



## NAILD: The Plan: Put It In Writing

**Planning** is an accepted, even demanded, convention in today's business world. Steve Jobs, Steve Wozniak and Ronald Wayne developed a plan when they started Apple Computer in 1976. The Ford Motor Company had a plan in 1908 when it began developing the assembly line concept. Johnson and Johnson had a plan when it recalled 31 million bottles of cyanide-laced capsules of Extra-Strength Tylenol in 1982.

It's hard to deny that planning is a powerful, versatile and effective tool. Though, not all of us use "planning" to its fullest potential and, as a consequence, we minimize, or miss, its many benefits. There is no "magic" to developing a good plan. We need only to be disciplined, organized, focused and resilient... talents we all have.

Many planners fail to formalize their thoughts and ideas. Rather, they opt, day to day, to rely on their memory to recall valuable information, facts, and statistics. In the age of omnipresent information, depending on the Internet as a reliable source for existing data can be a good choice. Yet, random ideas, concepts, notions and abstract thoughts, not formally captured in a Word document or on paper, may be permanently lost due to faulty short-term memory limitations. Researchers have found that our **short-term memory** capacity is only **5 to 9 things** at one time. When we try to add more than that to our short-term memory storage, the new item replaces an existing one or simply won't make room for the incoming information. Intuitively, our brain tries to erase or pass-on memory bits as quickly as possible. This process is one reason why **multitasking is not only inefficient and unproductive**, but it is also misleading. We think we're achieving more than one thing, when, in fact, we're simply diluting more than one thing!

The actual process of converting short-term memory to long-term memory requires us to "encode" bits of information so that recall, retrieval and/or recognition are possible. The bottom line is if a thought is important: **WRITE IT DOWN!** Not only take copious notes, but also a) date them, b) indicate who was in the conversation and c) review them later (quickly, if possible) to expand omitted details and clarify any vagueness.

There are no reliable substitutes for recording information, thoughts and ideas in writing. So, why don't we put to pen (or keyboard) our thoughts and ideas? We could be **afraid to committing ourselves** to what we've written, we could be **concerned** that our ideas **will be ridiculed or criticized** by others, or our **thoughts may be contrary to company policy** or our boss' position. Legitimate concerns? Of course. But not valid reasons for relying on short-term memory when accuracy, clarification and context are needed.



**Take away:**

- \* If a thought, idea or concept is worth future consideration, **WRITE IT DOWN!**
- \* Short term memory capacity is 5=9 things at one time
- \* Multitasking doesn't work

Gary Thomas



glt & associates  
203-209-9072

[gary@gltworkshops.com](mailto:gary@gltworkshops.com)