

## BALANCING TOMORROW, TODAY™

by Dr. Stacie



For the last few weeks we have been looking at how our home and work lives can sometimes drive us a little crazy. But, have you ever thought about what goes on in the lives of business owners, association presidents, church leadership, or those who run other types of organizations? The responsibility for so many people's livelihood, the future of the association, and the spiritual growth of your congregation, for example, are heavy loads for a person to successfully carry day in and day out. Therefore, we'll wrap up our series by looking at how to balance tomorrow's *sanity*, today – in organizations.

Spring is here and the only remains of winter's melt is our mud season metaphor's last stand. What can organizations learn from rural driving in mud season you ask? You may be surprised to find out.

First, let's look at what makes business owners and organizational leaders go crazy. Although the list is quite long, some of the common concerns are maintaining financial stability, employee stability (or volunteer stability for associations, churches and the like), and customer relations (since every type of organization has some sort of "customer").

Organizations often "pick a rut and stick to it" in the guise of not rocking the boat, business as usual, not fixing something that's not broken, and even adhering to their strategic plan. Business owners and organizational leaders, however, may actually find that sticking to their proverbial rut is the cause of their organizational insanity in the first place! By focusing on *where* they are going instead of *why* they are going there, many good organizations have slid off map and are now defunct or disabled.

This is where our second mud season principle comes into play—"don't ever stop." Business owners and organizational leaders who do not regularly stop to evaluate their direction and their *reason for choosing that direction* may not sink, as you do in our mud metaphor, but will have a tough time reaching their organization's potential. You see, an organization's financial, employee, and customer stability directly correlate with the value the organization delivers. If an organization "picks a rut and sticks to it" and doesn't "ever stop" to evaluate *why* it continues to choose that direction, then they probably don't have a clear long-term vision of the value they deliver to their customers, how to inspire employees to build that value, and what that value is truly worth in tangible dollars.

Fortunately, mud season is over and the new beginnings of spring are here. Business owners and organizational leaders can steer out of their respective ruts and take some time to evaluate *where they are going and why*. Understanding what your customers will always need or want, no matter how crazy the world may seem or become, and knowing how your organization can deliver that unchanging value will not only make you sane and successful today, but will build a solid foundation for tomorrow's sanity and success as well!

So here is how you can start balancing tomorrow's sanity, today – in organizations:

- Think about your organization's direction. Are you clear on where you are going?
- Take out a piece of paper and write down *why* you continue to choose the path your organization is currently following.
- Does your direction correspond to an unchanging value from your "customers" perspective?
- Make a list of ways you can determine what your "customers" will value, no matter how the world might change, and then figure out how you can deliver it!
- If you get stuck, you can e-mail me for help.

Remember, maintaining your sanity in organizations, like balance, is a process...not a destination!

*If you'd like some ideas about balancing a specific area of life, work, or your organization, e-mail me I'll take a crack at it. As always, all correspondence will be kept confidential.*

*Thanks to those of you who have already sent your requests in! Look for my responses in upcoming issues.*

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