

# THE FINANCIAL EDGE

March 2017



## The Luck of the Irish!

*Personal comments by Mary*

Many years ago I found myself in Boston on St. Patty's day. I was there for work and stayed the weekend. I made arrangements to meet a friend of a friend to get a tour of Boston. She was a Boston native and turned out to be a great tour guide. The day started with a cold wet morning. Our first stop was at a local Irish bar for a steaming hot cup of coffee spiked with baileys cream. With luck the weather improved later that day and we walked the famous Freedom Trail. I got to take a step back into our history, seeing Faneuil Hall and the historic graveyards. We stopped at a local deli and I tried melon sorbet. It melted in my mouth. We did a little shopping in Back Bay and closed the day by stopping at an Irish beer garden to sample the green beer. The day was a memorable one. I am not sure how much of it was luck or how much was me reaching out to find that special tour guide for that day.

Personally I find Luck goes to those who are prepared - Prepared to see the opportunity, prepared to take action on the opportunity and prepared to pay the price to carry it through.

However finding a four leaf clover, hanging a horse shoe over the door or tucking a rabbit's foot into my pocket are tangible reminders to expect lucky things to happen. We see what we look for. Finding the good in the world increases my personal energy. Energy to take action which provides a sense of being **invincible** - **enough** so that I can conquer my world.

May you find the luck of the Irish today! And be prepared for it!

*Mary Guldán-Lindstrom*



## ARE YOU READY FOR YOUR ANNUAL BUSINESS STRATEGIC REVIEW?

As part of our annual strategic review with business owners we review the marketing expenses. We discuss the financial results that they feel they achieved. For one client we noted a \$2000 monthly expense. The owner was a little perplexed that the amount was so high. It was an indirect marketing expense that started at a minimal amount and had grown to \$2000 per month. It was automatically deducted from the checking account so being in a rush – it just got recorded. The management team analyzed the customer benefit on this expense. They reduced this expense to -0- within 4 weeks, without any impact on the sales. The client calls this the \$24,000 dollar meeting. **That \$24,000 went straight to the bottom line. Are you looking at your numbers?**

**Don't keep doing the same thing over and over and getting the same disappointing results. Call us now to set up an annual review! Let's improve your bottom line! 920-351-4842.**

## The Book Review

**Title:** The One Minute Manager

**Author:** Kenneth Blanchard & Spencer Johnson

**Topic:** Management

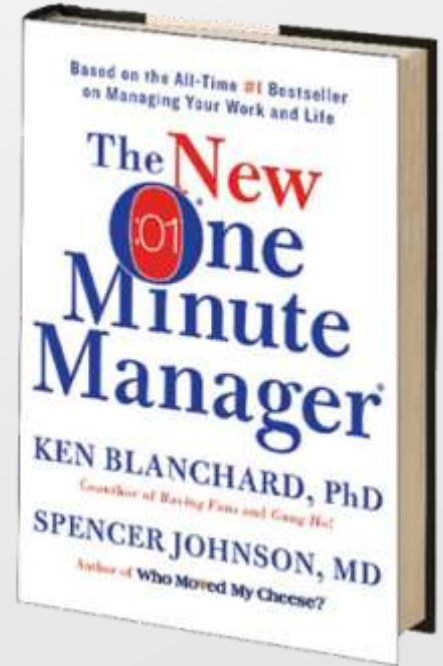
**Easy to Read:** \$\$\$\$\$ (6 out of 5 dollars)

**Applicable to Small Business:** \$\$\$\$\$ (5 out of 5 dollars)

**Summary:** A very short book revealing an effective simple management style in story form. Meet the One Minute Manager and why his system works. The book discloses the three secrets - one minute goals, one minute praises and one minute reprimands.

**My recommendation:** A simple effective system to get greater results in less time through people. It is the foundation that other management systems are based on. It can be used with raising kids, training your new puppy or improve the results of your organization.

Pages: 106 | Published: 1981



## Celebrate the International Day of Happiness

By Mary Guldán-Lindstrom, CPA

Can you believe that in 2012 the United Nations proclaimed that, forevermore, March 20 would be observed as the International Day of Happiness?

This is a day set aside for “recognizing the relevance of happiness and well-being,” according to the U.N. resolution, “as universal goals and aspirations in the lives of human beings around the world.”

Over time the pursuit of happiness, our constitutional right as a US citizen, has been mixed with the pursuit of prosperity. While food, shelter and education is an important part of overall well-being, it’s not the whole picture. So today let’s celebrate happiness!

Here are some ways....

- Start the day with a positive intention, *Ask yourself, How can I bring joy to at least one other person today?*
- Explore ways you can help others,
- Gather a list of music, art, books and activities that make you feel alive with happiness,
- Send a letter of appreciation to someone you hold dear.
- My favorite – just smile 😊 and say hello to those you meet.

