



Our mission is to provide information and strategies to business owners and managers for improvement in the effectiveness of its business management so that key objectives can be realized.

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It All Adds Up

I recently visited a restaurant that we love for its consistency and price point for good food. My husband and I have been dining there for more than 10 years. We visit regularly because we are a good fit for them and them for us.

Over the years, one of the only things that bugged us was that they served cold drinks, such as iced tea or water, in small glasses. These 16 ounce tumblers, when filled with ice, hold very little liquid. This caused several things to happen: 1. the wait staff had to make multiple trips to the table to refill our glasses, 2. we would stay longer than intended sometimes due to waiting for our glasses to be filled so we could wet our palette, 3. when we would get our iced tea just where we wanted it (with lemon and sweetener), the wait staff would fill 'er back up in an attempt to save steps.

It seems like such a simple thing, yet my husband and I, on occasion, would speculate as to how much those glasses were costing the company. It all adds up. The extended stay of guests, the wait staff running back and forth repeatedly – sometimes at the cost of not properly attending to other guests, longer waits for guests waiting on tables, even increased usage of sweeteners (due to the number of refills, we routinely used more than we would have otherwise). Given all of this, imagine our surprise when we found the restaurant moved to a larger-sized tumbler. This one was great. I think we had one refill each and used only one packet each of sweetener. The service was good, as usual, and we noticed that the wait staff seemed more attentive overall.

It is often the “little things” that add up over time. Here are areas within virtually every business that can hamper productivity, dampen profits and put a lag on morale.

- **Exchanges too many hands.** How many people does it really take to place an order? Look at your systems to see if it would be beneficial to reduce the number of people needed to perform a function.
- **Employees don't have all the information needed.** When employees can't remember the particulars, they often go seeking answers to their questions. This takes the employee's time, the person's time for answering the question and, sometimes, the customer's time. Most businesses can benefit from documenting information in a common place, such as a notebook with guidelines, procedures, etc. This also provides a map for new employees to quickly learn the lay of the land.
- **Chaos rules.** Clutter around the office or business is one thing, but another is having a workspace that is unorganized. Supplies that are out of place, forms that are mixed in with other papers – all mean extra steps and more effort to achieve one task. It takes only minutes each day to keep workplaces in tip-top shape for doing business.
- **Stopping and starting woes.** It takes more time to perform a job when a person is interrupted and must begin again. While some people welcome interruptions throughout the day, this can wreak havoc on personal productivity. Eliminate unnecessary interruptions by breaking down job functions so time can be maximized, removing interrupters such as a candy bowl at a person's desk (put the bowl in a common place for all to enjoy, but that doesn't invite impromptu conversations throughout the day) and save time away from your desk or station by combining trips (restroom break with a trip to the supply cabinet, for example). Don't forget to set a specific time each day to check e-mail, too!
- **Take a break.** Taking a true break from the workplace will deliver you back to the office or company in top mental performance. Working through lunch at your desk, while it may seem productive, actually lessens your productivity throughout the afternoon. Take a break – even if it is only to walk outside for 10 minutes – to improve concentration and achieve peak performance.

It all adds up. Improved productivity throughout the days, weeks and months will yield a performance-driven year. For more ideas on how to achieve your company's best, give us a call today.