



MONDAY MOTIVATOR

CREATED BY PERFORMANCE STRATEGIES
MANAGEMENT CONSULTING GROUP

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ISSUE 57

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How Did This Happen?

Last week I was walking down the hall of an office building thinking about a networking meeting I had scheduled for Monday morning at 8am. The meeting is called a “troika” and is a meeting of three people who all have a mutual interest in supporting each other in their business interests. I was thinking to myself that there’s no way to know what the outcome of this meeting will be. And that is the point of this edition of The Monday Motivator.



So many times we business owners, managers, sales people, customer service people or admin types all get used to our jobs. We tend to go through the motions and show up on time to do what we did yesterday and will likely do again tomorrow. A few, however, will rise to levels of leadership and take on increasing responsibilities that impact a lot of lives. Employees, vendors, customers and many others unknown to us are all affected by decisions that leaders make day to day.

Every so often I’m asked a question by one of our clients that relates to disappointing or bad news.

HOW DID THIS HAPPEN?

Somewhere in my past I heard a statement that had a big impact on me and still does to this day. “If you’re out of the room, you’re out of the deal.” I never forgot that. For some reason it resonated with me in a way other deep, philosophical thoughts hit you between the eyes when the timing is right. There’s another saying from the Zen folks that goes something like this: “When the student is ready, the teacher appears.” So what does all this mean? It means this... we are where we are, how we are and how we are not due to all the choices we’ve made up to this point. That’s about as simple as it can be said but it’s a lot more complex for some people who

have a hard time with concentrated, on purpose, focused actions that all point to a desired end result.

Movies have been made about such experiences. I'm reminded of a Tom Hanks film about his survival of a Fed Ex aircraft crash where he ends up on a remote uninhabited island in the South Pacific by himself. The movie was made in 2000 and the title was Castaway. In the story his name is Chuck Noland. He is a time-obsessed systems engineer, who travels worldwide resolving productivity problems at



Fed Ex depots. In the movie a few items wash up on shore from the debris of the plane. He cuts his hand trying to make a fire and in anger and pain, he throws several objects, including a [Wilson](#) volleyball from one of the packages. A short time later he draws a face in the bloody hand print on the ball, names it Wilson, and begins talking to it. It becomes his only sense of socialization. He eventually develops an emotional relationship with this ball. Four years alone on an uninhabited island will do that to you.

Throughout the movie we see his plight and wish for his good fortune but realize that he has only what he finds and thus must make good decisions just to survive. Chuck uses some of the washed up debris to create a sail in the construction of a raft. After spending some time building and stocking the raft and deciding when the weather conditions will be optimal (using a calendar he has created in his cave to monitor the time of year), he launches, using the sail to overcome the powerful surf. Each decision was life or death. He was forced to give up one action to pursue another. This happens over and over. It was either this choice or that choice. He could not have both.

After some time on the ocean, a storm nearly tears his raft apart. The following day, as Chuck sleeps, Wilson (the volley ball) becomes untethered and floats away from the raft. Chuck is wakened by the spray of the water, sees Wilson, and swims after him, but Wilson has gone too far to safely retrieve. Chuck returns to the raft and collapses in tears. Later, a passing cargo ship finds him, drifting. He is saved and it takes some time for him to get used to being around people

again. I won't spoil the ending in the event you have not seen the film. If you are a business owner I highly recommend you see it.

By the end of the movie we are moved, a little educated about survival skills and actually experiencing feelings for his lost companion – a bloody, deflated, dirty volley ball. At that moment if anyone were to ask you how all this happened you'd have such a long story to tell that you'd say something like "It's complicated. You need to see the movie."

Our lives are like that movie. We face challenges and need to make decisions. Certainly we don't have the terrible realities of Tom Hanks in his movie. If we did many of us might not survive the ordeal. Our decision making process might not be up to the task. But this movie points out a very valid fact of life. We become our decisions. Each time we make a choice to do one thing and not another we are actually setting in motion a whole new set of realities as a result of our decision. It's like facing a fork in the road every time an important decision is made.



At the end of every day how anything happens is largely due to the decisions we made along the way. Yes there are other realities that influence us that we did not have that much control over. The last great recession comes to mind. Many that we all know suffered

little to great losses. Homes were lost, jobs were lost, and savings vanished. The few who were able to weather the storm did so because they made earlier decisions to invest, save or leverage their money to enable them to survive that or any other unforeseen economic storm.

So when someone asks HOW DID THIS HAPPEN? The answer is usually tied to the sum of personal or group decisions that were made over a long period of time. Many times we see company leaders who put off making important decisions while substantial opportunities are lost.

At our office we have a large training room. On the walls we have motivating, supportive quotes that we have all heard before but gain new insight by seeing again. One such comment reads something like this: "Never do something without knowing what will happen next." I think of bomb diffusion experts when I see that quote. That sounds like really good advice. But what if you are in unfamiliar territory? How do you anticipate the impact of a constantly changing business reality in your own industry? It's not easy. In fact there are times when business owners or leadership executives simply take a gamble and hope it all works out. It's not that uncommon.

Usually such a gamble is really a calculated risk based on experience coupled with a fairly accurate anticipation of the outcome. There are countless examples of this in the past hundred years of business in America.



In summary, the point is that the way anything happens is based on everything that happened prior to that question. Much of that reality is based in decision making. If your business is not quite where you want it to be, you might consider turning to experienced people who have a history of dealing with difficult choices and have learned how to come out on top in the process. Such experience is earned over a long time and offer real value to any business seeking to make good decisions where the outcomes seem uncertain. That's what Performance Strategies is all about.

Now about that breakfast meeting we started this edition with ... We will meet and exchange details about how we can support each other. One thing I'm sure of is this... I have no way of knowing what might result from this "troika." I only know that if I'm out of the room I'm out of the deal. What deal, you might ask? I don't know. I won't know until I am there and the result of our conversations leads to something that might never have happened had I not showed up. It is the decision to show up that will lead to something but I do not know what yet. So now I'll share a saying that I created about twenty years ago. "If you want things to change get up, dress up and show up."

Until next week, if you know of any business that would benefit with a little coaching in the areas of organization, time and task management, social media, sales, marketing, customer service, operations, HR, leadership or team-building, have them give us a call at 562-577-7000 or send us an email. We will keep you in the loop on how it's going.

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Our consulting and coaching focus supports management, sales, customer service and operations. Included are sales and management assessment surveys as well as leadership, teambuilding, sales operations efficiency and online tracking projects. Our other team members bring additional disciplines as well. We will showcase them in future editions of this business journal. We are all committed to driving the results you want.