

Management Article – Four Things You Can Do Right Now to Make Business Better – February 2010

As owners of small businesses, most of us are thinking about low cost ways to get and keep profitable customers. Here are a few of the things that I have been doing to get more business or to improve customer experience for ventures that I manage:

- **Create a written business plan with quantifiable goals and realistic timetables:** I operate all of my businesses with a clear vision of where I will be in one year, three years, and five years. I know that many of you do good annual planning and work from a written business plan that you re-visit and adjust regularly. However, in my many years of small business consulting, I have found that more than a few owners of small businesses don't take the time to write out a business plan. If you haven't got one, do it today!
- **Get active or more active in your industry's association:** One of the primary reasons that I was so successful in the auto recycling business was the work I did as a founder and member of our industry association. Being in the company of owners within the same industry forces you to think strategically. Membership exposes you to different perspectives and yields valuable connections.
- **Search out best practices and implement them:** I prospered in the recycling industry because I was part of a small group of salvage yard owners that met twice a year to compare metrics and share best practices. Sharing metrics revealed which of us were doing better at dismantling cars, turning over parts, making deliveries, etc. Participants served non-competitive markets and shared best practices freely. What I learned every six months as a participant in that group showed up every month in my bottom line. I have teamed with experts from a variety of industries to start such industry specific groups and will be adding more in the coming months. If you would like to learn more about peer benchmarking, visit <http://www.MrMissionPossible.com>. The next full day peer benchmarking session for recyclers that I will lead is scheduled for November 19th, 2009. The cost to attend is only \$750.
- **Create or improve your referral program and publicize it among your best customers:** The vast majority of referrals come from established clients. Are you getting a steady stream of new business from these customers? It's fine to invest in attracting new customers, but don't forget to cultivate the ones who helped you get where you are. Examine your existing referral program, and talk with your customers about ways to make it better.

Visit www.greenweenies.com to learn all the backroom business terms in Ron's book *Green Weenies and Due Diligence*. There are 1,200+ terms in over 300 pages, with hilarious illustrations by world famous artist Gahan Wilson. Register for your free weekly "green weenie" by e-mail. If you want to know what a three fingered booger is, or what's in a train wreck envelope, **greenweenies.com** the only place to go!

Remember, only you can make BUSINESS GREAT!

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AutoSalvageconsultant.com was formed in 2001 to help recyclers improve their businesses. The company has become THE definitive source for recyclers' management and training needs. The founder, Ron Sturgeon, is past owner of AAA Small Car World and was part of the partnership that purchased GreenLeaf from Ford Motor Company, executed a turnaround, and sold the company one of the largest public companies in the auto recycling business. You can review his resume, with skills and experience, at www.AutoSalvageConsultant.com. In March 2009, his third book, *How to Salvage More Millions from Your Small Business* was published. You can order it at www.SalvagingMillions.com. His first book, *How to Salvage Millions from Your Small Business* was reprinted in the U.S. and published in China, Korea and the Czech Republic. You can learn more about how to help your business at autosalvageconsultant.com. You can reach Ron Sturgeon by calling 817.834.3625, by e-mailing rons@MrMissionPossible.com, or by mailing to 5940 Eden, Haltom City, TX 76117.