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## Not Just a Corn Cob Pipe and Button Nose

### THE SURPRISING HISTORY OF THE SNOWMAN

Building a snowman is one of the most picturesque winter activities, which is why snowmen have become a wintertime cultural icon. A snowman appeared on the very first postcards, was the subject of some of the earliest photos, and even starred in silent movies. Frosty may be a happy snowman now, but his ancestors have a much more varied — and sometimes dark — history.

#### THE MIDDLE AGES

Snowmen were a phenomenon in the Middle Ages. They were constructed with deep thought and great skill because, during a time of limited means of expression, snow was a free art supply that literally fell from the sky. These artistic feats were popular winter attractions for well-to-do couples who wanted to get their fix of temporary art. Snowmen were often created by famous artists, including 19-year-old Michelangelo who, in 1494, was commissioned by the ruler of Florence to sculpt a snowman in his mansion's courtyard.

#### THE MIRACLE OF 1511

In Brussels in 1511, during six weeks of subzero temperatures called the Winter of Death, the city was miraculously adorned with hundreds of snowmen. The spectacle told stories on every

street corner — some political and some demonstrating anger with the church, many too risqué to speak of. For the people of Brussels, this Miracle of 1511 was a defining moment of artistic freedom. But when spring came and the snow thawed, the Belgians were left with damaging floods.

#### THE SCHENECTADY MASSACRE

Not all snowmen have an innocent history. In 1690, former Fort Schenectady in upstate New York was home to a remote Dutch settlement, which was under the constant threat of attack. Soldiers guarded the gates at all times because they were frozen open, but during a blizzard, they left a pair of snowmen to protect the gates while they sought shelter. That's when 200 French Canadian soldiers and Native Americans approached. Naturally, they were unfazed by the snowmen and ruthlessly invaded the settlement.

Building a snowman seems like a simple and charming activity, but after learning about its surprising history, you might find those piles of snow seem a little more complicated and a lot more meaningful than before.



# South Bay Energy

DECEMBER 2020

## Steve's Update

As I write this month's newsletter, it is the beginning of November. Fall is in full swing, so it's starting to get cold out! This morning, I put my bicycle away in the shed, took the snow blower out, and put it in the garage. I also put some STA-BIL gas stabilizer in the GTO and the Streamliner and put them in hibernation. That includes putting them on the trickle charger. I am also expecting my buddy Erik to call me from the boatyard soon to take the boat over for winter storage!

I know I talked about working on the '50 Streamliner last month, but I never got around to it. I've really got to get to the brakes on that car, since it really doesn't stop very well. It's really tough working on the cars in the garage. There is just no room. Plus, maybe I am losing a little interest in working on these things. I think I would rather drive them than work on them! I guess we will have to wait till spring to mess with either one of them.

As you know, here in New York, we are still in a state of emergency and not allowed to solicit new customers. South Bay is still working in New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and Ohio, but we are still shut down in New York. The present state of emergency is set to expire Nov. 3. We probably won't know if they are extending it till the end of the week. It's been tough to keep our employees out of work for so long, and I am a little confused as to why the current situation requires a state of emergency. I don't see why soliciting to help business owners with their energy supply is something the government won't allow. Seems a little bit over the top. Perhaps the governor will finally put an end to this and let us go back to work.

In some of my past newsletters, I talked about property I have been looking for in either upstate New York or Pennsylvania. I like the idea of Pennsylvania because the taxes are lower and there are fewer land use regulations. I have seen a few pieces of property, but



Here's a picture of the pond!

there always seems to be one thing wrong with the property that keeps me from making an offer. The last one was extremely steep and almost the entire 200 acres was a mountain! There was maybe half an acre that was flat. That's too much climbing for me!

However, I looked at this one piece of property in Wayne County. It took me just a little over three hours to get there, and it seemed to fit the bill. It was not very steep or hilly at all, and it had a really nice pond on it too. It was a little bit more money that I was looking to spend, though. This search has been going on for probably 3-4 years. This has been by far the best property I have seen. I just don't know. Maybe I will make an offer. Maybe something else will come along.

This newsletter will probably be hitting your mailbox around Thanksgiving time. This has been a really tough year. I think we all realize that we still have a lot to be grateful for though. From our South Bay Energy family to yours: Have a great Thanksgiving, everybody!

- Steve Mellis

# Decisions, Decisions

## Tactics for Making the Best Business Choices

As a business leader, you're likely well-versed in making decisions, but in the midst of a global health crisis, a political minefield, and environmental disasters, planning for the upcoming year is different territory for even the most seasoned business professionals. So, how do you make the right decisions for your 2021 plans? Start with these three steps.

### NO. 1: LOOK AT THE DATA.

Data has never steered you wrong before, so don't stop using it now. However, you have to use the right data and contextualize it with today's lenses. For example, when choosing a new marketing campaign or direction, continue looking at the cost, revenue, potential errors, and risk factors. Use those to make an informed decision about which step to take. For example, is the campaign empathetic to the needs of your clients, or will it come off as tone-

deaf? (**Hint:** Try split testing in 2020 before fully deploying a new campaign in 2021!)

### NO. 2: DON'T GO WITH THE STATUS QUO.

"This is how we've always done it" will kill your business. Nothing is the same as it was just one year ago. The entire world has transformed, and attempting to continue with what's "normal" will only cause you to miss what could be. As you plan for 2021, consider the abnormal. Look at options you would have never considered doing and test their efficacy. If one fails, move on. But there's a big chance that you may stumble into something that is totally unique and completely worth your time.

