

## A lesson from Farming

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In my college days I was a ‘professional crammer’. You know what I mean. The report assigned to me five weeks ago is due day after tomorrow, so I had better get started. Cramming worked fairly well in college. I would study my backside off for the few days leading up to an exam and do quite well.

Bad habits are hard to break and this one followed me into my career, causing periods of high anxiety. These days we live in a microwave society and the thought of putting the appropriate time and effort into a project, career or even our lives is just not attractive. Most people don’t want to put the necessary effort into their job to maintain peak efficiency. Rather than performing marketing activities on a daily basis, they wait until sales are in the tank and then try to “kick it in high gear” to compensate. Or they ignore employee training and support until a customer service nightmare pops up. Then they rush into recovery mode to save a client.

Let’s think of your work in farming terms. A farmer plants his crop at a certain time, usually in the spring. That is followed by watering, fertilizing and weeding the crop every week throughout the growing season. Finally, one day the harvest comes and the farmer reaps the rewards of several months’ worth of work.

What if the farmer had the same attitude towards his business as many people do about their job? Rather than tending his crop on time and tending to it regularly, he plants it late, neglects to water and lets the weeds get a strong foot hold. Then one day, knowing that he only has about six weeks until harvest time, he begins to work feverishly night and day; watering, weeding and erecting grow lights in the field to keep the plants growing around the clock. What kind of harvest would you imagine he will yield?

Just like farming, your business profitability is a direct return on how you handle your job over a period of time. One of the common denominators I have noticed in the businesses that are doing well, is that they were doing the right things a year or more ago. The steady continuous effort has created momentum that is still propelling them forward.

Wherever you are in your business today, this is the perfect time to shore up the weak spots and start doing the right things. Don’t expect immediate results, which is what everyone wants. Rather, work the principles and do the right things, knowing that it will ultimately pay off.