

THREE TIPS FOR SPRING CLEANING THE OFFICE

Just like closets and kitchens get a spring cleaning this time of year, small business owners should also take the time to dust off old contracts, test new systems and polish up policies and procedures that may need some sprucing up. Here's a small business spring-cleaning checklist for the tidy entrepreneur:

No. 1: Update Contracts to Reflect the Times

Sometimes a small business owner may not draft an original contract for a service or good. "Borrowing" terms and conditions from a friend's contract or a contract found online can lead to unfortunate outcomes if the entrepreneur hasn't taken the time to evaluate each sentence. The same can occur with contracts drafted years ago, which may need an update in order to account for changes in business operations or technology.

No. 2: Purge the Old and Test the New

A cluttered hard drive not only slows down computers, but also exposes them to external threats.

"One of the most common things people negate to do is comb through data, go through files, clear out documents and applications they don't need," said Jason Harrison, of Harrison Technology Consulting. "When you run less software and you are using just what you really need, you eliminate potential security hazards."

Harrison recommended entrepreneurs install all suggested updates for computer programs, including anti-virus software, which business owners often "set and forget."

Document backup systems also could use a spring sprucing to ensure they work and are storing the right documents.

"Make sure your backup is working by conducting a back-up audit," said Harrison, "Life gets busy and business owners may forget to add new documents to that backup."

Testing should also extend to security on devices such as smart phones, tablets and laptops, which can be easily lost and compromised.

No. 3: Evaluate Your Employee Appraisal Process and Procedures

Human-resource experts advice assessing employee performance should not be left to the weeks before evaluations or bonus distribution.

"Small businesses are getting more sophisticated in using client and supervisor feedback to determine what value a person is bringing to an organization," said Rob Basso, president of Advantage Payroll Services.

Basso recommended that entrepreneurs survey clients to find out how satisfied they are with the employee handling their account.

"Ask a simple questions like 'How long does it take for someone to get back to you from my office?'" advised Basso. These types of surveys, coupled with observations of how employees work, will help small business owners determine if the employee workload is too little or too much.

If several new employees have come on board, spring may be the time to polish up a company's employee handbook.

"Make sure that policies and procedures still make sense for your organization. At two or three employees you are not going to have too many issues with vacation, sick or family-time because it is handled very casually," said Basso, "But, once you get to 20 employees, layers of complexity are added."

Credit: Fox Business News

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The Monument Builders of PA is proud to spotlight Mayes Memorials from Lemont, PA. Mayes Memorials has been a dedicated member of the Monument Builders of PA and owner Dick Stever is a Current Board Member of the Monument Builders of PA. I had the pleasure of speaking with Dick about his business and the services he provides.

Mayes Memorials has been a staple in Lemont community since the 1900's and has resided at its present location, 910 Pike Street, Lemont, PA since 1924. The Mayes family owned and operated the business from the early 1900's until 1976. At that time, the Mayes family sold the business to a group of owners who ran the day-to-day activities until 1981. In 1981, Mayes Memorials returned to a family owned business when Ron and Lynda Dague purchased the business. Ron and Lynda continued the traditions of the Mayes family by completing all the design work themselves as well as the installation of their monuments as well.

After having sales experience in the monument industry and following an initial career in funeral business, Dick made the decision to purchase Mayes Memorials in 1998. After the purchase of the business Dick stated, "I am carrying on the tradition of excellence set forth years ago by the Mayes family. Mayes Memorials guarantees that their work and focus towards quality and value in their products will provide a meaningful Memorialization of your loved ones."

Over the past 10 years, Mayes Memorials has focused on that quality by building a 2500 square foot building in 2005 that enhanced their business. The new facility allowed Mayes Memorials to provide excellent turnaround time and service on the purchase and installation of a monument. Additionally, they invested in their inventory and quality units that have allowed Mayes Memorials to increase their average sale by 100% in a few short years. Lastly, Mayes Memorials offers written guarantees on all of their foundation work as well as material warranties on quality stone, such as Barre Grey and others, to make our customers comfortable that we stand behind our work and offer service after the sale.

