

Investing In Time

"I'm too busy running the store to do all those other things I know I need to get done," a store owner recently told me. This certainly isn't the first time I've heard this lament from a retailer. I've heard it from clients I've worked with one-on-one as well as audience members at my presentations. Those "other things" often includes marketing, recruiting, business planning, reviewing financial documents, etc. As owners we're so busy running the store we don't have time to run the business. I usually respond by recommending that the owner consider adding a part-time employee or two to free them up to do these important "other things." Almost without fail the person replies, "I can't afford that." The fact is that they can't afford not to. It's vital that the owner of a business has time to focus on the elements of the business that will make it successful. Most of us only need about four or five hours a week of focused and uninterrupted time to spend on these "other things." Some may see the extra payroll as an added expense. I believe it's an investment.

Here's a great example. Every year when spring comes around, my thumb slowly turns black. I am the Dr. Kevorkian of lawn care. No matter what I do the crabgrass wins, the critters build condos underground, and I end up frustrated, hot, and sweaty. So this year, I'm going back to hiring a lawn service. I used a lawn service up until I started my own company, when I decided I shouldn't spend approximately \$120 per month on yard work.

Back then I saw the \$120 as an expense. I now realize that by investing in the lawn service, I have an additional 5-6 hours each month to market my company, time that could result in a speaking or consulting engagement that nets considerably more than the investment in the lawn service. It also keeps me from having to handle fertilizer, I can spend more time with my family, and I get real grass that's free of critters. Of course I could choose to take care of the lawn myself and pay someone else to market my business but I don't believe that's the best use of my time. Like the owner of a store, I can delegate many things but the key to my business' success is to personally focus on those important "other things".

So the next time you find that you don't have time to do those "other things," stop and consider if the cost to find the time is an expense or an investment. I've found that by investing in the appropriate help that I'm happier, more profitable, and best of all, my yard is no longer the most depressing sight in the neighborhood.

About the author: Doug Fleener is founder of the Dynamic Experiences Group. He is a veteran retailer with more than 25 years of hands-on retail experience with world-class retailers including Bose Corporation and The Sharper Image. He has also owned and operated his own specialty stores. His new book, *The Profitable Retailer: 56 surprisingly simple and effective lessons to boost your sales and profits* published by Acanthus Publishing is available at www.theprofitableretailer.com or at Amazon.

Doug is now president and managing partner of Dynamic Experiences Group LLC, a Lexington based retail consulting firm dedicated to helping retailers create unique customer experiences that results in higher sales and profits. Learn more at www.dynamicexperiencesgroup.com or call Doug at 866-535-6331.

Fleener also shares his knowledge of experience based retailing in a series of custom key notes and workshops designed for stores, businesses, corporations, non-profits, and trade associations of all sizes. His casual style and quick wit make him not just a crowd pleaser but also an incredible motivator, encouraging people to take action and deliver extraordinary experiences to customers and employees alike. Learn more at www.dougfleener.com.