



PROFIT MATTERS

HOW DO YOUR NUMBERS LINE UP? | BY CHRIS "CHUBBY" FREDERICK

Graduating from Groundhog Day

One of my favorite movies is "Groundhog Day" starring Bill Murray. In the movie, Murray's character is stuck in a frustrating cycle. Every morning when he wakes up, it's the same day. During this day the town, events and people never change. It is not until he changes that he is able to break this cycle. Have you ever felt like Murray's character? You go to the shop day after day and the results stay the same.

Here are some common examples: You have an opening for a master technician, you do everything you know to do, but still have not found the right candidate. You try to increase your car count, but in spite of your best marketing efforts, nothing changes. You need to increase your maintenance sales, but it appears that your customers only want to fix what's broken.

I refer to this as the Groundhog Day syndrome, and it is important for us to grow out of this trap. Bill Murray's character was able to break this cycle when he changed, so what is it about us that we must be willing to change? Let's listen to Senior Coach Eric

Twiggs explain to a shop owner the three areas that must be addressed if we plan on graduating from Groundhog Day. I'll let him explain the rest in the remainder of this month's column.

Dealing with Bob

The first area to address is our blame strategy. It is our natural instinct to blame other forces and factors for our failures in life. I will introduce you to a principle that Dr. John Maxwell refers to as the Bob Principle, using examples like the following.

Over the years, I have met shop owners who have not achieved the goals and objectives that they set for



themselves. When I speak with them about where they are, they list many sources of blame. They blame factors such as the economy, their previous service manager, the competition, the customers and their previous business consultant.

Here is the Bob Principle: If at every stop, Bob is blaming other people and factors for his failures, Bob is the real problem! This reminds me of an encounter that I had with a shop owner several weeks ago. The owner was explaining to me that his customers feel that he is too expensive. He blamed

QUESTION OF THE MONTH

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Why is it so hard to change misguided belief systems?

Humans are wired to defend their beliefs based on their own experiences regardless of the potential disaster of the belief. Beliefs are simply illusions! Opening your eyes to the truth behind your beliefs is the only thing that will set you free from misguided beliefs that are holding your shop back from being profitable.

Do you have a question for Chubby? E-mail him at cfrederick@autotraining.net.

the economy and his “unique” customer base for his low parts margins.

When I asked him to explain why the other shop that I had worked with in the same neighborhood was using the same price structure without any problems, he had no answer. He then admitted that he was the problem because he was afraid that he would lose the sale if he used the correct pricing structure.

The starting point of becoming a success is taking ownership of your failures. Each failure carries with it a lesson. If we are blaming other factors for our failures, we miss the lesson and do not graduate.

The shop owner in the previous example was able to improve his business once he placed the blame where it belonged. Once he took ownership of

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his results, his business went to the next level and he was able to graduate from the Groundhog Day of low margins.

Building on Beliefs

The next area that needs your attention is our belief system. A belief system is a pattern of thinking based on previous experience and education. The primary cause of a limiting or a misguided belief system is taking an experience that was designed to be a stand-alone event and making it a general rule.

For example, I know of a shop owner that decided to hire a service manager to give himself time to work on the business instead of in the business. The owner's long-term goal was to sell the business to the manager and retire.

The service manager did well in the beginning, but later surprised the owner by leaving the organization to go to work for a competitor's shop.

The owner refused to hire a replacement, because he now believed that there were no loyal candidates in his area. A limiting or misguided belief system like this causes us to learn the wrong lesson.

Instead of learning from this experience and improving his recruitment and selection process, the owner learned the wrong lesson and is stuck in the Groundhog Day known as “lack of free time.”

At the end of the day, we are what we think about. This is true whether the thought is accurate or not!

If you want to learn more about this thought process, go to <http://www.ationlinetraining.com/2011-11> to listen to the ATI Teleseminar “Mr. Right vs. Mr. Right Now, How to Find and Hire the Right People.”

Changing Our Expectations

The third and final area that we must be willing to change is our basic expectations. Our minds are designed in such a way that we get what we expect. We all reside at the address of our thoughts. I have met with shop owners that tell me at the start of the week that they will have a bad week. The week has not begun but they are sure in their minds that it will not be successful.

Approaching your business expecting to fail is like someone needing water and going to the ocean with a teaspoon. Just like the man at the ocean, what you collect from your business will be limited by low expectations even though there is great opportunity. Studies have shown that a service writer that is optimistic outsells a pessimist by as much as 40 percent.

I am reminded of a story that our CEO Chris “Chubby” Frederick tells of a new service advisor that did not have an automotive background, but who was experienced in the sales process from his time spent with other companies. The technicians at this service advisor's shop thought they would play a trick on him by having him present a large estimate to a customer that had a history of declining repairs.

The technicians crowded together expecting to get a big laugh at the new guy's expense. They were shocked to hear the customer inform the advisor to proceed with the repairs! This is a case study on the power of positive expectation.

The reason the advisor was successful is that he expected to succeed and did not have a negative expectation based on the customer's history. The desire to change the business is not enough. If you don't expect things to change, you will be just like Bill Murray's character in “Groundhog Day.”

The common dynamic in this discussion is personal change. To emphasize the importance of personal change, I will share with you the following story of a monk who as an old man was reflecting back on his life:

“When I was young, I tried to change the world, but I could not do it. I tried to change the nation, but could not do it. I tried to change the town and could not do it. I tried to change my family and could not do it. Now, I realize that if I had only worked to change myself, the positive change in me would have changed my family. The change in my family would have changed the town. The change in the town would have changed the nation. The change in the nation would have changed the world.”

There is power in personal change. If you are willing to change your blame strategy, belief system and basic expectations, you can graduate from Groundhog Day. So if you need help on hiring Mr. Right vs. Mr. Right NOW go to <http://www.ationlinetraining.com/2011-11> and opt in to hear the teleconference. 

Chris “Chubby” Frederick is CEO and president of the Automotive Training Institute. He is thankful for assistance from George Zeeks, Brian Hunnicutt, Bryan Stasch and Matt Winslow in preparing this monthly column. Contact Chubby at cfredrick@autotraining.net.

