

Overcome Business Chaos... STAT!



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There's one thing all of us have in common—whether our businesses are large or small or focused on maintenance or design/build or are located in a busy city or a small town: Despite having one million and one things to do each day, we all have the same 24 hours in a day to get them done.

The end result is typically a day full of business chaos—running around, putting out fires, falling behind and not making any time for planning ahead or planning at all before just calling the day quits as a result of exhaustion. Rinse. Repeat.

Some common causes of chaos in a small business are easy to spot. If you're feeling overwhelmed, make it a New Year's resolution to identify which one (or more) of these you're suffering from and what steps to take in 2016 to turn business around for the better.

- 1. You're wearing all of the hats.**

When you start your business, there is typically no one else to depend on other than yourself. You manage everything to ensure it all gets done. But as you grow your business, this becomes harder and harder to do efficiently without burning out. You dig yourself a hole that becomes nearly impossible from which to escape.

- 2. How do you get a handle on this situation?**

Step one: Read "The E-Myth Revisited: Why Most Small Businesses Fail and What to Do About It" by Micheal Gerber. It documents this situation perfectly. Part of the challenge is identifying what you're best at and delegating the rest to people who are better at those tasks than yourself. For instance, maybe it's accounting or billing that you don't enjoy that takes up too much of your time. Save yourself time and money by hiring a part-time accountant to tackle these tasks and leave you time to focus on sales or customer service. It will be worth it for your business ... and your sanity.

- 3. You have trouble figuring out how to grow your business.**

Finding, serving and retaining customers is what generates cash flow and pays your bills. Customers must come first. Sit down and prioritize how you and your team members should spend their time when it comes to serving your paying customers right. This will increase referrals and positive reviews (as long as you ask for them), naturally growing your overall customer base. In the meantime, your sales team can also work on finding new customers.

4. You're growing all wrong.

With growth, comes more employees, more billing, more relationships to maintain, etc. This is where "The E-Myth Revisited" will come in handy again, sharing tips for setting up systems. By being able to teach your people how to repeat what you do effectively with systems, you can more easily continue to grow without falling into chaos.

5. You don't have focus.

Taking it one day at a time is OK, but it needs to be done with a bigger goal in mind. Take time to strategize and formalize your business plan. What are your goals? What is your vision? Are you a residential maintenance business that wants to grow its commercial customer base? Are you a commercial maintenance business that wants to take on bigger clients? Decide, focus and execute. This will push the unnecessary interruptions off of your priority list and keep you moving in a positive direction.



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