



The Power of Checklists is the Cure for Chaos!

By Philip P. Beyer

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Checklists are not unique in bringing a business to order. Many of the budget-killing mistakes that risk customer loyalty can be dramatically reduced or eliminated by putting together simple checklists, and getting everyone to follow them. Ah, there's the rub, you say! We found a way.

Consider the following who have implemented checklists that have saved whole companies from disaster; saved money and time, but also many lives.

Medical Checklists

Disturbed by the thousands of needless deaths in hospitals, due to infections, renowned John Hopkins Hospital critical-care specialist, Dr. Peter Pronovost, put together a simple five-step checklist in 2001 for installing lines in the human body during care. Almost immediately, infection rates plummeted at John Hopkins. Sadly, Dr. Pronovost could not get hospitals interested, primarily because physicians felt they didn't need checklists to do their job. Sound familiar? Finally, Dr. Pronovost got the State of Michigan to try his simple checklists in a handful of the worst hospitals in the country. Results? In December, 2006, the Keystone Initiative published its findings in a landmark article in *The New England Journal of Medicine*: Within the first three months of the project, the infection rate of Michigan ICUs decreased by 65%. In the Keystone Initiative's first eighteen months, the hospitals saved an estimated \$175 million in costs and more than 1,500 lives.

Checklists inspired by the B-17 Bomber

Boeing almost went bankrupt when one of their top pilots crashed a newly-designed bomber right in front of top military brass. Realizing their new generation of aircraft was too complicated for even the best pilots, Boeing created a simple checklist and proceeded to sell over 13,000 planes that flew over 1.8 million miles without a crash.

Downloading

Begin creating a checklist system for all the processes in your business that need to be performed in a consistent way (i.e. Setting up a new customer).

How your company operates, all the business of your business will remain in your head, if as an owner or manager—you have never taking the time to download it—out of your head—into written documents (i.e. checklists, procedures, policies and other documents). These documents should be gathered and organized into an Operations Manual.

Daily Routine Checklists for Personnel

The Daily Routine Checklist is like the job description, developed into a detailed checklist of duties in the order a person performs them, from the time they arrive at work until they leave. It is to be prominently located for easy use, either on an employee's desk or a clipboard by their workstation. With this document you, the owner or manager, also have for your reference a list of everything each employee does. Daily Routine Checklists are your eyes to see every task and duty performed in your organization, from taking mail to the post office to mopping the floors. These checklists followed correctly, one step at a time, stop errors from being repeated and virtually eliminate procrastination and chaos.

Quality and Service Control Checklists

Quality and Service Control Checklists are crucial to any company that wants to guarantee quality and service. Every company and organization has a product it is selling or promoting. Your product may be a service, but it should be quality service. A verbal commitment to quality and service is about as predictable as bubbles in the air. Without a checklist system you cannot guarantee or prove quality or service, because you are a fallible human being, and you can't remember to complete every process consistently.

Have you ever read something and it turns out you've read it wrong? Or, you were supposed to do something and it turns out you didn't, but you "just knew" you had? My point exactly! We're human, and we don't see or do things the same way every time. Our mind may be thinking about numerous things, or something major, and overlooking something small.

Imagine your next business trip, and how your airline pilot might be focusing on the weather or passengers, when he misses a small light alerting him his landing gear is up or down. Thankfully, airline pilots use detailed *checklists* that keep you and me safe from such mishaps!

Did I mention—Great Systems Work!

To invite Philip Paul Beyer to speak for your conference or other event...
Contact Susan Beyer at Ebiz Products, 615-425-2652 or email susan@ebizproducts.com.
Philip Beyer's book *System Busters: How to Stop Them In Your Business* is available at www.Amazon.com. For more about SYSTEM100™ software, visit www.System100.com.