decide ahead of time what that should be and then create the steps to get you there.

Think about this, if you are driving somewhere you know when you are "there". You wouldn't get in your car without knowing where you are going. For all of the items on your list - what or where is "there". When the process is complete, what are you holding in your

hands? Why are you making that phone call? What do you want to get out of it? Determine what the end is BEFORE you get started.

Step 3: Document Your Process

Put it on paper people. Create a flowchart of all the steps you need to take to achieve your desired outcome. Just start with a pack of sticky notes and start asking yourself questions. What do I do first? Write your answer on a sticky note and place it on a wall. What do I do next? Write that answer on the next sticky note, put it on the wall next to the first note and so on until you have a map of how you want to do things.

It's an easy process, but it's not always a simple process. Keep at it, the rewards are worth it.

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