Enjoy your day! ~ Mary



## Marketing For Profits

By Mary Guldán-Lindstrom, CPA

Competition is tight in most businesses, customers have plenty of options. We are bombarded with marketing messages everyday - on television, radio, print and internet. Messages telling us that if we just buy their product or service - we will be wealthier, happier and healthier. As a small business owner how do we overcome the messages encouraging our customers to switch? Plus maintain a profit to stay in business?

Right now the tax preparers are being challenged by H&R block. They advertise that their user friendly software for the do it yourselfers, local offices and now Watson can help you have "taxes won". Not sure what that means but I do know that as a taxpayer we need to distinguish FOCUS CPA from the competition.

**Here are five key ways to market your business plus earn enough to stay in business.**

### START WITH THE RIGHT CUSTOMER

We can't be everything to everyone. We can try but it becomes time intensive and creates financial losses trying to make all customers happy. Consider the 80/20 rule - keep your focus on the 20% that create 80% of the profit. Focus on a niche - an industry, a specific service, or solving a specific issue. When accepting customers focus on the ones the business can deliver the most value to and the ones you enjoy working with. You can reduce your marketing costs by focusing on one message. You can increase the results by focusing on the media that your target customer pays attention to.

### TAKE GOOD CARE OF YOUR CURRENT CUSTOMERS

Don't forget your current customers. Typically it costs 7 times more to find a new customer than it is to keep a current customer. It is easy to take them for granted - typically they don't raise a fuss or express unreasonable demands. It is important to tell them thank you for working with your business. Remember - they have many choices.

### BE PERSONAL AND CARING

We work with people, not businesses. Take time to talk with them how they want to be talked to - by phone, by text, by e-mail, snail mail or social media. Ask what keeps them up at night. Talk in their language not yours. Walk through your entire process through the eyes of your target customer.

### BE COMPETENT AND CAPABLE

In my world customers expect that everything we do is accurate, despite the information that they provide. If a mistake is made the customer may receive the dreaded IRS notice. By focusing on a certain type of customer - we are aware of the issues and opportunities they may face. We have acquired experience and knowledge to guide the customer and enhance their success. Tax law is complicated and is constantly changing. Save your time, energy and money by sharpening your skills and experience that is needed by your "right customer".

### CREATE VALUE

Put action to the words. Deliver what was promised when it was promised. Share with the customer what you have done. Customers hire for results, they might not be privy nor care what it takes to get there. If the results are to prevent something bad from happening, remind the customer of what they avoided. When we pay to avoid problems - we forget about the benefits of the service. Remember that your competition is out there creating fear and finding reasons for your customer to doubt the services they are receiving. Make sure your customers know what you do for them.

Every business needs customers. The whole point of marketing is to attract and keep customers - customers that create your profits. By focusing on your unique target market, with a critical message that is important to your target customer, in a manner that you will reach your target customer - you will have the best customers for you. The best customers generate the best profits. With a laser focus on your best customer - you save time, money and energy.

**YOU'RE IN FOR A TREAT...**



**Would you like a free Kringle from Uncle Mike's Bake Shoppe?**

Just encourage a small business owner to set up a **free discovery meeting** with Mary at Focus CPA Inc. and we will send you a gift card for a free mouthwatering, award winning Kringle of your choice.

**We are accepting new clients this tax season! A referral is the best compliment that we can receive.**

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## The Leprechaun's Gold

'Twas a fine sunny day at harvest time when young Seamus O'Donnell, walking along the road, heard a tapping sound. Peering over the hedge, he saw a tiny man in a little leather apron, mending a little shoe.

"Well, well, well!" said Seamus to himself. "I truly never expected to meet a leprechaun. Now that I have, I must not let this chance slip away. For everyone knows that leprechauns keep a pot of gold hidden nearby. All I have to do is to find it, and I am set for the rest of my life."

Greeting the leprechaun politely, Seamus asked about his health. However, after a few minutes of idle conversation, Seamus became impatient. He grabbed the leprechaun and demanded to know where the gold was hidden.

"All right! All right!" cried the little man. "It is near here. I'll show you."

Together they set off across the fields as Seamus was careful never to take his eyes off the little man who was guiding him. At last they came to a field of golden ragwort.

The leprechaun pointed to a large plant. "The gold is under here," he said. "All you have to do is to dig down and find it."

Seamus didn't have anything with him to use for digging, but he was not entirely stupid. He pulled off his red neckerchief and tied it to the plant so that he would recognize it again.

"Promise me," he said to the leprechaun, "that you will not untie that scarf." The little man promised faithfully.

Seamus dropped the leprechaun and ran home as fast as he could to fetch a shovel. Within five minutes, he was back at the field. But what a sight met his eyes! Every single ragwort plant in the whole field - and there were hundreds of them - had a red neckerchief tied around it.

Slowly, young Seamus walked home with his shovel. He didn't have his gold. He didn't have the leprechaun. And now, he didn't even have his neckerchief.

Story is reprinted from [loving2learn.com](http://loving2learn.com) website. PS For those that enjoy a drink - try a *Leprechaun's Gold*, with Goldschlager® cinnamon schnapps & Irish cream.