

Getting Out of "Do-do"

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By **Steve Epner**

I am not kidding. This article is about getting out of do-do!

"Do-do" is the mode most business people seem to always be stuck in. Head down, shoulder to the wheel, nose to the grind stone, push, push, push. We are always doing. Maybe it makes us feel better. Maybe it is an animal instinct that comes from ancient history. Wherever it came from, it can be expensive, less productive than we think, and can make us downright ineffective.

It is easy to fool ourselves when we are hard at "do-do" work. As a matter of fact, we often call it busy work. We look busy. That gets us promoted. We work extra hours. We complain that we cannot get away from our desks. We always seem to be in "do-do" mode.



What is important is to get out of the "do-do" trap and instead strive for "done-done." It is important to do work — it is more important to get work done. Finish something. Get results. Move forward.

That is an important business lesson. Find the places in your organization where there is just too much "do-do." This is true of any operation. It seems especially prevalent in the world of small businesses. The most successful people and the most profitable businesses (other than government) are always finishing things. They operate, live in and encourage "done-done."

One old saying that fits is: "the good is the enemy of the best." How often will we keep tweaking something to try and make it just a little bit better? Or even perfect? Instead, we should get to the point where it gets the job done right and out the door.

More progress will be made when we are taking care of our customers. Deliver the results you know that they need. Let them tell you if anything needs to be improved. If they are happy, you can be happy.

Sometimes we just need to test our assumptions of what we think the customer wants from us. Try a small test sample. Be prepared to be surprised. Learn from the market. Make adjustments, try it again, get more feedback and keep working at it until the market says, "You have what we want." Then deliver with excellence.

Be fast and get things done, but do not accept sloppy work. Poor quality will hurt you every time. Appropriate quality that gets the job done is usually much faster to market, less expensive to do, will satisfy the customer and builds a strong "done-done" reputation.

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We have all heard the expression: "paralysis by analysis." This is a natural consequence of living in a "do-do" world. We have all seen companies that miss opportunities because they studied it to death. They are worried they might miss something. They are afraid of being wrong, so they never get that new initiative done.

In our modern world, "action trumps everything." (This is the subtitle of a book by Leonard A. Schlesinger, Charles Kiefer and Paul B. Brown; I met Len while participating in a special program for Entrepreneurship Educators at Babson College). We need to keep moving forward. We need to take action and get things done.

We need to try things, learn from the experience, correct course and try again. It is OK to perfect ideas by trial and error. Put this mindset into effect, and you will be rewarded with ultimate success, better processes and an environment where continuous improvement rules.

Some people will say, "But that is not our culture." I respectfully disagree. Culture should not be used as an excuse for not doing the right thing. Culture is the glue that holds groups together. Do not confuse culture with bad habits. Get out of the "do-do" bad habits and move into the profitability of "done-done."

There is plenty of opportunity to grow, expand and improve. Stop thinking about it and start getting something done. You will be amazed at how much can be accomplished.

Steve Epner teaches Innovation and Corporate Entrepreneurship in the Graduate School of Business at Saint Louis University and Innovation at the undergraduate level at Webster University. He is the founder of Brown Smith Wallace Consulting, Inc., a business advisory firm based in St. Louis, Mo. He can be reached at sepner@bswc.com.