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COMMERCIAL/INDUSTRIAL/INSTITUTIONAL MECHANICAL CONTRACTORS

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Winning vs. Whining

Challenge yourself and your team to rise above current market uncertainties

The following article, reprinted with the author's permission, appeared in the June 2012 issue of Plumbing and Mechanical magazine. Although it was written from the point of view of a plumbing contractor, many of the points can easily be applied to practically anyone in business, whether out in the field or in the office. We thought it worth sharing.

Recently, I ran a meeting at my company, Peterson Plumbing, which was attended by all my team members. I had been physically gone from the company for about six weeks and we had been facing some stronger-than-usual lead-generation challenges during the shoulder season.

In the face of this challenge, some of our front-line team members began the grumbling process. You know how the process goes: People start grumbling under their breath about things they aren't pleased with.

In order to keep the grumbling to a minimum, I incorporated a powerful statement into that meeting's training session for my great team: "Winners find a way to win and whiners find a way to whine." Thank about that for a moment and tell me it's not completely true!

I carried this quote forward with my weekly coaching group and then I shared it during a keynote speech I delivered in Kansas City for More Floods, a national flood restoration company.

I want to share this thought with you here because the feedback I've received from this simple statement has been staggering. When it comes to coaching, speaking or delivering any message to an audience, it's all about timing—and this concept certainly seems to be timely.

Learning Opportunities

The time is now to stop whining and become more focused on winning. Every message I deliver to you is one that I also need to hear myself. I believe this is part of how life works.

No matter the size of your company, your bank account or anything else, we all have challenges—or learning opportunities, as I like to call them. Believe it or not, I've been criticized by peers in the coaching and consulting space for not acting as if I'm perfect and that I have all the answers!

What? Really?

I still have to laugh when I think about this. In my opinion, we are all just human beings leading our companies to the best of our ability. Our ability is essentially determined by our current understanding, implementation practices and

leadership skills at this point in our lives. This shapes our present situation, which is typically full of learning opportunities.

One thing I know is it's easy to fall into the trap of whining about our circumstances. It's easy to get sucked into the world of negativity that surrounds us on a daily basis. It's easy to begin questioning ourselves when we've lost perhaps another job due to charging a higher price.

Another thing that's easy, but can have a positive impact on your business, is to challenge your process. If I can't

reduce my price, what can I do differently in the presentation process with my clients? How can I demonstrate more value, while building additional trust and confidence? What language am I using that is preventing me from closing more deals? Question the status quo in your business and you will discover some simple changes that can increase your success rate.

Winners find a way to win and whiners find a way to whine!

Let's look at five core areas that determine the difference between whiners and winners.

1. Whiners focus on the past, while winners focus on the present and the future.

Whiners are always looking in the rear view mirror, either feeling as if they are a victim of their current circumstances or they're yearning for things to be more "like they used to be." Winners, conversely, only consult the past to learn from various

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Find Satisfaction And Success By Giving Something Back

Volunteer work can help you meet like-minded people, explore career options and make you feel more fulfilled and connected to your community. To get the most out of volunteering, start by identifying what you want to do.



Consider the kinds of activities that make you lose track of time, and choose volunteer work that incorporates your particular passions. Make a list of your limitations and preferences. Do you work better at night or in the morning? Do you like to be in charge of projects or prefer a supporting role? Remember that your goal should be to find volunteer work that gives you a charge, not one that leaves you depleted and stressed.

You might consider making a list of skills you'd like to improve or acquire, like public speaking or managing a team. Volunteering

is a great opportunity to “dip your toes in the water” and see how you do.

Once you've started volunteering, keep a journal to reflect on how you are feeling, what you enjoy most and what responsibilities leave you exhausted or frustrated. Remember to take care of yourself, too, because you can't help others if you feel exhausted.

What Am I Doing Here?

We've all walked into a room and immediately forgotten what we were looking for, right? Don't worry—you're not losing your mind or your memory. According to experiments conducted by a Notre Dame psychology professor, the reason is that walking through a doorway creates an “event boundary” in your mind.

In one of the experiments, subjects were asked to move an object from one room in a “virtual environment” to another, or to transport an object the same distance without crossing through any doorway. The participants tended to forget more after moving through the doorway, suggesting that it acts as a kind of barrier that obstructs the ability to retrieve thoughts made in a separate area. Other experiments in actual rooms reinforced the findings.

