

SOUTHEAST



BUSINESS

ASSOCIATION

## NEWSLETTER

# Don't Put Off Business Tasks

January 2015

### **Putting off the critical and not-so-critical tasks in your business can set you up for failure.**

by Rieva Lesonsky, *Best-selling author and authority on entrepreneurship*

Do you ever procrastinate? Don't we all, at least occasionally? But for a small-business owner, procrastination can have serious consequences. It can mean blown deadlines, missed opportunities and lost customers.

Ironically, the things we put off are often the most important things in our business. We briskly get to work answering emails, while ignoring the small-business loan application we really need to complete that's rotting at the bottom of a pile of papers. My two business partners are incredibly productive—but at any given moment, even these paragons of efficiency have at least one big, looming project they can't bring themselves to start.

If you're staring down a project with a million moving parts, begin by breaking it into small steps. I mean really small.

Kick-start yourself out of your procrastination funk, you've got to dig deep into the reasons behind it. Are you procrastinating due to:

**Fear?** Fear of failure is the obvious choice here—if you never try, you can't fail, so you keep delaying whatever's hanging over your head. But there's also the fear of success. What if you completed that loan application, got the money and grew your business beyond your wildest dreams? Are you afraid you wouldn't be able to handle the growth, that you'd have no time for your family, that you'd have to give a big speech at your next industry conference? Figure out what you're afraid of. If the fear is unfounded, it'll become obvious. If it's telling you something important—such as, you don't want to grow your business because you enjoy your current lifestyle—then listen carefully.

**Burnout?** Maybe you're putting off a huge task because you're fried. If entrepreneurship is starting to feel like a grind, figure out how to freshen it up. Could you delegate the task you're procrastinating or at least share some of the labor? Is there a way to do it differently so it doesn't feel like the same old, same old? Try breaking up the types of tasks you do. If you've been writing proposals for a solid week, revamping your business plan is likely to feel like a chore. Instead, take a few

days to make client calls or do something completely unrelated, then start the big task when you're refreshed.

**Incompetence?** If a project is outside our comfort zone, we often delay getting started. There are two solutions here: Either delegate the project to someone who is competent, or become competent yourself. If the skill will benefit you as a business owner (say, public speaking or networking), it's likely worth learning. Take a class, study the subject online or get a colleague to coach you. If the skill won't be useful to you in the long term (updating your fashion boutique's website), hand it off to an employee or contractor, and focus on the tasks in your wheelhouse.

**Distraction?** There are tons of distractions in the average business owner's day—from workplace crises to employees dropping by your office, from the temptations of Facebook to the temptations of the fridge (if you work at home). To help you keep your blinders on, set a time to start on the project, treat it like a meeting with your most important client, and eliminate distractions  
*(continued on page 2)*

### Inside this issue:

#### Our Next Meeting

2015 Summit  
January 8, 2015 6 pm  
Bonnie Kay Seafood  
222 Spur Road  
Greensboro  
(RSVP Amy Schwartz)

Make sure to bring 1  
business card, a pen and a  
blank sheet of paper

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## Don't Put Off Business Tasks - continued

however you need to—whether by turning off your email and phone, shutting your office door, working from Starbucks or staying up til 4 a.m. to get the job done.

**Temporary ADD?** When you try to work on the dreaded project, does your brain start buzzing with a zillion other things you need to do? Do a “brain dump” and write down every “to do” that’s racing through your head, from “Pick up dry cleaning” to “Call client before 4 p.m.” to “Redo spreadsheet” to “Buy Mom’s birthday present.” That way, you know you won’t forget anything and you can get focused on what’s really important.

**Complexity?** Sometimes a project seems so big, it’s just too overwhelming to start. If you’re staring

down a project with a million moving parts, begin by breaking it into small steps. I mean really small—like “Find Joe’s phone number” or “Make a copy of my tax returns.” Complete at least one step every day. You’ll typically find that once you take a step, momentum will keep you going. But even if you only complete one step a day, you’ll still get there eventually.

