

"20 SECOND RULE"

Most of what we try to implement and achieve at a service station is based on forming best practice habits. If we are unable to create a long-lasting habit we are often only mildly successful in achieving what we set out to do. Whether it is implementing a control, reducing losses or maintaining profit margins.

Successful Dealers and Managers are the ones who are able to run their business without needing a lot of willpower to accomplish the long list of "to do's" every day.

Willpower is a finite resource. You only have a limited amount to work with each day. President Barack Obama, for example, knows this and requested that all the basic decisions be made for him every day. Daily things such as what he ate, what he wore and many other details. He wanted to save his limited willpower for more important decisions such as running the country.

One very simple trick to reducing the amount of willpower required every day is to implement the 20-second rule. It states simply that if you reduce the time needed to start something to 20 seconds or less you will be more likely to start.

For example, if you are learning to play the guitar, and place the guitar within quick reach of where you work every day you are more likely to practice. The same applies to work

habits. If the temperature register is in a file in the back of the office, you are less likely to complete it. If the quality checklist for the car wash is not close by, you will probably not fill it in. This is especially true if you have a busy day, and when you run a service station, every day is a busy day.

I've mentioned it before, but one of the first things I do when taking over a site is to buy at least 10 clipboards and some nails. I hang the clipboards wherever I need a constant control to be implemented. The checklist, form, register or procedure is placed on the clipboard so no-one has the excuse of saying that it was not close by and could not be completed.

Some of the critical controls can be improved with a simple checklist that is put up on a clipboard close to where it should be used.

Some examples are the fuel delivery checklist, the temperature register, the stock delivery register, the food production register, the coffee machine cleaning checklist, the daily shift handover checklist for supervisors and others.

And, you know what, it takes less than 20 seconds to grab the clipboard and continue developing the right work habits. Give it a try.

BEST PRACTICES:

DO remember to place the clipboards where they can be easily reached, ideally out of sight of customers

DON'T forget to explain the 20-second rule to anyone using the clipboards

DO ensure the clipboards are NEVER empty

DON'T allow the clipboards to be used for anything else, before you know it they will be off the wall and "missing"

QUICK WINS:

Remember the opposite is also true about the 20-second rule. Moving distractions or "bad" habits more than 20 seconds away can help you to avoid them. For example, moving Facebook off your desktop, or setting it to not show notifications can reduce the nr of interruptions. Also, placing a bottle of water on your desk or some fruit and moving the cold drinks and chips to the back of the fridge can improve your snacking habits.

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