

Small changes, big difference

Solicit outside opinions to improve your business

BY PHIL SASSO



Phil Sasso is president of Sasso Marketing Inc. (www.sassomarketing.com), a technical marketing agency specializing in tools and equipment. Subscribe to his free marketing tips at philsasso.com/blog.

This is my last Sales & Marketing 101 column. I'll still be writing for *Professional Distributor* in 2011, but in a new Sales Q&A column (see sidebar). I considered doing a Q&A column months ago, but was unsure about the idea. It took an unsolicited nudge from my editor to push me past my initial resistance.

Sometimes change can be hard. But often it's the hardest changes that yield the greatest reward. We've

all been there. We begrudgingly work through a transition and, in the end, we find it was one of the best things we ever did.

So, I'd like to challenge you to consider what changes you might make to your business, and to commit to making them happen in 2011. That may mean doing different things that aren't comfortable. How willing are you to step outside of your comfort zone if it might improve



Questions answered

Q: I hear there is going to be a new Q&A column in Professional Distributor. What's it all about? How can I submit my question?

A: The Sales Q&A column kicks off in the first issue of 2011. We want you to have information and insights to run your business better. So, every issue, we'll field questions from distributors about topics ranging from accounting to merchandising to skips, contests and more.

The answers will come from a variety of sources including industry experts, consultants, manufacturers and top dealers who are on the road every day like you are.

To submit a question, email editor@pten.com. I look forward to hearing from you!

– Phil

It doesn't. Overwhelming changes can be overwhelming to implement. Plus, if a big change fails, it can fail big. A series of small changes can add up to a big difference.

For example, do you tote and promote? If not, try it once or twice a month. It can help you meet new customers that might not otherwise buy from you. Or do you invite customers onto your truck? If not, try it once or twice a month. It can help you cross-sell new tools and equipment that customers may not know you carry. Neither can hurt you. And you might just find it makes a big difference in your bottom line.

Once you're making changes, be sure you have a way to measure their impact so you can keep what works. ■

your productivity or profitability?

Change from the outside in

I can't take credit for the new format of my column next year. I may have had the idea first, but I never mentioned it or took the initiative to make it happen. Ideas without action are meaningless. Sometimes an outsider can see obvious improvements that evade us.

Who can help you with your sales, your promotion or your overall system? Have you asked your District Manager for insights? Do you talk to other mobiles about what's working for them? Have you asked your customers for input? What ideas from Professional Distributor do you put to use?

If you want honest insights on your business, be ready to hear things you might not like. Try not to take it personally and be ready to sort the good from the bad.

Every once in a while a trendy new business idea comes along and everyone jumps on the bandwagon (recently, social media like Facebook or Twitter). Often businesses do it just because everyone else is doing it.

Business isn't about being fashionable. It's about being profitable. Change needs to have a purpose: Will it improve sales? Increase productivity? Serve customers better? Increase your margin? Changes need

to make a difference to earn your time to implement.

Small changes, big impact

Often, we think change needs to be big, earth-shattering innovations.



SOLDER-IT
INCORPORATED

**New cordless
TURBO-THERM®
Butane Powered
HEAT GUN**

- Battery Operated Blower
- Temperature Range 400°F - 800°F
- Complete with 4 Alkaline Batteries
- Butane Fill Lasts for One Hour in Mid Temperature Setting

**Your Professional
Butane Tool Supplier.**

HG-300



**Great for
Paint
Removal,
Wiring
Applications,
and Wherever
Heat is
Needed**

Heat Reflector Tip Attachment Included



Butane
Powered



Batteries for Blower
Included



Diode
Indicator

SOLDER-IT, INC.™
404 Irvington Street, Pleasantville, NY 10570
Phone 914-747-1092 • Fax 914-741-1356 • Toll Free 800-353-7941 • www.solderit.com

Enter 33 at "e-inquiry" on professionaldistributormagazine.com