

## Just Do It

- Al E. Bavry, Advisor, Kimal Lumber



Years ago, I remember hearing a term that I must admit, I'd succumbed to from time to time...called the "Someday Syndrome." It's a "Someday I'll..." mindset that I suspect we all know and have had bouts of it from time to time... "Someday I'll play the piano." "Someday I'll start a (fill in the blank) business"... "Someday I'll write a book." "Someday I'll buy an RV and travel"...And it goes on...Of course there are many things you'd like to do, so you say to yourself, "Someday I'll---" But then as weeks, months, years, and possibly decades go by...That "I will do it" thing never happens. Some people call this their ongoing "Bucket List."

So, here's a motto of mine that can override the "Someday Syndrome," which is undeniably capable of killing your highest dreams and aspirations. It's very simple and goes like this: "JUST DO IT!" It's amazing what gets accomplished when you let JUST DO IT win out over all your procrastinations and debating. For the sixty years I've owned, managed, and been a very active part of this great industry...I've "come up short" many times. (Surprise! I'm far from perfect.) And as I remember the times I had to face my shortcomings, the main lesson that came out of all those situations was a "Just do it" theme.

Here's some examples that I'm sure will sound familiar in your own dealings at work. Remember when you had a long-term customer who may also be a friend, and now he/she is paying late? Or maybe not at all? And you hate facing him/her to ask what going on or ask for your money...So you park that tough conversation into the future? Or, the long-term employee that is slowly going off the rails (something is going on), who has an attitude change, whose work is suffering, who gets complaints from co-workers? But you hold off taking any action, thinking, "This employee is just going through a bad time after a divorce, and will come out of it." Or... (Fill in the blanks.) Whatever you perceive, you put off any "confrontation," and you park that tough meeting into the future. Often W-A-Y into the future. (Someday I'll...maybe?) Or... Say the economy has changed, maybe dramatically, and you must re-align the business model. (This can occur on a trajectory upward as well as the "down" types) Anyway, you kinda know what to do, but you park those tough decisions sometimes way into the future?

I could go on, but you get the picture. Those tough things that you know deep down you need to focus on and take action, but you get good at putting off and parking into the future. Or put another way, you're just kicking the can down the road. Well, something usually happens in this extended time span...As you "wait" for a better or different outcome, what usually happens is this: The situation gets worse. Not better. That builder/friend that "appeared" to be struggling, now four months later is filing bankruptcy. (Why didn't I have that tough conversation with him three months ago?...Ain't hindsight great!) Or that employee with a bad attitude change, instead of improving, now four weeks later makes several costly mistakes that further infuriates your other workers who can't understand why the issue wasn't addressed until now.

So, here's where I'm going with all this...Fairly early in my career, it dawned on me that by delaying often very unpleasant meetings/confrontations, those "things" just got worse. So, I developed a technique to give me more confidence to JUST DO IT. As soon I start knowing something is going on that doesn't smell right, I start a rehearsal of what I'd say and do in this meeting with the person involved. I guess you could say I would be play-acting with myself...and in this rehearsal state, I'd practice drill what I'd say and how I'd say it, until I'd get it down good. This includes trying to imagine what that person would say in response...And I've learned (which is very hard) to take as much of the emotion out of it as

you can...and don't beat up the other person. The person you're talking to must always feel respect and trust from you. So keep calm...Very very calm...Deal with facts...Not hearsay. More often than not, when I'd get into these very tough, very telling conversations, it didn't take long for that other person to now open up. Often, once that they have this opening, you really need to shut up and listen while they really lay bare what's on their minds. They may even start with, "Boy... I've been dealing with this problem...Hoping it would take care of itself...But not knowing how to talk to you about it." And they often now admit the whole story, with little prompting, complete with lots of detail!

Wasn't that worth it? You had respectfully given them that opening. O.K. Now that "thing" is faced head-on, we go to Phase Two...Your errant builder, employee, friend, whomever, shed the light of day on the "problem"...No, you don't go away feeling that you just learned what the problem is...The business side of you has to rule. So, for that builder who can't pay, you say, "I appreciate what you just told me, and for being very honest with me. But the underlying problem is, you can't pay your bill. Now, you and I need to put our heads together and have a plan on getting paid. And if possible, how we can continue to sell you materials. Let's sit here and figure this thing out...together. So, when we leave this meeting, we both have a clear understanding of the path we're on. And so we both understand it, I'll recap the meeting, write it up, and get you a copy by tomorrow." And maybe a good idea is to have a follow-up meeting in a few days, so everything moving forward is crystal clear.

When you have that "situation"...Customer, employee, friend...whom or whatever...And you know that delaying a response is probably going to make it worse, not better, then the only logical route is "JUST DO IT." If proceeded with good thought and good planning, of course, most of the times as I learned the "Art" of wading into these things early on...The eventual outcome was almost always better than waiting for it to "just play out." (Those hard-landing, six-figure bankruptcies don't pay many bills!)

I'll wrap it up with this...short and straight to the point: "JUST DO IT."

Good Selling...Good Collections...Good communications...Good...All!