### NO. 3: EMBRACE CHANGE.

You've set your course. You have your team in place. You're excited to begin. Now, get ready to change everything. Sounds



exhausting, right? But it can happen. Rather than being resistant to what isn't working, admit defeat and move on. If there's one benefit of the COVID-19 pandemic, it's that we were all given a crash course on how to adapt quickly. Take those lessons and apply them to your 2021 plan. Be prepared to admit when your original plan isn't working because staying on an ineffective course can do more harm than good.

Don't avoid it. Planning for 2021 is necessary — even if you need to change course quickly.

# Holiday Hacks for the Busy Professional

## 4 TIPS FOR A LESS EXHAUSTING HOLIDAY SEASON

The holidays are an incredibly busy time of year. Between work and home, it can feel like there isn't enough daylight to get everything done. We have projects to complete, emails to answer, dinners to plan, gifts to buy — and family is coming in from out of town. Is it possible to take care of everything and not be completely exhausted by the end of it? While we can't answer that definitively, we can share a few "holiday hacks" to help you get more out of your time.

**Put work aside.** Give yourself blocks of time to focus on one thing at a time. You may be tempted to multitask, but for your mental health, don't do it. Focusing on one thing at a time produces better results (this applies equally to cooking as it does to client work) and you'll feel better through the process.



**Delegate — at home!** You delegate assignments at work, so why not do the same at home? Start with your immediate family and work your way out. Give everyone a task: Someone does the grocery shopping. Someone is in charge of a main course dish. Another is on side-dish duty. Others get dessert. Don't forget to assign a clean-up crew. Save yourself for the tasks you REALLY want to do.

**Take frequent breaks.** When you have a lot going on, frequent 5–10 minute minibreaks can go a long way in easing the mental pressure. Don't hesitate to take brain breaks throughout the day. Go for a quick walk around the building or neighborhood. Read a chapter of your book. Play a quick game on your phone.

**Say no to the kitchen.** When your time is precious, why spend a lot of time in the kitchen? While some find cooking a joy, others find it burdensome. If you're in the latter group, it's okay to go the boxed or prepared meal route when time is short. Boxed meals can still be prepared with love, and you can get high-quality frozen dishes or freshly prepared meals from your favorite grocery store. The time and energy you save is worth the investment.

In 2020, we have more options than ever to make life easier. So, enjoy the holidays a little more by doing the things you love and using these tips to make the most of your time and energy this season.

# THE 2 BIGGEST MISTAKES YOU CAN MAKE WHEN SETTING SALES GOALS FOR 2021

Regardless of how 2020 treated your business, 2021 is fast approaching, and this past year is about to become a closed chapter. It's time to examine both the bad and the good that happened in 2020 and set tangible sales goals for 2021. Just be sure you don't fall into these two traps.

### MISTAKE NO. 1: MAKING YOUR GOALS UNREALISTIC

Setting an unrealistic goal for each quarter is sure to lead to failure. The trick is to push the limits of what has been done without settling on a number that is completely unachievable. Remember, if your team begins to exceed expectations, you can adjust and increase your goal! It's far better to overachieve than to underperform.

Finding that perfect goal number means that sales leaders will have to sort through a lot of data. Rely on both external and internal data to develop an understanding of the sales outlook for 2021. What do the 2020 numbers forecast for your business? What kinds of services or products are the most popular? What's the forecast of the economy or your industry? These questions can guide you as you set your goals.

### MISTAKE NO. 2: FAILING TO PLAN PROPERLY

You will not accomplish the goals you've set for yourself and your team if you don't provide the steps to get there. Pull information from industry leaders as well as your sales team, workers on the floor, and marketing managers. Your employees have valuable viewpoints on your business, while outside forces shift your view from internal to external. With this combined information, hash out a plan with your sales team. Don't leave the Zoom meeting until you have tangible steps in place.

A plan is only as good as its execution, and when there's no opportunity to prepare, it will undoubtedly fail. Your quarterly and yearly sales goals for 2021 should be set now so that your team has ample time to prepare. This will allow for additional training or discussions about proper tactics and strategies for marketing and selling your business to targeted customers.

Before you know it, 2020 will be in the past. Don't forget to make tangible sales goals and a plan for 2021 before it's too late.

## Word Search

D L T F I G P F T U L D Y W X  
D Z T A X V H X B M I Z K O H  
Y X U R E C A M J L X Y G L H  
L C O D A M V M T H I L X Z T  
D P P X D Z J D U Y M L Y B J  
G W E I S N O W E R C O A U E  
F Y F A I Z J G W E A H D E Z  
J J W Q C A H F W E X X I S F  
F O Y H G E A J T H G A L I I  
T V U V U M G I W C L K O O L  
A L N F I C A R O L G A H U Q  
V Y M L H I D L E V O H S Q R  
T S Y W L J X R M Q D H F R V  
C Z C O C O A T G S C W B U Q  
C T V F G N I D D E L S S T N

CAROL  
CHEER  
COCOA  
FAMILY  
GIFT  
HOLIDAY

HOLLY  
PEACE  
SHOVEL  
SLEDDING  
SNOW  
TURQUOISE

# REWARDS

As a South Bay Energy customer, you get Reward Dollars every month that you can use in over 500,000 ways! Use your rewards for takeout, online shopping, groceries, and more. Save on popular name brands like ...

SONY

Marriott

macy's

Target

SUBWAY

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