

CREATING NEW HABITS *in a* New Era

Are you trying to get back to normal or are you adapting to a new normal?

BY MARK RICHARDSON

I was speaking to a thought leader from Google recently and she reminded me of an important dynamic. She said it takes 66 days for someone to form a new habit.

We have been in these extraordinary times for most of 2020 now, so there are new habits that many people are forming. This is an active dynamic process not just a flip of the switch into this new world.

This is important because it is the new habits that will drive and support the argument of a “new normal” (not just getting back to normal) as the world moves forward.

So, what are some of these new habit themes that people are adopting? Let's take a look at a few of them.

REMOTE WORKING

I know many leaders are grappling with the notion of team members continuing to work remotely rather than coming back into the office. I use the term remote rather than “at home” because working remotely is about not being in the workplace physically, not just being at home with the kids. I know many business owners don't see 100% of the productivity today with working remotely but this concept is not new to business and it is possible to be as or more productive remotely.

There are a couple of key items to consider.

- It takes time. Most employees have been working in a traditional manner for a long time so it may take six to 12 months to really get this remote dance down.
- Make it a conversation with your team, not a policy from above. People are processing the past few months differently (and continue to do so). The more you can have dialog with everyone about remote working versus office the more likely you are to find a happy and successful outcome.

GOING VIRTUAL

People buy from people, but this can be done virtually, not just face to face. Many companies are seeing clients more open today to meet face to face and are interpreting willingness as a preference. I believe it is more about client ignorance.

It was not that long ago consumers would go to the mall for their Christmas gifts. Today a lot of that shopping is done online. Consumers learned how and know the benefit of the online purchasing process but needed to experience the same benefit in making some of their buying decisions before it could become a new habit.

Going virtual requires new skills and practice to be able to feel comfortable and more effective. While you or your team may have strong technology acumen, going virtual is a different sport that requires practice. As a new habit it will save time and increase effectiveness with your customers, your team and your personal life.

BALANCE

We have talked about work/life balance for many years. Unfortunately, before COVID-19 this was moving in the wrong direction. By pushing the pause button in 2020 we have learned to get outside more, to slow down a little, to try new (or old) hobbies or activities. We have turned our days upside down with work and home life and can now see a new balance that can be healthy and positive.

While a “typical” day will continue to evolve, I believe it will not be the 9-to-5 day of the past.



I think days may begin earlier or later but will include many of the other activities that give us balance. This will no longer be a New Year's resolution that vaporized after two weeks. New habits are forming, and we need to have more empathy for how these have developed.

So, in closing, we continue to have a tremendous amount of uncertainty; however, what I am confident in is there will be new habits. I would encourage you to fertilize the good ones and take them to even a higher level. While as horrific as the coronavirus has been, “bumpy roads can lead to beautiful places.” ■

Mark Richardson is an author, speaker, columnist and business growth strategist. He has written several books on business management including “How Fit Is Your Business?” and “Fit to Grow.” His latest book is “Control Your Day Before It Controls You: The 7 Steps to Mastering Your Time.” All of his books are available on amazon.com. He can be reached at mrichardson@mrichardson.com.

EDITORIAL/DESIGN

Editorial Director Tim Hodson
616.520.2161 • thodson@greatamericanpublish.com

Editor Jasmina Dolce
616.520.2162 • jdolce@greatamericanpublish.com

Retail Editor Teresa McPherson
616.520.2163 • tmcpherson@greatamericanpublish.com

Digital Content Director Ana Olvera
616.520.2171 • aolvera@greatamericanpublish.com

Multimedia Designer Amanda Mackey
616.520.2157 • amackey@greatamericanpublish.com

ADVERTISING

Vice President, Group Publisher Bob Bellew
616.520.2164 • bbellew@greatamericanpublish.com

Integrated Media Consultant - East Coast Tiffany O'Kelley
616.520.2172 • tokelley@greatamericanpublish.com

Integrated Media Consultant - West Coast Kim Sammartino
616.520.2173 • ksammartino@greatamericanpublish.com

Classified Advertising Manager Kim Meyers
616.520.2137 • kmeyers@greatamericanpublish.com

Production Assistant Samantha Orsi
616.520.2148 • sorsi@greatamericanpublish.com

STAFF

Corporate Office 616.887.9008

Audience Development Becky Stovall
616.520.2138 • bstovall@greatamericanpublish.com

Creative Director Kristina Howell
616.520.2168 • khowell@greatamericanpublish.com

Custom Content Manager Jess Schmidt
616.520.2141 • jschmidt@greatamericanpublish.com

CFO & Director of Human Resources Deb Carnes
616.520.2169 • dcarnes@greatamericanpublish.com

COO & Chief Marketing Officer Kimberly Baker
616.520.2135 • kbaker@greatamericanpublish.com

CEO Matt McCallum
mmccallum@greatamericanpublish.com

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