

Let's Get Back on Track!

By Dave Luehr | 30 July 2020

Well, 2020 is more than half over and I think it's safe to say most collision repairers are not exactly on track for their annual goals. Heck, that is probably an understatement! Due to COVID-19, a lot of shop owners don't even know where the track is! If that describes your situation, let me see if I can help.

We still have several months left; it is **not** time to give up! It is time for shops to regroup, calibrate their goals, and get back to work on the most important aspects of the business. It is time to filter out all the world's distractions, and get laser focused. Most businesses are bumped and bruised, but I believe many shops may surprise themselves with how strong they may be able to finish the year and build a big head of steam moving into 2021.

Getting back on track really means regaining focus on old goals or creating new adjusted goals, and then eliminating all the distractions life is throwing at us these days. Below are some techniques designed to keep shops focused and working hard on finishing out this year like a champ!

Avoid Distractions

With all the noise in the world right now, it is natural for people to seek solace. While people do need to take a break from all the craziness, how one goes about it is critical. Far too often people lose sight of their goals and quickly find themselves scrolling through their Facebook news feed for hours or playing a mind-numbing game of Candy Crush on their mobile device. The only thing worse is sitting in front of the television and watching the "negative news" for hours and poisoning the mind. No good can come from this.

There are a few ways to positively deal with the world's madness.

Morning Routine

Start by creating a solid morning routine. Follow some of these tips to build momentum early in the day.

Avoid excessive news

I find it helpful to watch the news in the morning for about 15 minutes in order to catch up on the important things going on in the world – but that's it! Most of this stuff I have no control over, so why get all stressed out about it?

Smart breakfast

I am not a nutritional expert; however, I have a routine of primarily eating fruit in the morning along with a cup of coffee. This seems to work great for me but may not be for everyone. People should find something that works well for them that excludes eating a bunch of garbage to start the day. I believe it is critical to build momentum early in the day by eating smart. People tend to jump to distractions when they feel lethargic.

Daily planning

In the collision repair business distractions are everywhere! When you combine that with all the world's distractions, it can be extremely difficult to stay focused. For this very reason, I spend at least 15 minutes as soon as I get to my desk each morning planning my day. The reason behind constant distractions is due to not setting an intention for how the day will be spent! When a person doesn't determine how they will spend their day, the day determines it for them!

Even the best daily planners will get distracted from time to time, but they always have a written-out to-do list to come back to when they realize they have been distracted. This part of the morning routine is HUGE for helping refocus work towards important goals.

Practice Time Awareness

Most people live in a reactive state most of their day. As I mentioned earlier, the day controls them instead of the other way around. For people to truly take back control of their life and day, it is critical to simply learn to be cognizant in the moment when a new task or situation presents itself.

Awareness is that tiny moment that occurs between thinking and acting. The habit of thinking prior to engaging in wasteful activity is actually a skill people can learn. Here are a couple tips that may help.

Becoming aware

Since most people have never been trained to use their brains more productively, it should be no surprise that many people are often unaware of their own behaviors and actions in the moment. They react. Since most people were not given an owner's manual for this magnificent tool rattling around in our head, we often under-appreciate its power to help guide better decisions that lead to a happier and more abundant life. It all starts with awareness.

For those who struggle to stay on track towards their goals, which is most people, they must first become aware that they have more power over themselves than they may realize. Simply acknowledging this fact is where to start. So, look around to make sure no one can hear you, then say out loud right now... "I have the power to control my thoughts, actions, and direction in life!" Okay if you did that, you now have awareness... Congratulations!

Practice

After a person has awareness, the next step is practice. Yes, my skeptical friend, people actually do practice using their brains in a more productive manner!

A practical way to practice newfound awareness is to create triggers. A trigger is a thought a person connects to a redundant situation. For example, the next time Body Man Billy stands grinning in your doorway with a broken part demanding a supplement, you have a choice to make. Deal with his demand in the moment or continue working on the annual employee reviews. One choice is putting out a fire, the other is fire prevention. Regardless of the final decision, through simply being aware, a person has taken back control and will make a better decision each time they see Billy.

Productivity Habits

The Four Quadrants

I first learned about the four quadrants of time management from Stephen Covey's book [*The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*](#). This book, like many others, has had a profound effect on my life. If for no other reason than how to mentally plug the activities that occur in my life into an organized system. Picture a square that is divided into four quadrants.

The left upper quadrant is Q1. This is the quadrant of chaos! Important & Urgent. This is where activities reside when they are both truly important to you and demand immediate attention.

The right upper quadrant is Q2. This is the quadrant of prevention. Important & Not Urgent. This is where most people need to spend a heck of a lot more time to eliminate chaos in the 1st and 3rd quadrants.

The left lower quadrant is Q3. This is the quadrant of deception. Not Important & Urgent. Here reside the activities that are not truly important, yet because they scream so loud, they draw you in!

Finally, is the right lower quadrant, Q4. I call this the quadrant of distraction & escapism, like those I mentioned at the beginning of this article. Not Important & Not Urgent. People must avoid this quadrant at all costs if they want to live a life of success. Yes... it's time to put down the Candy Crush game while at work.

I have found envisioning these four quadrants when faced with a distraction to be extremely helpful. By picturing these quadrants in the mind, people will also find it much easier to create the awareness in the moment of decision.

Conclusion

A question I get a lot during times of crises is this... "How can I find the time to work on the important and non-urgent things when I spend all my time dealing with important urgent matters?"

Sometimes we must do some of both. It's like choosing between bailing water out of a sinking boat or fixing the hole. Time must obviously be spent bailing water, but if one doesn't also fix the hole they will eventually sink.

I know this has been a difficult time for so many of my friends in the collision repair business. Many are looking for answers. I wish I could offer a magic solution to make all this COVID-19 stuff go away. All I can do is offer some advice and some techniques that, while perhaps unconventional to readers, is stuff that really works.

If shop leaders will apply some of these strategies, regroup, refocus, get clear on a new set of goals, and then avoid the tendency to give up or fall into distraction, I really believe shops and the people that run them will soon discover an even better version of themselves.

If you need more help getting refocused, [schedule a complimentary appointment with me](#) to discuss how Elite Mastermind Groups can help you get back on track, think bigger and achieve more!