



LAUREN'S CORNER

This month, we celebrate 10 years in business. For those of you who don't know, I got my DBA and started fixing computers in the living room of my home. My first location outside of the house was literally a shared office space where I rented a door for cheap. Then I took over the space and outgrew it (11 State St.). I never had a doubt that we would remain in Downtown Troy. In fact I didn't even look at properties outside of the city. Today, Groff NetWorks is one of the top computer networking and IT support firms in the region (by revenue), according to rankings released by Albany's *Business Review*. Here's to the next 10 years!



New Client Announcement



Located on Interstate 787 in Cohoes, NY, Harmony Mills Pediatrics serves the children and teens of the northern New York Capital Region. We are happy to have them as clients and look forward to serving their IT needs.

New Team Member



Welcome our to our newest team member, **Ryan Oakland!**

Ryan joined us in April as an Emergency Response Technologist. He is a welcomed addition to our team and we are very happy he decided to join us!

GETTING TO KNOW YOUR TEAM



Meet Ben!

Title: Emergency Response Technologist
Employee Since: 2011
Favorite TV Show: Last Week Tonight w/ John Oliver
Favorite Sport: Hockey/Board games
Favorite Food/Drink: Smoked brisket/IPA
One thing you can't live without: Reddit



5 Easy Ways To Eliminate E-mail Overload

- 1. Set your "send and receive" to only twice a day.** If you're like me, you need to access your e-mail to work, whether it's sending tasks to others or looking up communications relevant to a project you're working on. Problem is, it's EXTREMELY tempting to go down the e-mail rabbit hole when you open it up, because there's ALWAYS some new e-mail there tempting you to open it. If you set the "send and receive" to only exchange a few designated times per day, you'll eliminate the temptation of NEW e-mails popping up.
- 2. Unsubscribe from anything that's not necessary.** Over time, your e-mail clutters up like a junk drawer and will cause you to take several minutes a day to process through all the spam to get to important e-mails. Therefore, take a little time every month to just unsubscribe from anything that really isn't necessary, including social media notifications. (Do you REALLY need to be instantly notified every time someone comments on Facebook?)
- 3. Turn off notifications.** If a neighbor was ringing your doorbell every time they had a random question, you'd shoot 'em. So why are you letting yourself be constantly distracted with a "ding" or a pop-up when an e-mail arrives? It's not like you aren't going to go and check it. And if there IS a critical communication you need to be aware of, have that person contact you via phone; if it's THAT important, it will warrant a phone call.
- 4. Set up rules to pre-sort e-mails.** Doing this organizes your inbox into groups of messages so you can focus on clearing and answering all the e-mails related to one subject, making you far more productive.
- 5. Delete, delete, delete!** Once you've answered an e-mail, DELETE it! If it's critical, file it. Here's another tip: Sort your messages by the "From" address. Often, looking at your inbox this way will allow you to quickly erase e-mails that are related, answered and DONE.

Top 10 Biggest Entrepreneurial Mistakes

- 10. Trying To Get Rich Quick.** Most overnight successes take 15 to 20 years to achieve. If you go in expecting to be rich overnight, you may become discouraged early on and give up your dream. Know that success takes time, perseverance and a little bit of luck.
- 9. Assuming No Competition.** Even if you have the latest, greatest, never-been-done-before approach to something, don't assume you have no competition. Competition is more than just the direct, obvious competitors. Competition is also all the available alternatives. What else could the consumer do instead of using your product or service? Could they do nothing??
- 8. Being a Weak Leader.** The success of your company is contingent on you being a strong, effective leader. This does not mean you need to be an authoritarian, and this does not mean you are everyone's buddy, either. A great leader sets the course for the company, communicates it constantly and inspires the team to get there.
- 7. Being All Business All The Time.** Many entrepreneurs put their personal lives on hold to focus exclusively on their business. Ultimately, both suffer. No question your business needs your full attention and effort, but only in short spurts. Balance your personal and business life, and you will actually do better in both.
- 6. Pie-In-The-Sky Financial Goals.** If all business plans came true, being a billionaire would be nothing extraordinary. Many entrepreneurs go into a new venture, planning astronomical returns. Yet most never even get the business off the ground. Unrealistic goals not only hurt your credibility, but can also be an emotional drain. Set Specific, Measurable, Accountability, Realistic and Time-specific (SMART) goals to ensure continual progress.
- 5. No Rallying Point.** There is a reason why employees leave high-paying corporate jobs to go to start-ups, and it sure ain't for the money. People are driven to serve an important purpose, in addition to bringing home enough bacon to feed the family. Many businesses never define their real purpose for existence and continually attract a mix of employees who are seeking success in different ways. Clarify the purpose of your company, beyond just making money, and you set the stage for attracting like-minded employees. A team focused on the same goal is a very powerful force.
- 4. Cutting Price.** Often, the first thing entrepreneurs resort to when business is tough is to try differentiating on price. Cheaper prices mean more customers, right? Wrong! Most customers are willing to buy more expensive items because of the greater quality or the better convenience. During tough times, often an increase in price, coupled with improvements in quality or convenience, can bring the customers in droves.
- 3. No Clear Marketing Message.** You never know where, when or how a new prospect is going to hear of your business. If you have a mix of messages out there, the prospects will have an unclear expectation of what you offer. Your company must be presenting a consistent clear message on all fronts. You will never get a second chance to make a first impression.
- 2. Not Being Forthright.** The days of cover-ups are over. The anonymous nature and grand size of the Internet allow someone in the know to share anything with anyone at any time. If your business tries to cover up a mistake, it is just a matter of time before the word leaks and you are labeled as a liar. That's not good for business. Be the one to break your own bad news, and you just may be perceived as honest and trustworthy.
- 1. Trying To Do It All.** The greatest mistake entrepreneurs make is to believe they can do it all by themselves. While an entrepreneur can do most things, they do most things poorly. Just like any other person, an entrepreneur has one or two God-given talents. As an entrepreneur, it is your job to identify what you are great at and do those few things to your fullest. Surround yourself with people who are strong where you are not. Great companies are built on the foundation of exploiting a few strengths, not on trying to be masters of everything.



