

A Path to Increased Revenue

Michael Gerber's classic book for entrepreneurs, *The E-Myth Revisited*, was the major influence of 20 years of my career. I read it annually and encouraged others to do the same.

Gerber teaches the value of systems. Find what works, create the system and replicate it 5,000 times. Teach and prophesy, "This is how we do things here."

But systems may not transfer or evolve. The environment is a change agent to any system.

Systems are little more than formal checklists. Perform these actions, check the box, get results. Adjust the checklist as needed. Add all checklists to the company operations manual.

Gerber taught us that if we become systems-dependent, we can free ourselves from becoming people-dependent. If we are not people dependent for outcomes, our labor costs decrease and outcomes are more predictable.

But there is no promise that a powerful system at work in a pie shop is transferable to businesses in general. The system may not even work in another pie shop. Environments alter outcomes. Checklists are organically developed in local non-franchised companies. (Franchisors teach their operators one company operations manual fits all ... "This is how we make burgers, everywhere.") Franchisees pay a big price to buy the book of checklists.

I don't use the word system except inside of the business in which the system was created. A true system is defined by a consistent output. Check these boxes, get results.

But environments change around every business and vibration occurs inside the system. As results decline, systems must change. Tried-and-true methods become stories to tell about

the good old days when systems worked. What got you here, won't get you there.

What will get us there? A new path. As change occurs, we must blaze a new trail and find a new path. We must move from a system to find a new path and resist the checklist while we swing the machete with fervor.

The Bible teaches the principle of the path:

"The prudent see danger and take refuge, but the simple keep going and pay the penalty" (Prov. 27:12, NIV).

Prudent business owners see things changing and carve a new path rather than a new system. Companies such as Sears, Blockbuster and Borders surely saw danger but kept going. Hopefully the driver of a yellow cab sees an Uber in his future.

Today, I focus on the functions that must occur in order for potential customers to take a closer look at a product or service. I don't teach paint-by-numbers. I don't offer a cookie recipe. I help clients cut a path as led by the Holy Spirit.

The functions of marketing are the same. The carpenter's tool box is the same. The craftsman uses his tools differently for each job. But the path from foundation to rooftop is predictable.

As you seek marketing help for your business, seek a coach who has a path to increased revenue. Look for someone who seeks first to understand how you meet the needs of your target audience. Create a path from your product to the mind of your future customer.

Each step on your path is unique to you. Tools work best in the hands of a carpenter.