

# [Avoid Being Too Busy to Serve](#)



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## **Keeping It Green** By Ron Hall

Steven Covey in his "[Seven Habits of Highly Successful People](#)" writes the following, which expresses what I want to share with you:

*Once a woodcutter strained to saw down a tree. A young man who was watching asked, "What are you doing?"*

*"Are you blind?" the woodcutter replied. "I'm cutting down this tree."*

*The young man was unabashed. "You look exhausted! Take a break. Sharpen your saw."*

*The woodcutter explained to the young man that he had been sawing for hours and did not have time to take a break.*

*The young man pushed back: "If you sharpen the saw, you would cut down the tree much faster."*

*The woodcutter said, "I don't have time to sharpen the saw. Don't you see I'm too busy?"*

Recently, I spent a day repairing the crown moulding that I installed 25 years ago in the living room of our century-old home. Some of the moulding came loose and began sagging soon after I had tacked it up.

After yet another reminder from my wife over the holidays, I lugged a stepladder from the basement of our home and reattached the moulding. For good measure (and thankful for my wife's long-suffering patience), I brightened it with a fresh coat of paint. My wife was delighted with both the

decades-delayed repairs and with the paint.

As I went about my business I thought back to when the two of us bought the moulding at a large home supply store. At the time it was one of many stores in the now-defunct, Midwest-based chain of Handy Andy stores.

What we experienced at that particular store resulted in the two of us coining a new phrase: The Handy Andy Syndrome. It describes people being so busy being busy that they're not providing service of value to customers, to their employers or, ultimately, to themselves. We coined the phrase after spending about a half hour prowling that big box store trying to find a single knowledgeable employee willing to help us pick out and buy the moulding.

We had no luck. Everyone was too busy. Employees were either stocking shelves, hurriedly scurrying from one area of the store to another, gathering shopping carts, operating forklifts or doing other routine chores. In the end, we selected and loaded the moulding into our car ourselves.



While we had always had good experiences at other stores in that chain, we never returned to that location.

How often have you as a potential customer contacted a business and encountered employees or perhaps even company owners so busily engaged in routine chores that you, checkbook in pocket and eager to make a purchase, are left wondering what's going on?

More to the point, can you recall incidences when you or your employees became so busy dealing with the minutiae of your day-to-day routine that the people most important to you – family, friends or customers – didn't get your best?

This strange business malady, being busy for busy's sake, goes beyond the syndrome I've just described.

Perhaps even more perversely, as Stephen Covey shared in his anecdote starting this column, it can also infect the manner in which we perform our services. And this as we're actively and confidently involved in serving customers.



Ron Hall  
Editor-in-Chief



## New Innovations and Leaders Features

Each month our new “Innovation & Technology” department will detail the development of a significant new green industry product. We’ll address why and how the product was developed-from initial concept to its manufacturer.

Briggs & Stratton Senior Engineer Steve Lavender [details the process](#) of bringing a new commercial engine to the professional mowing market.



We’re calling our second new department “Landscape Leader.” Our first interviewee is Chris Elmore, the new president of The Grounds Guys, the landscape franchise division of The Dwyer Group that burst upon the scene just a couple of short years ago and is now spreading across the United States.

Elmore shares some candid thoughts on The Grounds Guys and its future [here](#).