

# #cfrresults

## Close The Window Or Buy A Paperweight

Insights from Tom Hershberger, CEO, Cross Financial, 2020

The staff at Cross Financial has migrated to working remotely and the change is providing a significant learning opportunity.

While I have enjoyed working from my home office with the sounds of our neighborhood and spring breezes streaming through my open window, I have discovered why so many years ago, businesses used paperweights. It only took one strong breeze to clear my desk. I won't make that mistake twice.

I always thought of paperweights as a decorative extra around the office. Today, I find it is an essential tool to keep things organized and in place. The lesson struck me as an illustration of what we are learning in banking today.

### **Some traditional practices should be maintained.**

Our office building has windows that do not open. The paperweight on my desk was a gift from serving on the board of a local non-profit organization. It has sentimental value, but doesn't really serve any other purpose in my daily activities. Even so, I keep it around.

As I now discovered, having windows that open requires a different approach to sorting papers on my desktop. When the circumstances changed, a simple solution from the past worked perfectly. Don't throw out your proven practices. Repurpose tenured ideas to fit your changing environment.

### **Environment changes the importance of our support systems.**

Even a decoration can find a practical purpose in the right circumstances. Had I stayed in my normal office, there would be no need for a paperweight. But times have changed and my new situation challenges me to employ different solutions. A simple decoration is now an essential resource. If you have employees focusing on new activities or supporting the organization in new ways, did you change anything about the environment to help enhance their contribution? If you have customers that want to connect to their bank,

have you enhanced the environment to improve the delivery process. What are you doing differently to optimize your emerging environment?

### **Experience-based learning.**

Another lesson reinforced by my Spring Breeze Incident of 2020 was a reminder that we learn faster when we get to experience the process. Solving problems and addressing challenges moved front and center when businesses were asked to begin physical distancing from their customers. It's not a desired condition, but still allows for service and outreach through alternative delivery channels. What we learn by solving immediate problems converts to a knowledgebase faster if we experience the change. Involve your staff in your decisions about policies, procedures and operations. Especially when changes are impacting workgroup or team activities. They will learn quicker and adopt new behaviors faster when they experience the change process with you. Unify your team around relevant solutions.

### **Old dog - new tricks.**

Adapting to new circumstances requires some flexibility and the right attitude. When that spring breeze, I was enjoying so much, decided to clear my desk, I could have yelled at the wind. A poor response, but it was an option. Instead I chose to clean up the mess and solve the problem. Why? Because I really enjoy the spring breeze. I could have simply closed the window and isolated myself in my home, but in doing so, I would miss the opportunity to enjoy the spring breeze. Adopt the changes you are managing as an opportunity to learn. An opportunity to be a proactive, positive manager that pulls people together.

Are you finding ways to enjoy your new environment? Are you making adjustments to stay organized and keep things in their proper place? Some of the answers might be in traditional solutions. Still others, may require some trial and error.

### **In any case, look around you and decide... are you going to close the window or buy a paperweight?**

We'd like to hear from you. Send your feedback and thoughts to [tom@crossfinancial.com](mailto:tom@crossfinancial.com).

