



Road Signs!

By Vern Swedin ■ *Pace*



Can you imagine if you were speeding along the freeway at 70 miles per hour without having any understanding of the concept of car travel, the rules of traffic, the automobile you are driving, the route you are taking, or even the road signs along the way? You wouldn't do it!

Traveling like that would be so risky that most of us would slow down and take the time to learn the fundamentals involved. First, we would become educated on the concept of car travel. Next, we would probably learn the laws and rules of traffic. Then we would study the vehicle we are to drive, master the route from a road map, and finally we would use road signs to guide us to our final destination.

If our final destination is our goal to reach, we should probably start with the goal in mind: Where do we want to go?

Your company vision or goal should be clear enough that you know where you want to go. Before you even start your trip, you will need all of those other fundamentals in order to be capable of safely guiding your car and passengers (or business) to your goal destination.

Let's assume for a moment you understand the concept of car travel, your vehicle and all the other preparation needed to be able to head out on the open road. Are you prepared and alert enough to drive your vehicle safely to the goal?

Most of us run the highway gauntlet (and our businesses) daily without much thought. Often, it seems that we just get in and 'drive' to work. But driving (and running a business) are dynamic adventures, filled with constant change and variables. Do we understand the road signs along the way? Are we even looking for them, or just 'driving as usual? How many times in life have you been driving along and came to an intersection in the road and have had no idea what to do next? Or driven right past your turn because you were engrossed in thought or simply following your habitual path?

When I was writing this article, a friend and mentor, Ron Noden, shared with me a funny moment from his life. He told me he was driving along the road and saw a sign ahead. As he approached the sign he attempted to read the warning, when all of sudden well

before the sign he hit a big bump in the road, just then he read the sign clearly "BUMP". When he was sharing this account I felt the all to similar sensation of being broad sided in life much like the "BUMP" sign. How many bumps in the road have you experienced in your business? What was the direct affect the "bump" had on your business?

How do we prepare ourselves to avoid a major mishap?

- Be fundamentally sound in your car driving and your business.

- Know your real goal / destination.
- Plan for and look for trouble—often it is as simple as spotting the road signs and doing the fundamentals you know will work.

Driving your business is much like driving your car. The more experience you have and the more skill you develop, the more you have the capability to run your business faster. When we are moving at a faster pace than others, the tendency for many co-workers is to try to join along. Who wants to get to the finish line last? Speed can be good—and speed can kill. Getting to 'faster' is only good if you are still alive at the destination.

Your ability to read the road situations will allow you to prepare for the traffic and obstacles that lie ahead. Others will appreciate the fact that you can get to where you are going in one piece. If I were to tell you that I'm not sure whether or not we could really get to our destination alive because of the dangers that are in our path, you might choose to second guess whether or not you would go on that trip. We all love an adventure just not one that ends in fire and smoking oil.

In business, like driving, we can weigh the costs and risks, and depend on three elements:

1. Leadership ability
2. Risk assessment
3. Potential gain

By examining the above criteria, we





can make an intellectual decision and minimize our potential exposure.

Knowing is the first step to growing. I am certain that working together in this marketplace, whether we are PCO's, manufactures, REITS or distributors, we can help one another see

"In business, like driving, we can weigh the costs and risks, and depend on three elements..."

the signs that lead to success.

Do you see the signs?

I've got to go, my favorite sign just popped up: "Rest Area 1 mile." ■

About the Author

Vern Swedin is Director of Business Development at Pace. His experience as the Co-founder and Chief Visionary Officer of the revolutionary UR-ON organization and development/creation of other technology businesses has shaped his ability to help organizations find new and creative ways to win. With an exten-

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