

mei-ster:
Suffix denoting
a professional
practitioner

ProfitMeister

MAXIMIZING YOUR MARKETING MONEY

VOL. 7, #1

Does Chaos Lurk in Your Firm?

Taming the turmoil requires clarifying priorities, assessing skills and hiring outside expertise

"You use examples that I understand and I can relate them to my business."

Julia Brown
Owner

New Mexico Ghost Tours

9:00AM Tuesday. A logistical nightmare is quietly unfolding.

Message one: From D., VP marketing - I'm on bed rest; it's kidney stones

Message two: From L., warehouse employee—I blew out my knee skiing and won't be in this week

Message three: From IT—one more day without service ; it's cable's fault

Message four: From the bank—No financing at this time; credit line over-drawn

Message five: From HR—Anna failed to show again this morning

Status notations: C.O.D. trailer from Montreal expected at 3pm with inventory

The new norm: change

The tumult of business demands unrelenting resilience, a strong focus on goals, and a willingness to change. As owner, leader and top dog your job means moving the company forward through natural disasters, sickness, unexpected weather, death, taxes and a host of other *opportunities*. The dirty little secret that no one talks about: this is the new norm. Today's workplace is change 24/7.

10:45AM Same Tuesday

*Your 10:30AM appointment calls, "I'm late."
You shift lunch with another banker from 11:30AM to noon, field two more vendor calls and glance at the new ad for next month's*

sale. The bookkeeper leaves checks on your desk for signature.

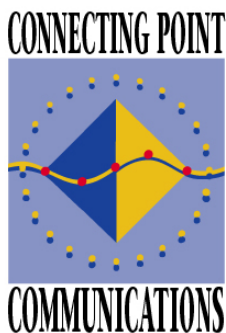
As change accelerates, workers face their own chaotic frameworks. In the quiet of their household prior to the workday's start, a babysitter didn't show, a caregiver resigned, a carpool didn't happen. During the workday, lunch hours flex to accommodate elder parents' doctor appointments; some leave work early to pick up children from school. Daycare calls and the sick child must be retrieved. Everywhere personal and work worlds intertwine.

Your challenge: focus and clarity

The day described here—or one similar—plays out hundreds of times across the country. A tsunami of information adds to business thrust and as a result overwhelm threatens even the most poised of leaders.

If you're running a business, you are more alone than ever. With whom do you discuss the ongoing problems? Who listens to your complaints about logistical nightmares? Where do you turn for support? How do you streamline systems when you don't know them? How do you stoke your own fires of motivation when those around you seem to be needy beyond belief?

Perhaps more importantly, how do you focus on those long term goals that seem to get lost in day-to-day chaos? The objective of preparing for a keynote speech at an in-



P.O. Box 3523
Albuquerque, NM
87190
505-280-9772

“Chaos is the score
upon which reality
is written.”

Henry Miller

dustry tradeshow seems moot in the face of a day like this. Or, is it?

Meet with a professional

If stress exists in the workplace, today's employee wants the boss to fix it... or else. In a chaotic world, work must represent some semblance of sanity. For times like this you must rely on and hire a specialist in the form of a coach, a consultant, a subject matter expert or a mentor who brings perspective and potential solutions to your equation.

As an advantage, in addition to information, you get a sounding board, a professional brainstorming partner, and a confidante, a professional with whom you can share the fears which cannot be shared with the workforce.

Assess the expert

This professional can help you acquire learning more quickly, offering good value for your money. Unlike the instant feedback from product summaries, it is more difficult to assess the value of a service. Ask the following ten questions to assess a service professional's ability to help you:

1. *Does this professional add to my knowledge?*
2. *Do his/her questions cause me to think?*
3. *Did he/she provide a tool, an evaluation method or an idea that helped me to solve the problem at hand?*
4. *Did our interaction make a difference for me at the time?*
5. *What market niche, if any, does this expert address? How do I know?*
6. *Was this professional's intention to serve and help me or to make a quick sale?*
7. *Do I respect this person and their opinion? Do others? Did I check references?*

8. *Did he/she show effective customer care?*
9. *Did the time we spent together yield something productive?*
10. *Am I better off because of this opportunity?*

While eliminating the chaos may be an unrealistic goal, understanding and moving through it makes sense. A professional service provider can offer a perspective that sheds light on problems and diminishes the burdens they represent.

5:45PM Almost-over Tuesday

VoiceMail. Honey, don't forget to pick up the cleaning and get milk on your way home. I'll get the kids. Love you.

Avoid these red flags

One final thought: when you hire a professional your need dictates the call. No matter how urgent the need, avoid these red flags:

1. *The person doesn't meet your eyes.*
2. *The expert oversells at every opportunity, assuring you that they (and only they) can do the job.*
3. *The company doesn't publish a list of clients or offer references.*
4. *The company doesn't have a website.*
5. *You don't have a good feeling about this person or company.*
6. *The professional can't cite recent training, professional associations or even books that they have read.*
7. *There is no free information/consultation session.*

Conclusion

Even if you decide not to hire an outside expert, you benefit from slowing enough to clarify your priorities and assess the skills that you possess. Once you've done this, go forward with confidence despite the chaos.



©Mary Ellen Merrigan

Connecting Point
Communications
P.O. Box 3523
Albuquerque, NM
87190-3523
505-280-9772

www.ProfitMeister.com