

Member's Quarterly

Spring 2020 Edition

President's Message

Sweat the Small Stuff

Pay attention to the details

Everyone tells us to not sweat the small stuff. I beg to differ. Paying attention to detail is the real recipe for success. That means spending the time to get organized and to stay organized at work. You can do that anyway you want — lists, schedules, alarms that go off on your phone. You must pay attention to the details if you want to not just survive at work but thrive and succeed.

That doesn't mean everything has to be perfect. That's not practicable nor likely possible. However, you can limit the damage of the inevitable mistakes by developing your own attention guidelines. My first suggestion is a difficult one for all of us Type A personalities, but stop when you're really tired or frustrated. Come back later when you're refreshed and energized and you may just find the solution to the problem you previously encountered.

Other things that work for me include taking short breaks. Sometimes I'll refuel with a beverage or a snack. When I can, I'll take a walk outside to clear my head. I also like to start early before the world comes crashing in and I do big projects in small chunks. All of these strategies help me stay energized and focused so I can pay full attention to whatever I've decided to work on that day.

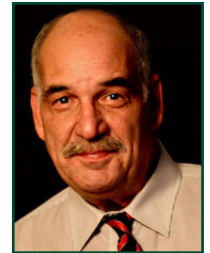
This doesn't mean you have to micromanage or focus so much time on the details that you don't get any work done. It's more about making the right decision about the things that need the most attention. Tom Peters, the management and business guru who wrote the great book *In Search of Excellence* talks about paying attention to the 'little things' that have the biggest impact.

What are those 'little things' for you and your organization? Peters was talking about taking a moment to look around every day and to see which things you were doing that you could be doing better. You must pay attention to detail for that to happen in order to get to the excellence levels that Tom Peters is suggesting we can get to at work.

One of the ways we've gotten off track lately is that we have equated order and good routines at work with words like rigidity and bureaucratic. Nobody wants to go back there. But the small things, the regular day to day things that get done daily, are really what adds up to success in business. If it works, keep doing it. Not only that but find ways to make it work better.

By the way, I just took another look at that bestseller *Don't Sweat the Small Stuff* by Richard Carlson. The sub-heading reads "and it's all small stuff".

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