

Stock theft

By Stuart White
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You may know the dentists' mantra – "you don't have to brush all of your teeth – just the ones you want to keep". It's a life lesson... if you let things go and don't pay consistent attention to them, you will lose them. This is true for almost anything in your life - relationships, your health and your business – if you take them for granted they won't be around very long to need your attention. This lesson was reinforced for me last week in the form of my home security, or lack of it, which resulted in my house being burgled. It was pretty horrible. I was asleep in my room and someone or some people managed to go through all my bedside drawers, help themselves to my I-phone, dismantle a lap top, take my camera, pocket a few hundred US dollars that I had stashed away at the back of a cupboard and then for good measure, swipe my wallet which I had carelessly left in my car.

Be it ever so humble or ever so grand, your home is your castle, a sanctuary where you should feel safe. Your home is the only environment where you have complete control over who is allowed in and who isn't, and thus who can get close to your family. So how did these alternative shoppers and potential assailants manage to gain entry into my castle, you may ask? – Easy! All too easy, I'm afraid. Firstly my electric fence which is there to secure the perimeter of my house wasn't working – it hasn't been for years. Second, the kitchen door was unlocked, as was every door leading through to our bedrooms. Thirdly, my house alarm system was not activated, and last but not least, my car was also left open in the garage. In fact egress was easy for even entry-level amateur burglars. It was a walkover or at least a walk in.

So where did I go wrong from the time I first moved into my house when I had painstakingly put in all the systems and barriers to stop such an incident from ever happening? I know that protecting your home and family from criminal intrusion should be high on your list of priorities, so why was it last on mine? If it's true that a burglar will bypass your home if it requires too much effort, tools and equipment to get in – why did I leave my home and family so vulnerable, as if there was an open invitation to vagabonds and the like and a sign saying 'enter this way'?

I just got sloppy. I had been so used to feeling safe in my home that I stopped seeing the weakness in how I was operating. I was blind to the dangers and allowed a complacent attitude to the security set-up to leave me and my family vulnerable. I had left the security to the dogs that night and they were clearly on time-off. I had taken my eye off the ball and it has cost me dearly. We take for granted so much. We take our friends for granted presuming that our past relationships and experiences with them are enough to cement the future with them. We ignore our health by living the good life of excess until we find our self with chronic blood pressure, at risk of a stroke and other ailments. I think it's human nature – we are all guilty of becoming myopic and lazy, especially in business. When things are going well we take the customer for granted and it isn't till sales are declining and profits dwindling that we start asking are we close enough to the customer, are we on the right path, are we paying them enough attention?

When we don't take stock of our situation we don't know where we fall short or where our weaknesses are. If we don't visit the doctor to get a checkup we are at risk, when we don't ask our friends how they are doing our relationships are at risk, when we don't stand back from our business and assess how are we doing we are at risk. And when we don't ask ourselves is our security iadequate we are at risk!

But if you put focussed attention on any part of your life and business, you see positive results - increased sales and visibility, better health, improved relationships, burglar-free home zones, etc.

We need to make sure that every now and again we take a good look around at our life and circumstances we find ourselves in and ask – is everything in order or would we improve on the status quo? And when you find those inadequacies and weaknesses and realise that you have slacked off, it is a call to take action - quickly. Adjust things purposefully. So it has been a flurry of activity at home this week. A new security gate has been installed inside the house, the electric fence people have done a new evaluation about what needs to happen to get the fence back on and working, a security guard has kept watch whilst all of this has happened and now we make sure every door in the house is securely locked when we go to bed. So I have momentum going again and security is top notch. The 'welome thieves' mat has been removed and the 'come in' sign replaced with one that very clearly says 'keep out'. Can't help thinking it would have been easier if I had just opened my eyes and taken stock earlier, instead of allowing the burglars to take it instead!

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