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**YOUR BUSINESS IS YOUR “CHILD” ----- BECOME A GREAT PARENT**

Many shop owners are failing to instill the basic life skills their business requires for it to succeed, and “be happy”.

Compare your business to raising a child. As you know, a good parent must teach the child basic life skills, disciplines, and proper values in the early years, or the child becomes one of those wondering individuals that usually end up in trouble down the road.

Your business is no different. Management must instill business disciplines early in its business lifecycle to ensure that later on in its life, it has developed a natural maturity with a great “personality”. Trying to develop business disciplines later in life, that should have been learned in the early years is a much harder job, and is very stressful indeed. Ever tried to teach a teenager new life disciplines that you know you should have spent more time on in the early years? Now you know what I mean.

Business disciplines, and policies, that must be instilled, and developed, early in a business career include proper cash management (accounts receivable control), gross profit percentage and dollar management, productivity measurement and review processes, to name a few. Trying to change to, and instill these disciplines into the business after a number of years have gone by, because they weren't paid attention to in the early years, is tremendously challenging, and a very stressful thing to do.

One discipline that many shop owners are failing to instill, or are neglecting, yet they have acknowledged should be a natural discipline that every successful shop requires, is the attitude, and **staff empowerment**, to make sure they “**never let the customer/client down**”. This is the “detail” of your customer/client relationship. Things such as quality parts and workmanship, client education about preventative maintenance, counseling on vehicle work history compared to manufacturer recommendations, and sincere follow-up with the client to ensure everything is fine, coupled with customized client service reminders, is being neglected by too many shops. These shops seem to be always sidetracked by other issues. Consider that when the customer/client is “let down” ----- that is, leaving distraught and not fully satisfied, ---- then the future “happiness” of the business is very questionable. Your “sidetracked issues” of today will seem very small indeed “tomorrow”, as you scramble to save your client base. Management, .....the parent,..... didn't take the time to do what they should have done in the beginning, and now your business,..... your child, .....is in trouble, and the guilt regrets haunt you.

It is time to **stop and take a full review of your business disciplines**. Don't “sidetrack” this issue. If you focus and instill self-discipline **to get it done**, it won't be too late. It is when you procrastinate on things you don't really want to do, but know must be done, that the road to trouble gets closer ever so fast. Become the great “parent” to your business that you are capable of being and teach your business well.

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