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THE SOMR PRINCIPLE

Single outlay – single return (SO-SR) versus single outlay – multiple return (SO-MR)

How do you feel about the idea that the lessons we learn every day are seldom leveraged into long-term repeatable benefits? Does that sound provocative to you? Well, it is an observation I have made for many years. Decades ago a friend of mine shared his interpretation on how we can best leverage opportunity to create vastly better returns.

He witnessed that many people go about their day to day tasks in somewhat of a blur, seemingly far too busy in the now, I mean RIGHT now. Rather than just pulling the hand break on, take a breather and just contemplate how the “great thinkers” of the world would see the task? More on that latter...*

The **SO-SR** principle offers the concept that most people are so busy involved in the daily humdrum and keeping their own enterprise running. That time and time again they execute the same potentially mundane task often begrudgingly and probably somewhat unsatisfied with the same boring outcome.

If any of your daily tasks often involve:

- Doing the same old task repeatedly.
- Perhaps dragging your feet unknowingly – or worse you realise and kept doing it!
- The fun and thrill of the task is not allowing any self-satisfaction and the result is no longer challenging or fun.

In short – doing the same task repetitively, or endlessly without progress of improved process, enhanced product or employee fulfilment. STOP and just think SO-SR versus SO-MR.

The **SO-MR** principle offers the concept of that special lightbulb moment. Where one steps back from the boring, routine and mundane and in a blinding flash or years of dedicated effort they redesign a process that takes the same process and looks at it a different way.

If you are the type of person that yearns for changing the status quo – this is for you!

- Invent a process that changes the outcome significantly.
- Develop what was routine into an automated or at least refined way of going about the job.
- See the mundane turn into spectacular results in output, improved job satisfaction and more of your time to invest in better quality work.

In brief, reassessing a repetitive task or improving the progress, enriched products and job satisfaction. It's all about removing the groundhog day moments out of your life.

Another statement we often hear is “people should be working ON their

business instead of IN their business if they really wish to achieve the greatness the business deserves.”

* Where would we be without?

Gutenberg's printing press around 1450, that press put education and information in the hands of many not just the entitled few. In manufacturing process, these inventors changed the world – James Watt in 1765 redesign of various items to create the Rocket steam engine that lead to revolution in transport, the holiday industry blossomed, fresh food across hundreds of miles in hours not days.

Health breakthroughs like 1902, Marie Curie successfully isolated radioactive radium salts laboratory in Paris. Or Florence Nightingale in the latter 1800s to 1910 and social reformer who was the foundational philosopher of modern nursing. You can find these amazing women and men in every walk of life. My question is, 'what have you changed in your business that you are proud of?

From a small stream a river grows.

The fact is for those who live thinking that life is about learning, are living a life full of opportunity. Observation and seeing the challenge is their quest. They look at things differently and are excited about change and improvements.

However, for some people they never take the opportunity to LLL – look, listen learn. Just like crossing the road, without a degree of caution is immediately and potentially life threatening. Perhaps you can reflect on your own desire to enhance your observational skills?

Start by reflecting on a few tasks in your business and take the position of an auditor who is going to challenge the way the work flow can be improved, snap a quick photo and note a few observations that spring to mind.

Then the next day challenge your staff, a colleague or friend, How could they improve the work flow or process?

Let's make a few the SOSR versus SOMR arguments?

It is an alternative view of looking at the work and projects you are working on, I'm encouraging you to "look, listen and re-learn" Therefore, it is reasonable to simply stop ask yourself 'WHY' am I doing the verbal instructions on this relatively simple task over and over with new staff or contractors over the years.

Adopt a new perspective, let's say its fifteen to 25 minutes to explain to each person how to "say" pack the truck to do a certain type of installation – lets assume you do that twice a month for one year – total time is around six to ten hours – what a waste of your time!

