

## **Flying by the Seat of Your Pants**

- by Lloyd Merritt Smigel

So many companies in this industry have gotten to where they are because of just plain old hard work, blood, sweat and tears. They started out with a few accounts, made enough, sometimes, to pay the bills and eventually evolved to hiring a few people and make a pretty fair living for themselves and their family. Pretty impressive.

Many grew without any formal plan or strategy and reached a peak. For some reason they just can't or won't grow past that certain dollar mark. They can not get across that invisible wall. That's pretty frustrating, considering that some of these companies have been around for generations and still have about the same amount of routes for years and years.

Yes, they can still make a good living but it is frustrating seeing some 'new kid on the block' come in to town and in several years they have a much bigger piece of the market share than they have. How did that happen.

Times change. Values change. Technology changes. Everything changes but some of the 'die hards' in business. "It got us to where we are – why change??" This is very dangerous thinking.

I have seen many companies with Pest Control routes at 5 thousand dollars and now I am seeing them at \$15,000 - \$20,000. How do they do that?

Changing their services, adding new services, better price structuring, better computer systems, better routing, etc.

The higher routes pay more income to the route personnel and, in turn, there is less turnover and more time to work on higher paying strategies and planning.

"It's too much work and I don't know how to do all of that." This is where seeking help comes in. No one is expected to just attain knowledge by using the Vulcan Mind Meld. Most of us are humans, not Vulcan's.

So we have to learn new ways, new techniques and new strategies in both dealing with individuals and running our businesses differently.

Recently I met with a company who sort of 'leveled out' at the \$900,000 - \$1 Million dollar mark. Up and down year after year just hovering on and around that mark for years. It took us about a year and we are out of the 'hovering' stage. New Mission Statements, new Job Descriptions, new types of services, rerouting, new goals, new training and new enthusiasm.

When YOUR vision is altered and YOU get excited about your new goals and the new roads you are traveling on – so will your personnel.

When I first arrived at this company, the owner was not sure how to get out of this rut, but he knew if he didn't – people would leave. He did want to grow but wasn't sure just how to do it. His people felt 'trapped' in their positions with no future. Sure, everyone was making a good living, but they all wanted more.

The fact of the matter is that most people do want to advance. If they don't, you would be stuck where you are. If you can not give them the opportunity to grow – the good ones will leave and find another company to grow with and become your competitor.

The entrepreneur must seek new ways to advance. They must continue to learn and/or give their personnel and/or family members, the opportunity to advance.

This is not an easy task. You are now comfortable and why take any risks?

Because if you don't you will be left in the dust and lose people.

Flying by the seat of your pants is actually more difficult than developing a new plan and going for it. Few learn this lesson.

There's an old saying, "you can't steal second base without taking your foot off of first base."

Invest in the future of your company and learn from others. Hire a consultant (it doesn't have to be me – you can get someone better looking?) but be sure they are FROM this industry and have a track record. Join the Discovery Retreats (Call Becky 1-888-711-3232) where every 4 months non-competitive companies meet to exchange ideas with each other. Talk to people who have broken through that invisible wall. You have to reach OUT of where you are to get the knowledge you need or you will stay on that Carousel going round and round working faster and faster and going, only in circles.

Good luck.