

Marty Whitford • Publisher/Editorial Director

## Easier said (and written) than done

### Business consultant Norm Cooper reminds us progress requires change



I treasure creating to-do lists. But sometimes I forget making these lists is just step one. I need to plan my work *and* work my plan.

**T**aking an honest, comprehensive inventory based on extensive internal and external feedback, as well as deep introspection, is a necessary step on the path of growth. But it's only the first step.

Step two is developing related improvement strategies and tactics. Step three is executing them. It's these two steps that separate good from great.

PMP Hall of Famer Norm Cooper has spent decades guiding pest management professionals (PMPs) and their companies through these three steps, propelling them from good to great. Last month, I shared a few of Norm's practical business tips. Here are a few more (just the tip of Norm's knowledge iceberg), along with my two cents:

**With a nominal investment of time and effort, pest management professionals (PMPs) can make the power of the press work for (rather than against) them. All it takes is a few relevant, catchy and concise press releases, backed by follow-up calls and emails, to build media relationships and positive exposure.**

*You're preaching to the choir (or media in this case). I couldn't agree more. PMPs need to partner with the press to underline their roles as both protectors of public health and guardians of the environment. Better to be proactive than reactive. Better to be media mavens than targets.*

**Which five service-based products would you least want to live without (i.e. cell phones, the Internet, GPS, cable TV, digital video recorders)? Would you cancel any of those services if their rates rose 7 percent? At what price increase**

**would you consider cancelling? How much do you think you could increase the price of your services before encountering strong customer resistance? I bet most of the push back wouldn't occur until you increased rates more than 7 percent, perhaps more than 10 percent, in one year. Amen!** *Competing on price alone, or even primarily on price, isn't a way to earn business. Everyone loses with that business model. And the cost of doing business is soaring. Fuel and medical insurance are two examples. If we don't raise prices annually, we're standing still on a down escalator. To capture increased value we must market and deliver increased value. Pest management is recession resistant, not recession-proof.*

**Shortly after returning from a business conference — or better yet, while en route home from the meeting — note three attractive business-improvement ideas discussed at the event and outline plans to leverage them. Then chase the trio of initiatives, one at a time, with zest. Don't let day-to-day business bury your initial enthusiasm and commitment.** *More sound advice, but another easier-said-than-done tip. I treasure creating to-do lists. But sometimes I forget making these lists is just step one. I need to plan my work and work my plan.*

**Disable your Reply-to-All email option. Few technological "advancements" have caused more pain and wasted more time.** *I recently heard a technology guru present email time-management tips that included: "If you replied to all in an email today, please know you've helped make the world a worse place." Point taken, although a bit overstated — which, ironically, is the root of the Reply-to-All abuse issue. **PMP***

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