MIKE MICHALOWICZ (pronounced mi-KAL-o-wits) started his first business at the age of 24, moving his young family to the only safe place he could afford—a retirement building. With no experience, no contacts and no savings, he systematically bootstrapped a multimillion-dollar business. Then he did it again. And again. Now he is doing it for other entrepreneurs. Mike is the CEO of Proventus Group, a consulting firm that ignites explosive growth in companies that have plateaued; a former small-business columnist for *The Wall Street Journal*; MSNBC's business makeover expert; a keynote speaker on entrepreneurship; and the author of the cult classic book *The Toilet Paper Entrepreneur*. His newest book, *The Pumpkin Plan*, has already been called "the next *E-Myth!*" For more information, visit <http://www.mikemichalowicz.com/>

How To Make Tough Decisions

When facing a major business decision, use the time-tested Benjamin Franklin methodology.

Big decisions can be tough to make, because we don't own a crystal ball to see into the future and it's easy to go in circles in our own mind. Furthermore, not all consequences—both good *and* bad—can be predicted. And since most entrepreneurs live in a state of being overwhelmed already, it's important to have a trusted process for making important decisions quickly.

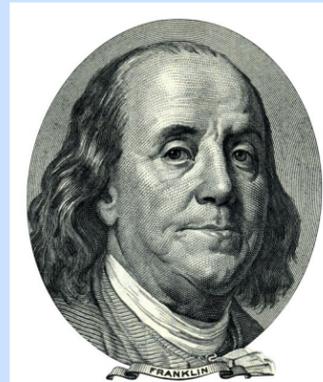
If you're not familiar with the process, start by creating two lists on a single sheet of paper: Pros and Cons. Next, write down every PRO for making a decision or moving ahead, and all the potential downsides (CONS) as well. Give yourself a few days to process this list and allow your mind to think of new pros and cons as they come to you. Get input on the list from people you trust, and add their ideas to your list.

Next, give a weight to each pro and each con—after all, one BIG pro can easily outweigh a few minor cons and vice versa. Then, tally up both sides, and it will become obvious

just how risky your decision is or whether the pros outweigh the cons. If nothing else, this process will force you to get all the questions out of your head and onto a piece of paper where they can be evaluated. In the end you have the information you need to make a final decision. Just remember there is no way any of us can guess all the variable pros and cons to any decision—and since you can't steer a parked car, MAKING a decision is the only way you can truly know if you made the right one or not.

Franklin is credited with the two-column pro and con list method of making decisions, and people have used it for centuries. While simplistic, it's an easy and effective technique that works.

When you finally announce your new direction or decision to your staff, just tell them that you talked to your business consultant "Ben," and he is in 100% agreement with what you chose to do.



81 4th Street
Troy, NY 12180

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Your Chance To WIN Movie Tickets Inside!



"Some people golf, some people play racquetball. But I've found if you really want to know what makes someone tick, nothing beats a ball pit."

TRIVIA

WIN 2 MOVIE TICKETS!



Congratulations to April L. Schmick, Paralegal at Tabner, Ryan and Keniry, LLP, who won last month's trivia! (Answer: The Match)

In honor of Mother's Day (May 10, 2015), what was the first state to issue a proclamation for a day honoring mothers?

- A. New York
- B. West Virginia
- C. Oklahoma
- D. Arizona

E-mail us right now with your answer at: Trivia@GroffNetWorks.com

THANK YOU!

On April 8, 2015 we celebrated our new home, 81 4th Street (Troy, NY) with an official ribbon-cutting and open house. The turnout was amazing and the day couldn't have been better. We were honored to see so many of you. If you haven't had the chance, stop in and see us anytime; we love giving tours!



Shiny Gadget

Meet The Coin: The One Credit Card To Rule Them All



Coin works by letting you add all of your debit, credit, and loyalty cards onto one piece of technology, the Coin.

After signing into the Coin app with the same credentials used to order the Coin, users are asked to create a unique six-digit tap code. It uses a combination of long taps and short taps, of your choosing, to ensure no one can get into the Coin app or the Coin itself unless they know the code or have control of the user's smartphone.

The coin retails for \$100 and is now available for preorder!

For more information visit: <https://onlycoin.com/>

