



'Multitasking' can be just another word for 'distraction'

Watching my 16 year-old, high school junior daughter do homework is an astonishing thing. Between listening to music, checking her Facebook page, having a snack, playing with the dog, answering questions from her mother and father, texting friends and a few other things I'm probably not even aware of, it's a wonder Sammie gets anything done.

I guess the first thing I need to tell you is Sammie's an excellent student. Her grades are good, she's a member of student council, a member of the varsity volleyball team, a member of the varsity softball team (and she plays in other softball leagues throughout the year), and there are a few other school activities in which she participates, which I'm now forgetting. In fact, her mother and I had to deny Sammie's recent request to add yet another activity to her list.

Sammie does a little multitasking between softball games.



Somehow, Sammie organizes her life so she's able to complete her homework and all of these activities — typically with a high degree of success. I say she's distracted. She calls it multitasking.

It's hard for me to criticize Sammie. Her grades are good. But I wonder, "Could they be a little better?" No matter how well Sammie deals with several tasks at once, if her attention is divided, my intuition (and a few studies I've heard about) tells me she can't be giving her best effort to the task at hand.

My guess is your life and business are much the same. If you're the one in charge of everything — planning, strategizing, scheduling, purchasing, accounts payable, accounts receivable, marketing, bidding, etc. — then something likely is slipping through the cracks. It's a matter of delegation.

Sammie can't delegate her homework to someone else (although she'd very much like to try). She's simply going to have to give up some of the other distractions. Unfortunately, business owners don't have that luxury. You can't simply stop worrying about accounts receivables. What you can do is transfer that responsibility to another person.

The most successful business owners I've met are the ones who know what they don't know or at least what they're not good at. Entrepreneurs are usually the most passionate about the business or industry. My guess is you became a Green Industry business leader because you like working outside and with people. You have a passion for helping customers enjoy their homes and yards. You didn't start a business so you could track down deadbeat customers or browbeat slacker employees.

Focus on the things you need to grow and strengthen your business. Leave the rest of the tasks for others. ... And if you know anyone good at calculus, please feel free to send his or her name along. I really can't help Sammie with her math homework anymore.