As the monument industry has evolved over the past few years, Mayes Memorials has created opportunities for their business to become more profitable by offering memorialization with the ongoing trend of Cremation. One such example of this Memorialization is the cremation units Mayes Memorials for Cemetery's and Church's. Finally, Mayes Memorials has worked very hard to make relationships with Funeral Home owners and Cemetery caretakers that enhance their businesses and build trust with their customers.

The Monument Builders would like to thank Mayes Memorials for their continued support of our organization and the monument industry.



Owner of Mayes Memorial, Dick Stever, in front of their store in Lemont, PA.

Shop Talk

Thank you to Sharon Baughman Witmer from Baughman Memorials for providing this bit of information for cleaning granite.

For granite that is very dirty or has dark marks on (but not oil), mix about a gallon of crystal cleaner and add to that about 8 oz. of denatured alcohol.



Thoroughly wet all surface of the stone. Let soak about 10-15 minutes but do not let it dry.

Pressure wash clean.

If some dirt still remains, repeat process.

For Sale

Titan Abrasive 750 lb. blast pot with air controls, moisture separator, blast hood, with filter and hoses.

Granite City Tool Pneumatic Abrasive pick-up, includes vacuum hose and 700 lb. storage tank.

Complete package: \$3,000.00

For more information please contact:

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2013 MBNA
Monument Industry Show
CINCINNATI, OHIO

MBNA held their convention in Cincinnati from February 8-10 with a full exhibit and many educational seminars. Over 900 people attended the convention and had the opportunity to visit over 80 different vendors. At the show you were able to experience the most comprehensive collection of manufacturers, wholesalers, equipment, product and technology suppliers in the industry all under one roof. We all know how important it is to meet face-to-face with these individuals and gain insights into the latest trends.



Change is something that is always happening and it seems our industry has been changing rapidly. Technology is playing a stronger role in our day to day operations. Cremation continues to grow and we have to be ready to serve the memorial needs of those choosing cremation. The convention was allowed networking with fellow memorialists a great way to pick up ideas and helpful hints to deal with these changes and make your business more efficient and profitable.



One highlight was the MBFilms debut. MBNA has allocated \$100,000 to the production of short videos for distribution to its members for their use. These can be used on your company's web site and promote different types of memorailization...they are very well done.



NEW ENGLAND MONUMENT DEALERS ASSOCIATION SHOW

**February 28-March 3, 2013
Groton, CT**

The Monument Builders would like to thank Andy Gingrich from Gingrich Memorials on providing a recap on the New England Monument Dealers Association Show that took place in Groton, CT from February 28-March 3, 2013.



The New England Show saw over 250 individuals from Thursday to Sunday visit the display room area. On Friday night a customer appreciation night was held for all attendees of the show. On Saturday most of the morning sessions dealt with presentations by a variety of individuals.

A presentation was given by the MBNA president concerning the new video application MB Films on their website. These films are free to put on your website to promote Memorialization. Additionally, if you would like to personalize the video with your firm's name it can be done for a nominal cost.

An additional presentation was by given by a representative from Adam's Granite. The emphasis of his discussion had to do with the ordering process on the manufacturing side. Discussion took place on why orders are sometimes delayed, the turnaround time for standard domestic and import stock jobs. Further discussion was held on what to do when a customer does not check their acknowledgement. These few factors were discussed as some of the biggest reasons for the delay in getting the memorial out to the retailer.



Lastly a representative from Cochran's Monuments discussed the importing process from China and India. Discussion along with handouts were given to attendees to explain what happens from the time you place the order until it gets put on the truck to be sent to the retailer. A reception was held on Saturday night to close the show.

We would like to congratulate the New England Monument Dealers on a great show!