Because you can't remain in one room all your life, the best solution is probably to make a mental effort to remember what you're doing when you cross that “event boundary.”

Three Techniques To Motivate Your Team

Superior training, great products and generous perks are all wasted if your team has no motivation to work hard. Here are some field-tested tactics managers can use to pump up their people and help them reach their full potential:

1. **Show them how they improve customers' lives.** All employees want to know their work is meaningful. At your next staff meeting, make a list of the different ways your products or services help people. Employees will be more engaged when they truly believe that their work has a positive impact.
2. **Don't let employees get into a rut.** Be unpredictable. One company closes its doors every Friday afternoon so the team can read and discuss the latest business books. This kind of break is crucial to keeping employees charged up.
3. **Keep symbols of success out in the open.** Post letters from satisfied customers and memos of praise from your corporate officers. Tangible evidence of success will keep your team focused on its goals.

The Password Is...

Remembering the combination for your locker in high school was tough enough—how is anyone expected to keep track of the dozens of different passwords you need to do anything on the Internet? Using the same password for everything isn't especially safe, but setting up dozens of completely different passwords can get confusing very quickly.

Here's how to secure your ID information without going crazy:

- **Start with a phrase.** Pick a quotation or common phrase that's easy to remember. Use only the first letter of every word, and add a random number or capital letter to increase the complexity. For instance, “To be or not to be” might turn into “tBon2B.”
- **Write down only what you need.** Instead of writing out your complete password, put down only what you need to know. For the above example, “Shakespeare” may be enough to jog your memory.
- **Separate passwords and accounts.** Don't record the website or account along with the password. Maintain separate lists, or use some sort of code you'll remember: “Grandma's birthday present,” instead of “Amazon.com,” for example.
- **Destroy the list as soon as possible.** Once you're certain you don't need any reminders, delete the list so it can't fall into the wrong hands.

SPEED BUMP

Dave Coverly



Track The Right Issues To Measure Sales Efforts

If you manage a sales team, you know that sales volume is an important measure of a salesperson's success. But you also probably realize that other metrics are useful, too. To keep your sales force productive over the long term, pay attention to these additional areas:

- **Sales volume vs. units sold.** One salesperson closes a single deal worth \$1 million. Another lands 10 sales worth \$100,000 each. Which sales pro is more valuable to your organization? Don't overlook salespeople who produce consistent numbers in favor of those who score an occasional high-ticket shot.
- **Profitability.** Generating revenue is good, but if that doesn't translate into profits, your efforts are ultimately futile. Make sure your sales force is pursuing deals that contribute to the bottom line, not just looking for break-even sales.
- **Productivity and efficiency.** A salesperson who spends 12 hours a day, 7 days a week to make his or her numbers probably isn't managing his or her time as effectively as possible. Beware of honoring Sally for all her extra hours if Jill brings in the same sales figures in less time.
- **Customer service.** Retaining current customers is vital to most companies. It requires time that might be spent chasing new business, though. Do you reward salespeople for keeping today's customers satisfied, or penalize them for ignoring existing customers in favor of new ones?

Don't Tie Yourself Down With Outmoded Beliefs



Backstage at the circus one time, a visitor noticed that the elephants were kept in place by nothing stronger than a thin rope that tied one leg to a stake in the ground. Puzzled, he asked one of the trainers what prevented these awesome, powerful animals from just snapping the rope and running away.

The answer? Raised in captivity, the elephants are held like that from an early age when they're much smaller and weaker. They get so accustomed to the fact that they can't break the rope that eventually they stop trying. When they're fully grown, they never attempt to pull themselves free.

Don't let yourself be held prisoner by beliefs and expectations that are no longer true—if they ever were.

Four Steps For Beating The Post-Vacation Blues

Your vacation should have relaxed and recharged you—so why is going back to work so hard? Here's how to diminish the seemingly inevitable post-trip letdown:

1. **Pace yourself.** Don't try to plan every minute of your vacation for maximum activity. Build in sufficient time to relax so you don't return to work exhausted from your "fun."
2. **Schedule your return a couple of days early.** Give yourself a day or so between vacation and going back to work; it can help ease the transition to your duties.
3. **Let others know your plans.** Let clients and co-workers know you're away and provide them with alternative contacts. You'll reduce the number of messages waiting for you at the office when you return.
4. **Ease into it.** If you can arrange it, make your first day back a half-day. You can take care of the most pressing issues before diving back in.

