

Finding the Time to Make More Deals

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DON'T WASTE YOUR TIME ON THE TRIVIAL
BY SCOTT BERGERON



You operate a profitable dealership, and everything should be running smoothly. But the business is running you instead – sucking your time like never before, thwarting growth and driving you nuts. It wasn't supposed to be this way, and it doesn't have to be.

What can you turn off to give you more time?

Basically, the key to finding time is working smart and developing smart systems that lighten your load. This gives you more time to address the paramount objective of growing your business.

Most "experts" will tell you there is no magic bullet to make dealerships successful. Some organizations have tailored systems, processes and inspections that make the big dogs (the focused) bigger. Inability or unwillingness to use these is what keeps the little dogs (the unfocused) chasing their tails.

Old-School Basics That Still Work

Basics of your success lie in traditional cornerstones – the "good old" glory days that were simpler and offered instant rewards, at least in comparison with the tech age.

You had your own methods that worked, and worked well. You had boatloads of repeat and referral business that made it all look easy. And you made it happen with minimal technology, and without social media and sophisticated search engines.

Those glory days of being back on the sales floor need to be replicated with your team, showing them the systems and techniques that succeeded. Your sales team and organization are reflections of your current systems and expectations.

Technology Alone Will Not Save You Time

Shouldn't today's cutting-edge technology drive more deals? No. Your customers have the same technology, so you now must manage more systems in the same amount of time – leading to a potential case of A.D.D.

Being able to use technology in a smart way means combining it with a common sense approach that allows you to manage all systems, including your Internet systems, without getting bogged down.

A Big-Time Lesson in Time Management

I lost one of the most important men in my life this year. My Uncle Jerry was extremely successful in his

life, both professionally and personally. Jerry was a landscape contractor – not a profession most consider glamorous. What he did, and how he managed himself and his time mattered, and led to his success.

During my high school summers in the 1970s, I worked for Jerry mowing ball fields. One day I told him his crew was "actually doing all the hard work, while he was just driving around in an air conditioned Thunderbird." His memorable response was: "If I could run my business by pushing a lawnmower, I'd do it in a heartbeat. But I can't. It isn't the best use of my time. That's why I hire you guys. Growing my business is what I do, and it pays a lot better!"

Jerry's point remains valid in any industry. We are paid as business owners to take care of and grow our businesses, in tandem with reliable support systems that address the tasks and details contributing to business growth.

Differences Between Big Dogs and Little Dogs

While building my company, Daily Gameplan, I've witnessed thousands of dealers and managers from new, pre-owned, powersports, watercraft and RV industries. I've encountered successful and mediocre owners and managers, and they consistently fall into one of two categories:

Category 1: The Big Dogs. The dog wags the tail. They major in the majors.

Category 2. Little Dogs. The tail wags the dog. They major in the minors.

Both types of dealers and managers generally have the same abilities, talents, backgrounds and selling skills. It's how they spend their time and stay focused on growth-oriented ideas that make one succeed over the other.

Almost always, it's the least successful that waste time doing minor and trivial things while letting their people and systems manage them. Successful managers and dealers assign the smaller projects and tasks to others, and focus on growing the business and customer care.

Do the Math – and See How Much Extra Time You Can Find
Take an old fashioned 3 x 5

index card, or if you're a techie use a note in your smartphone, and keep track of your hours for an entire week. Break down each task you've handled into one of three categories:

Category 1 – Is this something only I can do?

Category 2 – Is this something someone else can do?

Category 3 – Is this helping me grow my business?

If you find yourself performing too many tasks others should be doing for you, change. If you want to grow your business by 20 percent, find 20 percent more time to implement systems and ideas to make it happen. Let others take care of day-to-day maintenance.

Today's Biggest Distractions That Waste Your Time

Do you change your train of thought with every bell, chime, buzzer and ping? Don't deal with your voicemail or email every time any notification comes up. Silence them, and don't let them distract from your big-picture focus.

Save time by programming your email inbox to automatically file specified messages so you don't have to touch every email. Auto-forward certain emails to others. For example, any subject line with the word "service" can go directly to your service department.

Set aside certain times, such as 10 a.m. and 2 p.m., to open and handle your email, or assign someone to do it. Everything in between can wait in most cases. If you have someone else handling your email and there's an emergency, they'll tell you.

Conclusion

Delegate, and build systems that keep the trivial away from your desk. Stay on task, and don't let others sidetrack you. Stay focused on the big picture, and the little things will be taken care of, if you hand them off to others and consistently inspect their Key Performance Indicators. You are the leader of your organization for a reason. Be smart with your business and your time, and it will pay off in incredible opportunities in the future. 🚗

Former dealer executive Scott Bergeron is the founder and principal of Daily Gameplan (www.dailygameplan.com), a national sales team productivity solutions provider. Bergeron is a major advocate of common-sense approaches to dealership first and foremost challenges. Bergeron can be reached at 302.616.2160 or scott@dailygameplan.com.

