

"The 'overnight' part of 'overnight success' is sudden recognition of years of hard work."

» Kent Clothier



A Business Is Not a Building

My old crash-prone office computer and I have been together through thick and thin and hundreds of columns.

It will soon be retired to a corner of my office, and my wife will give me grief for adding to my collection of outdated electronics.

Needing a new computer, I did what I've done before. I drove to the electronics store ten minutes from my home.

There are knowledgeable folks there to explain things to folks looking for advice.

This store has massive inventories of computers, kitchen appliances, televisions, office furniture, etc.

It has dozens of aisles with every electronic piece, part, and thing-a-ma-bob you could want. It even has a full-blown café inside of it.

Wait...my bad. Did I say has? I meant had.

When I walked in from the quieter than usual parking lot, I was struck by how empty the front of the store appeared.



Weeding Out Complaints

A recent impromptu project had me reflecting on a theme I've spoken on for years: Appreciation.

We're still in the process of helping my parents settle into a new home.

Okay, it's not actually a new home. It's an old home, needing tons of repairs.

The main selling point was that it is closer to family and their doctors.

Another great feature was the lawn. It has large oak trees and azalea bushes.

When the home was purchased, things were in bloom, and it reminded me of live coverage from Augusta. It was beautiful.

The yard was so nice, it took my mind off the pending home repairs.

Surveying those same bushes during my recent visit, they more resembled a horticulture experiment gone awry.

They were choked with all sorts of saplings, vines, and tall weeds.

As I walked further, I was stunned to see bare shelves, empty departments, and a closed café.

They didn't bother putting up "Going Out of Business" signs. Word of mouth took care of it.

This massive store thrived for over a decade offering an extensive selection of all things electronic in a bustling metro area.

And then...it didn't.

Today, people are buying more tech products than ever. Demand for electronics remains sky high.

Customers' preferred methods for shopping for those products, however, have largely shifted online.

The physical size of that store and the vast inventory on their shelves were once competitive advantages.

And then...they weren't.

It had me reflecting on the disruption we see in most industries. Standing in the empty shell of a once-thriving business made it resonate all the more.

Banking products remain as important to customers as ever.

How they prefer to shop for and access our products, however, is also evolving.

Customers once "shopped" in branches. That is no longer the case.

Unlike most retailers, however, our future success lies in the people whom customers trust they will find in our branches for face-to-face assistance, guidance and advice.

Our people and the knowledge, empathy, and skills they bring to the customers they serve are the only things that will keep our doors figuratively (and literally) open.

Large azalea bushes apparently provide perfect cover and protection for every kind of thorny vine imaginable.

Poison ivy and poison oak seem to thrive within those bushes as well.

With grand intentions and less-than-grand preparation, I threw on a pair of gloves and decided I was going to reclaim those giant shrubs.

About two hours later, I was halfway done.

My arms looked like I had lost a fight with a bobcat...and not a particularly close fight, at that.

As I began complaining and mumbling a few things my mom wouldn't have approved of, my old mantra popped into my head: Most of the biggest "problems" you have today are associated with things you once only daydreamed about having.

You want a nice yard? Yardwork is in your future!

Dreaming of owning a home? Awesome...and there are a few chores and bills associated with home ownership.

You want to start a family? It's the best! And your priorities are about to be reprioritized!

You really wanted to be in management, right? You daydreamed of when your opportunity would come.

You worked hard and busted your tail to get here. Well, congratulations! You know what comes with being a manager?

Yup...managing people, issues, and problems! Yaaaay, you!

It's a better than likely bet that the things taking up most of your time, patience, mental and emotional energy right now are linked with things you worked really hard to get.

Striving to keep that in perspective just

In an evolving industry, good people matter more than ever.

might help us appreciate having the privilege to deal with the "problems" we've earned.

Remind yours of that fact.

"Stop selling, start helping."

» **Zig Ziglar**



Dave Martin, author of The In-Store Advantage, has become one of the most prolific writers in the banking industry. His keynote presentations, seminars, and podcasts have an authenticity and humor that brings teams of all sizes and seniority levels together.

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