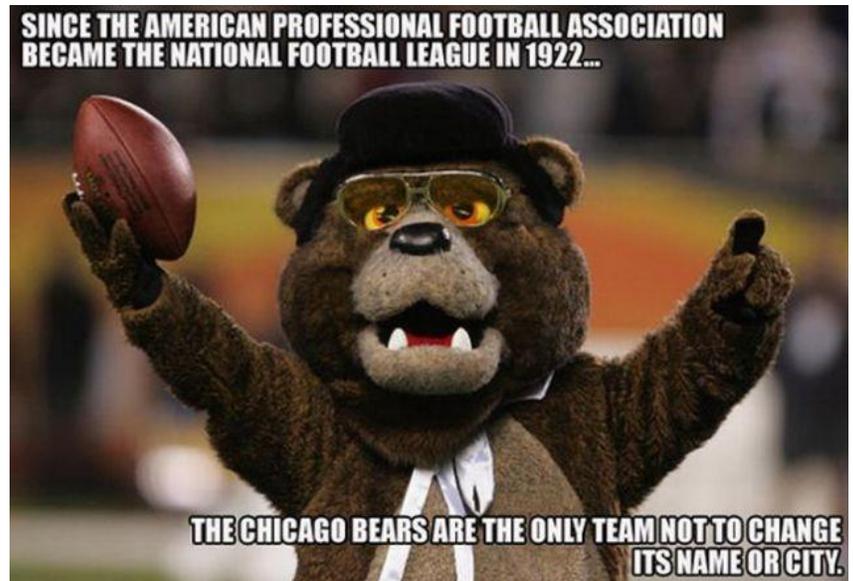
**Emotion?** Does a project require dealing with someone you can’t stand or revisiting an unpleasant situation from the past? Maybe you need to do something uncomfortable, like calling a valued client who’s suddenly late paying a bill. Don’t sweep these feelings under the rug. Face up to the

emotion that’s making you stall, and realize the only way to get past it is to complete the task so you can move on.

Need help getting unstuck go to [www.secba.org](http://www.secba.org) click on Membership Directory scroll the list and call a fellow member and ask for help!

Here's a thought: Business conventions are important . . .

Because they demonstrate how many people a company can operate without.



## SEHS Robotics Club

The Southeast Robotics Club needs your support. Team 668 has been working since September to design, build and program a robot to compete in the FIRST Tech Challenge. The FIRST Tech Challenge, open to students in grades 7-12, is designed to give students an opportunity to explore and discover the challenges and rewards of science, technology and engineering, while rewarding “gracious professionalism” and

cooperation between teams. To achieve our goal of participating in each year’s events, we must seek financial support from local businesses, members of our

**“Team 668 is open to all Southeast Guilford High School students”**

community, family and friends. Team 668 is open to all Southeast Guilford High School students and has an operating budget of approximately \$1000. Team members have participated in the public promotion of local US FIRST tournaments on WFMY News 2, and News 14, and they have participated in raising public awareness of S.T.E.M. events at Emerald Pointe, NC A&T University, and Dorton Arena.

**January is National:**

**Clean Up Your Computer Month**

**Glaucoma Awareness Month**

**Hot Tea Month**

**Mentoring Month**

**Poverty in America Awareness Month**

**Volunteer Blood Donor Month**

**Oatmeal Month**

**Teen Driving Awareness Month**



The Food Distribution Outreach Center volunteers were very honored to receive the can goods collected from our Christmas party. The center is located inside the Pleasant Garden UMC and serves over 175 families each month.

## It's Plane To See

In December I spoke about focus and Sir Winston Churchill's philosophy ... never give up! This month there was another opportunity for us to ... never give up!

My in-laws, Florence and Charlie, wanted to finally get to Greensboro to visit us in our home. Their health was never optimum enough to make the trip, but this year, at the ages of 89 and 90, they were not going to give up. Airplane tickets were purchased and the visit was scheduled for August. Florence wasn't up to it and they were allowed one year to use the tickets after fees were deducted. The next plan was for a September visit and it was a no go. October came and went then Florence's feet swelled with fluid - the doctor said no for flying and Jan's sister, Judy, said she would drive them here. Oh boy, it's a long 2-day ride each way.