We can list a few other examples later in this article however let us explore this one first:

Now, there are several examples of **SOMR** and in bullet form:

- Develop a checklist of each type of installation of the equipment and specialist tools required.
- The next step up would be – create a suitable mobile work box to carry the equipment and tools, perhaps ensuring it forms a workbench, carries specialist tools and spare common products, cleaners and such – let's name this one window graphics.
- You could adapt larger installation kits to be forklift loaded suitable for large scale installs like directories, building floors identification even a wrap kit – you're getting the picture – Right?
- Of course, another branding opportunity for you to showcase your logo and professionalism.

The payback is immediate as you have the install kits replenished ready for the next install and the project manager

simply nominates the install kit number for the job.

The benefits are instant and obvious –

1. Save time immediately. Do it once, done properly from that day forward.
2. Greatly reduces the occurrence of 'missing tools syndrome'.
3. Literally stops mistakes in their tracks – right person, right instruction and correct tools.
4. Potentially reduces secondary visits to site to finish silly mistakes.
5. Highly improved work satisfaction by assisting your staff to be presented as effective and efficient creative experts.
6. Enhances customers' respect by witnessing the professionalism of the staff and the way they perform the installation including the appropriate PPE, barriers and final clean of the site.

I read hundreds of Facebook posts blaming apprentices and everything but the simple fact is the spoken word is not worth the paper it's written on?

Imagine, that over the year the intelligence you and your staff build into the process by also engaging the Japanese principle of Kaizen. In short, the process of continuous improvement by regular review and adapting to suit the ever-changing opportunities. Developing and creating the best practice methodology by seizing the process at one point and building intelligence into the documentation to develop the staff.

The SOMR concept is totally adaptable to literally any process. The adaptability necessitates having an inquiring mindset and ability to change the borders of your imagination.

To provoke just a handful of the endless areas you can change your business by the SOMR concept the following list is one you can take into your business and see if you can improve the process by understanding the gaps there are in the current processes.

A few ideas categorised into business areas:

1. **Client acquisition:** Have you delved into the customer selection process or heaven forbid if you are letting your customers choose you – WHY?
2. **Customer ratings:** Not all customers can be groomed into clients. Therefore, have you developed a A, B, C, D and E rating allowing clear guidelines as to which type of clients best open doors to suit your manufacturing skills?
3. **Estimator guidelines:** Imagine you are

in the sign and print business NOT the estimating business. The maturity of your systems sets out the company aims and principles to best match quotes to profitability – I'm suggesting you don't need any practice quoting?

4. **The matching of input to output:** Well, no it's not random in a professional sign and print organisation – it's a very well-choreographed and orchestrated event. SOMR equals if you have invested (Outlay) in a digital print machine, then what are the plans to run the machine profitably (Return) for the maximum return.

5. **Production Log Jams:** The smoothness of the workflow with zero to very minor disruptions typically exemplify SOMR principles. If the opposite is true then, the opportunity exists for implementation of the steps in developing Single Outlay – (invest some money or time) to create Multiple Returns.

6. **Office Process:** I have been working with a regional sign maker who is growing rapidly, there is a real buzz in the air, new people and genuine excitement. First hand a web based Information hub with ALL the business information delivered on demand across 4 sites via a website. You know things are working when their bookkeeper developed a work instruction on how to perform a simple Xero® accounting process – making her job easier, the person performing the task happy to have concise instruction – the result, faster better, accurate and a perfect example of SOMR.

7. There are many, many more opportunities for you to develop your business, I'm just suggesting the door is open – try it.

When, not if, you want to systemise your business you will know you are achieving progress when a simple written word or verbal instruction i.e "Information" morphs into becoming a recognisable third party document containing "knowledge" that is available to all. Then you will hear that symphony start to play when that knowledge develops into wisdom available on hand for all to use as required. From that day forward you are really building a sustainable business and YES it is scalable.

>> As always, I like my readers to be encouraged to contact me on john@controlzone.com.au and I have a couple of typical documents like the installation checklist and a couple of bonuses. Add the letters SOMR into the subject line please.