

# GROWERTALKS

## Growers Talk Business

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### Procrastination & Business

Gary Mangum



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*But first—the rumors of my pending retirement are greatly exaggerated. For the first time in plus/minus 30 years, I missed the OFA meeting in July as I was in the process of dealing with a personal real estate issue. Since that time, I've had several calls, probing questions and notes congratulating me on my retirement at the end of this year. All I can say is that's not the case, as there are still lots of things to do ... and my family appreciates the income.*

It doesn't happen too often, but when it does and I let myself fall into the trap of procrastinating, it can be brutal. Like a snowball rolling down a hill, putting something off for me just seems to build on itself—to the point where it can become consuming.

My column this month is the perfect example of my procrastination kicking into high gear. I've started and stopped a dozen times, and just now have gotten to the subject I'll work with. Jennifer Zurko sent a courtesy reminder well over two weeks ago, which was relatively clear: Get your column in or else. Though she says it nicer, that's what she was saying. *(Finally, 211 words of 750 complete!)* In my case, intense procrastination can lead to a full mental block, which is why I'm in the midst of this self-therapy—writing down my thoughts ...

I still have two school-age children and I don't want my son to feel like I did; I always found it best to do everything possible to avoid my parents' involvement in my schoolwork. And lucky for me there was no real-time computer chat between a teacher and an entire classroom of parents daily. Assignments, compliments, behavioral issues—it's all real time now via e-mail. With all the new school communication systems, it's nearly impossible not to become an even better advocate and coach for our children. *(On a roll now—380 of 750 words on paper.)*

What's this got to do with business? I think we owe the folks that work with us meaningful feedback, as close to real time as possible. The tools that are now available to communicate should greatly enhance our ability to coach and mentor, praise and correct—with frequency and not just during an annual review. The closer to real time, the more impact we can have.

In our own business, we're in the process of turning ourselves upside down and looking at every aspect of what we do. This started with a look at profitable versus non-profitable aspects of our business offerings, and moving through virtually everything we do. What we're doing or not doing that creates a drain on our top and bottom line—and what we can impact if we do it differently.

The key to this essential look at our own business is a renewed sense of urgency. Our leadership team is in the process of assaulting procrastination and procrastinators. We have a full press going to execute everything as if our ongoing business depended on it. *(603 words—over the hump.)*

Beyond just being profitable and continuing as a healthy business, our focus has been the same for many years. We want to put our collective energy into providing the best service, innovation, quality and value that we can possibly produce. While this hasn't changed since Mike and I acquired the business, what has changed is using the new tools at our disposal to see how our plans are executed across the board—and literally take a look inside the stores we serve every day.

Procrastination. Allowing it to creep into our personal lives on occasion is natural—and probably even healthy at times. However, in the business world, procrastination can be as bad as complacency, and when combined, can create a truly bad situation. There's no place in our industry for either. We're better than that. *(786 words and thoughts to paper—and now it's Jennifer's turn to focus and make my thoughts readable.)*

**GT**

**Editor's Note:** I took Gary's advice and **did not** procrastinate in looking over his column ... —JZ

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