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Why saying “I’m so busy” is not a badge of honor – it’s a sign that you’re in trouble...

By

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We’ve all heard it a million times from everyone – “I’m sorry, I’ve been (pick one) flat out /swamped/ buried/can’t even breathe/ up to my eyeballs in problems because (pick another one) it’s fall, it’s winter, it’s spring, it’s summer / the person who handles that is out until next Monday / I’ve been in meetings all week / the internet was down and we’re just catching up / the company van just broke and it has to be fixed/ the girl who works the front desk is sick/ the paperwork is really slowing me down”....blah, blah, blah.

More and more the term “I’m so busy” seems to be used by people who consider it to be a legitimate reason why things (always the important things – the ones that will truly build your business) can’t be done. The brutally honest truth is that it isn’t a legitimate reason. Business is supposed to be busy – things happen – fires need to be put out etc . That’s business! What would happen if we replaced the words so busy with (pick one) so unfocused/so unprepared/so scattered/so afraid to make changes? I don’t think you’d hear the phrase quite as much (smile).

The reason why I’m so good at speaking about this topic is when I first started my company, I was the one who used to do all of the wrong things – always focusing on the little things, saying that if I wasn’t so busy I’d take the time to hire another sales rep/ build another profit center/do more speaking engagements/start the book I’ve been meaning to write/build my franchise model.....etc. None of it happened – there was always a new fire to put out. What was the problem you ask? The problem was me – plain and simple. How did I change?

I stepped out of the daily tornado - stopped sticking my head in the sand about my problems and I got real, real with myself and real with understanding what it took to truly build my business.

I kept telling myself that I was “so busy”. The more I used that as a crutch, the “busier” I became and the cycle continued. That, in turn gave me the permission to continue the same bad behavior over and over – the behavior that was getting me nowhere – fast. The moment that I thought differently, I began to act differently. We’ve all heard the saying: “You become what you think about.” – that’s only partly true – you become what you think about and do something about.

I’ll show you a way to fix it, but I don’t think you’re going to like it – I didn’t!

Step 1 was to realize that I had to distance myself from the business groups that I had belonged to and the people in them that thought small. I had to start thinking like an entrepreneur who had a vision of growing his company across the country. As I was making the transition, I quickly grew tired of the small talk: how “busy” they were and how much harder they had to work – just to survive. I didn’t want to survive – I wanted to truly prosper!

Your lesson: Be really careful who you surround yourself with – are they going where you want to? If not, then find new playmates – quickly!

Step 2 was to start reading everything I could get my hands on about leadership (John Maxwell has a bunch of great ones!). What I found was that all of the successful business owners that I read about were leaders and not followers. They had a habit of growing great people – people who would help them to do the “busy” work – so that they could focus on building their companies. Honestly, it was hard for me to let go of the busy work – after all, how could anyone do it as well as I could (smile)?

Your lesson: If you don’t make the decision in your business to find and grow great people to run the systems in your business – you simply won’t get there. One-man bands are always in trouble – the problem is they’re too busy to realize it!

Step 3 was that I have to constantly measure how I am spending my time. It’s very easy to get “caught up in it”. It’s still difficult for me to pass along or delegate tasks to people - I always want to help – however, I had to realize that I’m helping by growing the business not by sticking my nose in everything. If you don’t, before you know it, you’re back into the habit of going nowhere.

Your lesson: You can get going in the right direction for a while, but if you don’t constantly use self-discipline – you’ll fall back into the old habit pattern.

All of the clients (company owners and sales professionals) that I work with all have one thing in common – they realize that they have a challenge, they want to change and they’re willing to do something about it. In fact, they’ve got a new problem – they’re not sure what to do with all of their free time!

For more information and practical hints to help avoid “being too busy”, contact Craig by calling him at (978) 640-0803 or emailing him at cstimmel@spiainc.com. SPIA has a very rich website where more information is also available: www.spiainc.com – blog: <http://blog.spiainc.com>