

## More From Less

A very long time ago, I worked for Moore Business Forms. This was back in the early 1980's, and at approximately \$2.5 billion in sales, Moore was the dominant player in the business forms segment and one of the largest printing companies in the world. Now, multi-part business forms are rarely seen, and whatever remains of Moore exists somewhere in the depths of RR Donnelly. I sometimes tell people that I'm a ghost from a segment of the printing industry that no longer exists.

But Moore was a great organization in its heyday, and for me, the perfect place to learn about printing and sales. One of my first teachers was the Eastern Region Sales Manager for my division, a guy named Clay Less, who was very fond of introducing himself as Less From Moore.

### Simple Efficiency

Clay never seemed to care that "less from more" was not as desirable as "more from less." He practiced doing more *with* less, though, in a number of ways. One of the early lessons he taught me was how to stretch my \$50 per month "entertainment" budget. "You can take a buyer to lunch at a steakhouse for \$25," he told me -- remember, this was back in the early 1980's -- "or you can take 3 buyers out to Chinese buffet places for the same money. Most buyers don't need steak, and you can make more of them happy with Chinese food. It's simple efficiency!"

Clay also liked to point out that the whole business forms industry was founded on the principle of efficiency. Using carbon paper (and later carbonless), one writing could produce two or more copies. That was a very big deal in the days before copy/printing machines!

### Time And Money

Efficiency is still the solution to the two principal shortages that plague printshop owners -- time and money. (If you have more than enough of either or both, congratulations. Otherwise, please read on.) The money part is pretty straightforward. If you can't afford everything that you want, you have to make do with less. Dollars coming in must be greater than dollars going out, or else you're in trouble.

But let's think about that money going out. What is it paying for? I'd like you to consider the idea that there are only two categories of expense, *time* and *other*. Paper, ink and toner fall into the category of *other*. Payroll expense falls into the category of *time*. If you're paying rent, or a mortgage, that falls into the category of *other*. If you're contemplating a new piece of equipment -- or an improvement to your facility, either of which will make you more efficient -- that falls into the category of *time*.

The point I'm hoping to make is that, when money is limited, you should use as much of it as you can on things that will make you more efficient. The key to success in doing more with less is to increase the return on your investment of time.

### Everybody's Time

As noted, payroll expense falls into the category of *time*. In other words, this is not just about your time, it's about everybody's time. So here are the million dollar questions:

- How much time gets wasted in my operation?
- Who's doing the wasting?
- How do I make these wasters more efficient?

There's no one-size-fits-all solution to this sort of problem, but I can tell you the most likely solution only has two parts -- training and motivation. If your employees (or you, for that matter) do not know how to perform a task efficiently, someone has to teach them. And if your employees (or you, for that matter) need motivation to perform, someone has to provide that.

Think about the term *human resources*. Now think about this, the best way to do more with less is to have your *human resources* performing at peak efficiency. Evaluation, training and motivation are the keys.