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Business Systems – Not Just For Big Business

By Michael Clark

When I mention business systems to you, what comes to mind? Do you think of an IBM mainframe computer sitting in a big room in the middle of your building? Do you think of expensive, highly specialized software? That's what many small business owners imagine. And they think it's not for them. If that's what you think, you're only half right.

Half right because expensive, highly specialized software is probably not for you. Half wrong because good business systems most definitely are. A business system isn't hardware or software. It's the way that you do any part of your business. It's how you do things. You are using systems all the time, you just may not be using them efficiently.

I regularly urge business owners to get everything they know about their business out of their head and onto paper. I'm urging you now to do the same with your systems. Start writing out how you do things in your business. At a minimum, write out how you treat your customers or clients, how your paperwork for each sale flows, how your production systems work, how you market to clients, and how you do your bookkeeping.

Do this in detail. For each area, make a very detailed description of every step in the process. Include what you do and why you do it. Include the subtle parts that make your company uniquely you. Include the parts that you are proud of. Include the tricks that make it efficient. Include what you tried that didn't work and explain why. Each system should become a very rich, highly detailed system. Why so much detail?

Because this is the beginning of being able to consistently deliver results. And the beginning of being able to consistently deliver results even when you aren't around. Documented (written) systems make delegating much more manageable. Delegating is one of the keys to success in growing your business while still having a life.

Maybe you don't want a bigger business. Maybe you want to keep yours small. Still, wouldn't it be nice to be able to go on a long vacation and turn the keys over to someone else to run and make money for you while you are gone? Without systems, that wouldn't be remotely possible. With systems almost

anything is. Now, does that sound like something that should only be for big business? I think not.

Start up business resource guide and consultant, Michael Clark has been crafting best small business ideas for over 20 years. Michael, a serial entrepreneur, has opened multiple successful small businesses over the last 12 years. For more small business success stories, visit

<http://biznbeyond.com>

Does GPS Vehicle Tracking Equate To 'Big Brother?'

By Ken Sink

When people ask about my business, I tell them, "My company offers GPS vehicle tracking systems." Their response lets me know whether they are an employee or a business owner.

The first words out of the mouth of an employee is: "Sounds like `Big Brother' to me." Oh no, not `Big Brother!' Visions of mind-controlled drones working like slaves come to mind and they quickly walk away.

`Big Brother?' What is wrong with a business monitoring their vehicles? Or making sure their employees are doing what they're being paid to do? Who owns these vehicles, anyway? Does the owner have a right to know how they're being used?

Now, don't get me wrong. I believe employees should be trusted and treated as adults. But, if you've ever driven a rental vehicle differently than the car you own, then you understand how an employee may mistreat a company vehicle.

Take the speeding employee, for example. Employees who drive too fast waste your gasoline, wear out your vehicle prematurely and sooner or later, drive up your insurance rates.

A GPS vehicle tracking system can alert you when someone exceeds your pre-set speed limit. It's your vehicle, your fuel and your insurance premium; a tracking system helps you regain control of them.

Who uses your vehicles after hours and on weekends? Is an employee using your vehicle to moonlight? Is he using your gas to move his brother-in-law into a new apartment? You'll know if you install a GPS vehicle tracking device in your vehicles.

How do you verify overtime claims? Maybe you can verify the work was done, but when? With a GPS tracking system, you can cross-check a vehicle's location with the time of day it was there.

Have you ever been tempted to take an extended lunch hour? Think your employees might be tempted, especially if they're out of the boss's sight? A GPS tracking system records how long each vehicle remains at one location; use it to keep them honest.

Another benefit of GPS vehicle tracking systems: you'll never make another phone call to find out

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where your employees are—you can just look on the map displayed on your computer screen. Also, your GPS tracking system will remind you when it's time to rotate tires, change oil or perform other scheduled maintenance. And, many insurance companies offer discounts of up to 30% for vehicles protected with GPS tracking systems.

The employee also benefits when their company vehicle is equipped with a GPS vehicle tracking system.

1. Hand-written driver logs are replaced with data from the tracking system.
2. Using info from the gps tracking system, each employee's productivity can be quantified and compared; an employee's performance can be more objectively measured.
3. Your dispatcher can look on a computer screen and locate all your vehicles immediately.

Customers also benefit from GPS vehicle tracking systems. Businesses can provide precise arrival or delivery estimates, because the estimate is based upon the actual location of the tracking device-equipped vehicle at the moment they call. If a customer questions when your employee arrived or left —prove it to them using data from your tracking system.

Still think GPS tracking systems are tools of `Big Brother'? I guess it depends upon your point of view.

The concept of `Big Brother' never comes up with business owners. The business owner will say: "How will tracking my vehicles help my business make more money?" They want to know what GPS vehicle tracking can do for them.

Are GPS vehicle tracking systems `Big Brother'?—You tell me.

Ken Sink, owner of My Vehicle WatchDog, is a veteran with 20+ years of transportation experience, including fleet management of over 800 vehicles. Visit

<http://www.MyVehicleWatchDog.Info>

for more

information about GPS vehicle tracking systems from Fleet Management Solutions, Networkfleet and Sprint/Nextel.



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