

## **Are you doing the \$100 tasks?**

One of the downsides of being a small business operator is the many hats that have to be worn. You're often the human resources department, the company President, the marketing department, the sales force, the administration department and production all rolled into one. The bigger the business the easier it is to allocate these tasks but, for a store with limited or no staff, this can be difficult – but not impossible.

One of the most common pitfalls for any small business owner is getting trapped in the day to day activities and not sparing time for taking action on the tasks that will move the business forward. This can be understandable as customers often want things done yesterday and fires are always in need of being put out – and despite the best laid plans there are always unexpected problems that will arise. But frequently this isn't the only reason why too many store owners get trapped into fitting watch batteries and sweeping the pavement themselves. It often has more to do with the level of comfort at which we operate.

Self help guru Anthony Robbins has for many years spoken about the six basic human needs that we have to feel in order to be comfortable within ourselves. Three of these needs, I believe, contribute to why many jewelers feel better trapping themselves in the day to day tasks they should be allocating to others instead of concentrating on the bigger tasks – the one's that will generate \$100 or more an hour. Let's face it, we all know it is a better use of our time planning next months promotional campaign than fitting watch batteries; so why do we still do it?

The first need we satisfy by doing this is the need for certainty or comfort. We know how to fit batteries, we've done it for a long while and we know there is a need to get it done. We can feel less comfortable preparing the marketing plan if marketing is not our strong suit and we don't know where to start – hence it keeps getting put in the too hard pile.

**Often stepping outside the comfort zone is the fear that stops many jewelers putting the time and effort into the tasks they need to be doing**

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The second need we satisfy by fitting the batteries is our need to contribute. Fitting the batteries is a measurable task that we know is useful, it is a part of the process that brings cash daily into the business – it is a key cog in the wheel that starts when the customer comes in and finishes when they return to pick the watch up. We are contributing to the businesses daily activities and others can see the results of our efforts. Locking yourself at home for a half day marketing plan can sometimes feel a little intangible

The third need is the need for significance. Create a business where everything has to be done or decided by you can be a recipe for a business that needs life support when you're not there – but for the owner it provides a feeling of importance or significance. Everybody wants their time and their decision. The feeling of power can be addictive and hard to let go of. Making yourself semi redundant can lead to a feeling of uncertainty (point one again) and a worry that you don't serve any purpose. Believing that “nobody can do it as good as you” can be a source of satisfaction and even self esteem.

The success of your business can be linked to your willingness to suppress the ego – that desire to become the centre of all things that happen in your store

**So how do you break out of these habits?**

1. **Recognize that continuing to do what you've always done will only get you the results that you've got.** If you've read this far then you already know there is more you want from your business. If you don't take time to do the tasks that make a real difference then your forward progress will be halted
2. **Expect more from yourself.** This is not longer hours (you're probably doing too many already) but demand more in terms of the quality of what you do when you are there. If your store was owned by someone else would they be happy with the level of results and performance you are providing as the manager? Most store owners wouldn't survive six months working for someone else the way they work for themselves –there is no level of accountability and no consequences for their actions. Imagine you are being paid \$100 per hour by someone to do what you are doing. Would you still be sitting at the bench fitting batteries? Maybe you don't fit batteries but this is only an example of the type of tasks and level that the \$20 per hour person thinks at. You may argue you don't have the staff to undertake these tasks but you can always look at contracting some of these services out. If you are too busy to plan your business you are too busy to make more profit. Is that the decision you want to make?
3. **Plan your day in advance the night before.** Prepare a list of things you need to achieve the next day and include at least one hour per day of \$100 tasks that will grow your business. When you first arrive at work immediately lock yourself away to spend time on this task –that way if the day

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goes wrong you will not have missed the opportunity to complete it. Do not check emails, do not take phone calls.



David Brown is President of the Edge Retail Academy, an organization devoted to the ongoing measurement and growth of jewelry store performance and profitability. For further information about the Academy's management mentoring and industry benchmarking reports contact Carol Druan at [carol@edgeretailacademy.com](mailto:carol@edgeretailacademy.com) or Phone toll free (877) 5698657

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