Judy tried to get a refund, exchange or transfer to another family member to use the tickets, but was told it couldn't be done. Unfortunately Jan's parents did not buy the cancellation insurance. Judy told me, when she was up to it, she would get angry and badger them for the refund. I suggested to her that she not get angry, but be cordial and tell your parents story to the president or CEO of the airline. After a period of time when speaking with Jan she

was still not up to it (her husband in Hospice was gravely ill and passed away December 30, 2014) so Jan said she would be glad to take over the task.

Through her research Jan found out the information she needed to contact the CEO of the airlines and wrote the most wonderful, touching 2-page letter. She included a picture of herself and one of her parents. Charlie is a WWII purple heart veteran, she noted, and Mom and Dad have been married for 68 years! Jan told their wonderful story in a warm and loving way.

Now Florence also suffers from macular degeneration and is considered legally blind, but she wanted to see as much as she could on her visit here with her peripheral vision. Between walkers, canes and wheel chairs they made the trip which took extra long. Never giving up, we had our visit in November!

In the letter to the CEO Jan explained these issues and mentioned that her parents would never be able to use the tickets and no other family member is eligible to use them per the airline's policy. She asked him if there was anything he could do to make an exception, in their case, to refund the \$998. In closing Jan wrote, "I'm begging for help!"

In one week a phone call came from the executive assistant for the CEO of Delta Airlines. She told Jan the CEO read the letter and was very touched. They all were and, of course, he would authorize the full refund immediately. The airline was concerned about their customers. So we never gave up and recommend going to the top after reasonable efforts have been made for a satisfactory resolution. Remember the old adage ... you get more flies with honey than you do with vinegar and never give up, never, never, never, never, never, never, never!! Thank you, Sir Winston.



Tip O' The O'Malley Hat

## SEBA Board Members



### Southeast Business Association

PO Box 117  
Pleasant Garden, NC 27313

*Support, Encouragement & Endorsement*

*The mission of the Southeast Business Association is to provide a platform that encourages the growth and financial support of our local businesses. From the smallest to the largest, we will strive to endorse the businesses of the Southeast community and surrounding areas through support and interaction by working hand-in-hand with local civic groups and the community as a whole.*

We're on the Web!  
[www.SECBA.org](http://www.SECBA.org)

**President: Marty Heim**  
[marty@martydesigns.com](mailto:marty@martydesigns.com)  
336-674-9399

**Vice President/Newsletter Editor: Amy Schwartz**  
[aschwartz@triad.rr.com](mailto:aschwartz@triad.rr.com)  
336-697-7253

**Secretary: Tina Oliver**  
[fishtail58@yahoo.com](mailto:fishtail58@yahoo.com)  
336-402-0143

**Treasurer: Kim Payne**  
[kim@kimpayne.com](mailto:kim@kimpayne.com)  
336-676-1980

**Past President: Connie Thompson**  
[ccthompson@bbandt.com](mailto:ccthompson@bbandt.com)  
336-549-2679

**Board: Joanne Galo**  
[joanne.galo@firstcitizens.com](mailto:joanne.galo@firstcitizens.com)  
336-412-4148

**Board: Liz Murphy**  
[lizmur@msn.com](mailto:lizmur@msn.com)  
336-447-5014

**Board: Allan Younts**  
[Allan\\_y@bellsouth.net](mailto:Allan_y@bellsouth.net)  
336-580-0045

*This year pledge to SHOP SMALL, SPEND LOCAL, EAT LOCAL, ENJOY LOCAL and support the local businesses that support us and our community.*

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## President's Message

This year the President's Message will be at the end of the newsletter vs the beginning. The reason being: I'm a reader of industry related and client market driven publications that are filled with projections as what's coming down the pike and what it will look like. And --- most importantly for 80% of small business owners like us --- they highlight a trend.

To help you make 2015 your best year ever, look for

the Golden Nugget at the top of the newsletter that I gleaned from my reading.

Happy New Year! May it bring all of you Good Health, Happiness and Success in your personal and professional lives.

Cheers!

Marty Heim

