



Enterprising Rural Families™

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TIP OF THE MONTH:

MARKETING PLAN

Five “P”s of a market plan:

Products or Services:

- What do your products or services do?
- What makes your’s unique or special?
- Who will buy them?
- When will they buy them?
- How much will you charge?

Packaging:

This is the way your business is presented to the marketplace. It includes things like the image of your business and the consistency of your presentation in all communications.

Place:

Where do you do business? The location needs to “fit” the customer expectations. What is your position in the distribution chain? Retail outlets don’t do well in the industrial section.

Pricing:

Determined by things like cost of production, demand, what the market will support, perceived value, replacement cost of equipment, waste of raw materials and damage, annual inflation, advertising costs, and wages and salaries.

Promotion:

Promotion includes personal selling, word of mouth, public relations, sales promotions, and advertising.

Time Management – Do As I Say, Not As I Do!

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Throughout my life, both as a child and as an adult, I have struggled with time management. People often (too often in my opinion) suggest that I take a time management course or read a time management book. As a community development educator, I now find myself in the unenviable position of teaching time management from the “do as I say, not as I do” standpoint. Being in this position has forced me to examine my relationship with time management and I hope my self-reflection will help others in their relationship with time management. Some of the topics I have wrestled with include procrastination (excuse me

for a moment while I quickly take care of another task I just remembered I have to do), personality differences, and time management systems.

Procrastination has been the bane of my existence for as long as I can remember. The heartfelt encouragements to “just do it” inevitably have the same effect on me as does rubbing salt in a fresh wound. I’m obviously not alone with this problem. A quick search on Google for procrastination will provide you with reading material to indefinitely procrastinate any task you might face. Not only is the problem pervasive, it is also not well understood. According to an article on the Psychology Today website (<http://www.psychologytoday.com/articles/200908/escape-artists>) there have been a number of different hypothesis about why we procrastinate, but no definitive explanation, and thus no simple cure. Like other impulse control problems, such as over eating and overspending, procrastination can seriously undermine a person’s ability to be successful in their professional and personal relationships. My best advice to those who struggle with procrastination is to not spend too much time reading about it and cut yourself some slack. One of my favorite ways to avoid doing what I know I should, but really can’t seem to start, is to spend time reading about how to overcome procrastination. No one is productive all of the time. Appreciate yourself for what you do accomplish and contribute. I find that easing the pressure on myself will often allow me to get started on something and once I start, finishing becomes much easier.

This spring I was fortunate to have the opportunity to become a certified MBTI (Myers Briggs Type Indicator) practitioner and learn about the 4 dichotomies and 16 psychological types they have defined. For the dichotomy that looks at how individuals deal with the outer world, I have a clear preference for P which stands for Perceiving, NOT procrastination, which you might have assumed by reading the preceding paragraph. What this means is that I prefer to live in a flexible way. I often find detailed plans and final decisions too confining. I appreciate being able to leave my options open in case I receive new information and need to make last minute changes. My preferences for how I manage my time contrasts sharply with someone who prefers the other side of the dichotomy (judging) and how they like to manage their time.



They prefer to live in a planned, orderly way and make decisions that are final, and then move on. They like to have their lives more structured and more organized and sticking to a plan and schedule is very important to them. Obviously, the cultural norms in the United States, and especially in the workplace, are more aligned with the preference for “Judging” versus the preference for “Perceiving.” While having a preference for one or the other doesn’t make you better or worse, understanding that, as a person with a preference for Perceiving, I need to work on the skills and my ability to meet the expectations of those who have a preference for Judging is critical. It can be all too easy for those of us with a preference for Perceiving to be overly critical of ourselves and compare ourselves unfavorably to those with a preference for Judging. It can also be quite easy for those with a preference for Judging to overlook our ability to quickly adapt to changing circumstances and create order out of a situation rapidly disintegrating to chaos.

The Myers-Briggs™ Type Indicator

(The Keirsey Temperament Sorter)

E Extroverted (Expressive)	S Sensing (Observant)	T Thinking (Tough-Minded)	J Judging (Scheduling)
I Introverted (Reserved)	N Intuitive (Introspective)	F Feeling (Friendly)	P Perceiving (Probing)



Thinking about my penchant for procrastination and my preference for using my Perceiving function has allowed me to look at time management systems in a more insightful and critical way. Many of the popular time management systems are oriented towards those who have a preference for using their Judging function. Some systems are very complex, which provides ample opportunity for a procrastinator to get lost in the details of implementing the system without ever really using it to any advantage. Suffering from procrastination (I am going to liken it to an illness for the sake of my sanity) and having a preference for using my Perceiving function has made it difficult to find a time management system that works for me. Luckily I came across the Manager Tools podcast (<http://www.manager-tools.com/2006/05/time-management>) on time management which, in a nutshell, advises you to categorize your projects into tasks that need to be worked on now and later. I can’t say that I have completely and successfully implemented this system yet, but at least it is so simple it hasn’t taken time away from those other things I really need to be doing. And speaking of which, I better get back to it...



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