What condiment do the Dutch traditionally dip French fries in?



Five Questions

- 1) What condiment do the Dutch traditionally dip French fries in?
 - a) mustard
 - b) mayonnaise
 - c) chutney
 - d) gravy
- 2) Which famous American coined the Maxwell House slogan "good to the last drop"?
 - a) Annie Oakley
 - b) Ed Muskie
 - c) Teddy Roosevelt
 - d) Leo Burnett
- 3) Where on a horse would you find the body part called a "frog"?
 - a) Neck
 - b) Hoof
 - c) Mouth
 - d) Abdomen
- 4) The Nickelodeon cable network premiered in 1979 under what name?
 - a) Pinwheel
 - b) Playdate
 - c) Jigsaw
 - d) Toboggan
- 5) Which publication celebrates its 30th anniversary in 2012?
 - a) *Mademoiselle*
 - b) *Esquire*
 - c) *Prevention*
 - d) *USA Today*

Answers: 1) b 2) c (Strangely, Coca-Cola was also using the slogan at the time.) 3) b (It's the triangular indentation on the underside of a horse's hoof.) 4) a 5) d

Winning... from page 1

circumstances regarding what went well and what areas need work. Then, they focus on what they can do right now, in this moment, to achieve their goals moving forward. Winners simply view the past as a learning tool.

2. Whiners focus on what's wrong, while winners focus on what's right.

It's been said that on an average day, 35 things will go right and only one thing will go wrong. Unfortunately, that one thing seems to be where many people choose to focus their energy. Winners understand that if you're a mover and shaker, a few things aren't going to happen exactly as you had hoped. They choose to focus on what's right, never allowing a negative or nonproductive mindset.

3. Whiners blame others and situations, while winners take complete responsibility.

We all have people in our lives that refuse to take responsibility for their own actions and results. If you're a whiner who is in the trap of blaming someone or something else for your life, business and situation, you have given away all your power to create positive change for

yourself. Until you take full responsibility for everything that happens in your life, you will consistently be at the mercy of other people to determine your success or lack thereof.

4. Whiners have a scarcity mentality, while winners are abundance-minded.

Winners believe that there is enough to go around. They believe there are enough calls, enough customers and enough work for them to achieve their goals and not worry about their competition. Winning technicians understand that every service call is an abundant opportunity to make a positive impact on their customer.

5. Whiners resist change, while winners embrace and even create it.

We all know that most people resist and avoid change at all costs. Change can be challenging, yet change is absolutely necessary. In order to grow and improve in business, we must be willing to leave the comfort zone we have created in order to better serve our customers and team members. Winners have complete understanding of this fact and continuously look for the next

opportunities to change and strengthen their business.

It's tough out there, the game has changed and it will continue to change indefinitely. We must challenge ourselves, our processes and our team to rise above current market uncertainties.

Sometimes we just need to let go of what used to work. What got you here will not get you there! Reinvention is a must and it all starts with you. It's determined by how you think, what you believe, and the actions you take and ultimately how you lead!

Your team needs you. The other progressive contractors in the industry need you. Your clients need you. You must be fully present, engaged and prepared to play full out. No exceptions!

Now is the time to block any whining thoughts and focus all that you are on thoughts of winning!

—Kenny Chapman, "The Blue Collar Coach," is the author of *The Six Dimensions of C.H.A.N.G.E.* and owner of *Peterson Plumbing*. Visit www.thebluecollarcoach.com or call him at 877/968-2244.



Komen Walk Update:

Just a brief thanks to all of you who supported me in the 60-mile walk held in Boston on July 27th, 28th and 29th. There were more than 100 of you who contributed, to the tune of more than \$15,000. I am humbled by your generosity and support. What a tribute to my late daughter, Megan, in whose memory I walked. To view photos and other information from the walk, visit our website at www.PipingSystemsInc.com and click on the "President's Page."

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