

STACKING SUCCESS

KEEP YOUR PERSONAL LIFE IN BALANCE WITH YOUR WORK LIFE AND YOU'LL CLIMB TO THE TOP.

BY CHRIS "CHUBBY" FREDERICK | CONTRIBUTOR

SEVERAL years ago, I wrote an article on this subject, because as a coach, I saw that when shop owners did not balance business and personal life, it could cost them big on both sides. Mike Bennett, a shop owner in Gettysburg, Pa., was listening, and I want you to hear how he did it.

Bennett remembers some phrases we have all used as excuses at one time or another: "I own the business so the buck stops with me" or "I have to do it because no one else can (or will)." Admit it, as a shop owner you have used one of these or others like them to justify missing a family event or personal obligation.

Don't be ashamed, we all have. It's a trait that makes us "owners," right? This attitude is common and yet problematic, and finding a balance with life and business can be a horribly difficult thing. Trust me, I know! Missed recitals, forgotten game times, never seeing the kids before bedtime — it's all part of the sacrifice of owning a business.

If this has been your existence, then I'm here to tell you it doesn't have to be. And I'm going to tell you how.


Being a shop owner should not be a death sentence to your life away from the shop. You need to find some balance in your life for many reasons. Health is one of the most important. It is just not healthy to work 12 to 14 hours a day, six or seven days a week. Lack of proper sleep, poor exercise and eating habits, and stress are just a few of the health risks associated with long hours at the shop.


Efficiency or the lack thereof is probably the second reason. Working the



longer-harder plan usually leads to one thing — inefficiency. How many times have you stayed at the shop until 10 p.m. racking your brain over a drivability issue or something similar, only to go home frustrated and have an epiphany the next morning that miraculously solved the problem? It's simple. Your brain was tired and it needed to reboot. Probably the most important reason, though, is your family. Missed time with the spouse and/or kids is time you will never get back.

Getting your priorities straight and bringing balance to your life almost certainly will bring you greater hap-



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“HOW CAN YOU BEGIN TO WORK ON THE BUSINESS AND NOT IN IT? ANSWER: LEARN TO SAY NO AND COACH YOUR PEOPLE TO REPLACE YOU!”

CHRIS “CHUBBY” FREDERICK [ATI CEO]

piness and success at both work and home.

The question is how

How can you find some balance and yet still be the captain of your ship? Well, like every great solution in life, it starts with a decision. You can only make a true change in life when you yourself make a decision to do it. Let's hear from Bennett on how he did it.

I remember my decision-making point as clearly as if it were yesterday. More than five years ago, I started reading Chubby's articles in *Motor Age* and hired my first business coach. One of my two goals for doing so was to re-engage myself with my family. At that time, I had one daughter leaving for college and another just getting ready to start middle school.

Up to that point, I had missed most of the important events with the family. You know the story: Home after bedtime, never ate dinner with the wife or kids, rarely at school events, showing up after the start of the birthday party, all of the normal things that happen when you own your own business. Certainly we all know the sacrifices for owning your own business, right?

The business was doing well. We were turning over good cash and we had a great reputation in the town, but I wasn't happy. So I made a decision. I was going to take control of my business and figure out a way to bend it to my will (not the other way around). To cut to the chase, over the next four



and a half years, I was able to attend 91 of 92 NCAA soccer matches my oldest daughter played in while in college and have yet to miss any other family activity because of work.

Once you have made the decision, the process is not so daunting. I followed this formula, allowing my family and associates to do more in my business. My formula was rather simple:

Track your time. For one week, track everything you do that is work related. Make a list of everything you do. Decide what tasks are necessary for you to engage in and which ones you could delegate to someone else, or perhaps even eliminate. I think you will be surprised. There probably are a ton of mundane tasks you hold on to that someone else could do just as well as you.

Once you have a list of jobs you could shed, determine who you have that may be best suited to take the task over, or decide what type of candidate you will be looking for if you need to hire someone. Create a job description and outline your expectations for the individual who is going to take the job over. Empower your people by refusing to always be dad. I often suggest to clients that they encourage the staff to come to them with solutions they


want to discuss rather than with problems they need an answer for.

Get organized. Set priorities, work smarter not harder, delegate (and really let go). Create lists and save them for reuse. Keep a main calendar centrally located to post everyone's activities.

Leave work at work. With the technology to connect to anyone at any time from virtually anywhere, there may be no boundary between work and home – unless you create it. Make a conscious decision to separate work time from personal time. When you're with your family, for instance, turn off your cell phone and put away your laptop computer.

Learn to say no. Remember that it's OK to respectfully say no, whether to a customer or to an employee. When you quit doing the things you do only out of guilt or a false sense of obligation, you'll make more room in your life for the activities that are meaningful to you and bring you joy.

Life is something you should enjoy and excel at, not just survive. That includes life at home as well as at the shop. Rarely would you see the phrase “and he ran a great shop” on a tombstone, so I suggest you find the balance in life between your business and your family.

Because you only get what you give, I hope you will take some action and go online to www.ationlinetraining.com/2013-1 to receive a free copy of Chubby's Balancing Kit. 

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