



WORKINGSMARTER

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How's your follow through?

In September 2008, *Landscape Management* ran the first Working Smarter column. Since then, we've discussed topics such as better understanding processes, adding value for customers, improving internal communication, getting (and staying) organized and bringing more celebration into your organization.

You've also been given a Monthly Challenge to move your company toward Working Smarter. I wonder how many of you accept our Working Smarter Monthly Challenge.

How many of you not only read it, but also follow through and improve something about yourself, your team and/or company?

There have been many a speaker, philosopher, athletic coach and parent who, having the opportunity to mentor an individual or an entire group, make the following prophetic proclamation: "There are three types of people: Those who watch things happen, those who make things happen, and those who ask, 'What just happened?'"

After a year of Working Smarter columns and Monthly Challenges, let's pause and ask ourselves, "Which one of the three types of people best describes me?" and "Which one best describes my team?"

The 'Watch Things Happen' group

For you, the past year likely included reading this column (and Kevin Kehoe's, Bruce Wilson's and other tips in this key information resource), and thinking, "I need to start doing that."

Unfortunately, that thought usually leaves you the instant you set the magazine down, because you have not yet developed a discipline to follow

through and turn ideas into action. Because of this, you have hundreds of ideas bouncing around in your head that now confuse and frustrate you more than help and guide you.

You will often mutter phrases like, "We tried that before," "We aren't doing too bad now, so let's just keep on doing this" or the all-too-popular "We are too busy and just don't have time." As a result, you continue to struggle and never reach your full potential. One day, you'll say, "I should have ..."

The 'Make Things Happen' group

When is the time to start getting better? Ask this group, and it will be answered with an enthusiastic, "Now!" Those people who make things happen simply have the courage to try something. Even if it does not work, they've had learning experiences that helped them or their companies expand their awareness of the need to Work Smarter.

This group realizes setting aside time to implement a new idea, train the team and communicate goals and accomplishments delivers a hundredfold payback in customer satisfaction, personal growth and improved business performance.

The 'What Just Happened?' group

Consider this: Why will some companies have their best year ever this year and some just get by — if they're lucky?

Ask that question of this group, and they will give you their scientifically verified answer of "luck." They never realize they are part of this group until it's too late. A year from now, they will ask, "What just happened to our business, our best customers and our top employees?" They will act surprised, but deep down they know the truth.

So what's it gonna be — Door 1, 2 or 3?

MONTHLY CHALLENGE

Send an e-mail to jim@jphorizons.com and briefly explain how your company has been able to Work Smarter. Jim will follow up with those stories that might help other readers learn from your ideas.



More than 250 Green Industry companies have participated in JP Horizons' Working Smarter Training Challenge (WSTC), typically saving tens of thousands of dollars annually. To learn whether your organization qualifies to participate in the WSTC, visit www.jp horizons.com/LM.htm today.