



A collaboration with:



March 2026

Exploring Unaddressed Advertising Mail.

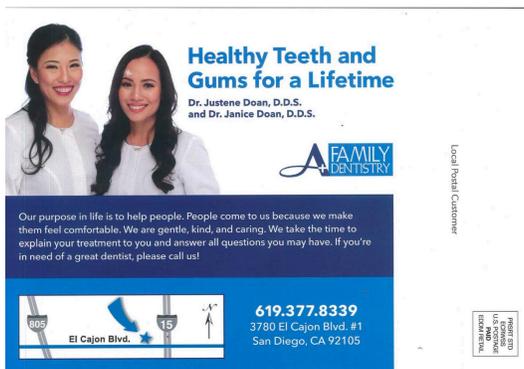
For many, it's the cheapest, easiest and fastest way to test this channel.

Unaddressed advertising mail — flyers, postcards, envelopes, and more — is a niche within the direct mail channel. For instance, in 2024, the USPS processed 3 billion pieces of unaddressed advertising mail (known as EDDM) or 5.2% of the 57.5 billion pieces of marketing mail delivered that year. (The 2025 statistics were not available when this article was written.)

In Canada, this postal classification is known as Neighborhood Mail; in the UK and Europe, it is called Door Drops. In almost any country with a postal service, this type of direct mail is the cheapest, easiest, and fastest way to test the direct mail medium.

This article explores this medium and offers some observations.

Targeting using geography



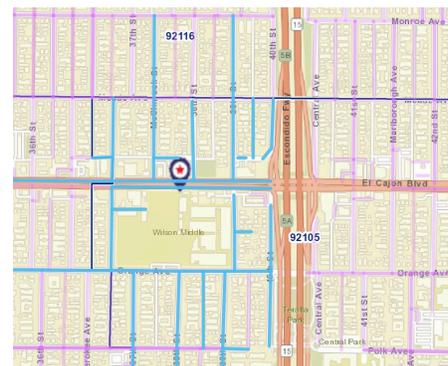
Any business that can target its audience by geography is a prime candidate for this type of direct mail. A dentist, for example, may send a promotion to everyone within 3 miles of their location. A tree-pruning service may target neighborhoods with mature trees. A retirement home may target areas where retirees typically live.

In each example, the map is simply converted to the postal routes within the defined area.

This dental office is located at 3870 El Cajon Blvd in San Diego. This map from the USPS shows the location and

nearby postal routes.

The blue routes are two selected routes for a possible



Source: USPS.com

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campaign. The routes can be selected individually, and the USPS tool provides counts, type (residential or business) and demographics (age, income, household size), the exact route number, and estimated cost. (This is a free service. Create your own EDDM map at <https://eddm.usps.com/eddm/select-routes.htm>.)

Healthy Teeth and Gums for a Lifetime

- Gentle care that is sensitive to your needs
- Friendly, understanding doctors who will keep you informed and answer all your questions
- Friendly staff with great communication skills
- Convenient hours and location

First Visit Offer
Dental Cleaning | Full-Mouth X-Rays
Laser Bacteria Reduction | Comprehensive Exam
Only \$165
Regular Fee \$547 (Restrictions Apply)

Schedule Your Appointment Today
or Call **619.377.8339**
APlusFamilyDentistry.com

Of course, it's not perfect, since some current patients who live within the delivery area would be upset that "new patients" get a much better price than they do, but that's life!

Reaching customers and prospects simultaneously

Fast food outlets, restaurants, and bars are heavy users of unaddressed admail, and they know their promotions reach both current and potential customers. This is because their promotions focus on deals, which reinforce loyalty among

A SUB ABOVE is NOW OPEN!

Jersey Mike's SUBS

6834 Market Street • Wilmington, NC • 910-202-6994
VISIT US AT JERSEYMIKES.COM

current customers while attracting new ones at the same time.

This promotion for a Jersey Mike's location has been running since March 2022.

It shows menu items as well as discount offers on the second side of the postcard.

(In our experience, most food-related

SUBMARINES
Fresh Sliced To Order!

AMERICAN CLASSICS

- 1 Ham & Provelone
- 2 Jersey Shore's Favorite
- 3 The Super Sub
- 4 The Original Italian
- 5 Club Sub
- 6 Club Supreme
- 7 Turkey & Provelone
- 8 The Original Italian
- 9 The Super Sub
- 10 The Original Italian
- 11 Club Sub
- 12 Club Supreme

CHEESE STEAKS
Fresh Sliced To Order!

- 13 Miko Chicken Philly
- 14 Chicken Bacon Ranch
- 15 Chipotle Chicken
- 16 Big Kahuna Chicken
- 17 Miko Famous Philly
- 18 Chipotle
- 19 The Big Kahuna

BREADS
White | Wheat | Rosemary Farm | Daily Gluten Free

EXTRAS
Add Chip & Dress | Freshly Sliced | Buffalo Drizzle | Buffalo Drizzle | Buffalo Drizzle | Buffalo Drizzle

WIDS MEAL
Kids Meal | Kids Meal | Kids Meal | Kids Meal

BUY 2 REGULAR SUBS, GET A 2nd REGULAR FREE!
\$2.00 OFF ANY SIZE SUB!

FREE CHIP & DRINK!
with purchase of any size sub.

BUY 2 GIANT SUBS, GET A 3rd GIANT SUB FREE!

Continues on the right

promotions feature multiple offers.)



Here's an example from David Foley's mailbox.

This promotion from Wendy's is an unfolded piece that measures 11" high by 12" deep.

Since this piece is much larger than most envelopes or postcards, this is a miniature billboard in the mailbox!

Consistency is key

Unlike traditional direct mail, where results are usually based on a single mailing, or perhaps one mailing and a follow-up, unaddressed advertising mail works best through repeated exposure to the same audience.

This is because the medium delivers a



These promotions, for two different locations, list the services that the stores provide on the front of the card.



This image is the reverse side of the yellow card, which, essentially, repeats the service offerings while adding location, business hours, and coupon offers.

(No doubt, this is the franchisor-approved template since the copy mirrors other advertising for the brand.)

Clearly, these promotions aim to communicate the

wide range of services available at The UPS Store, which might be mailed several times a year to the same group of homes and businesses.

Or, this message could be replaced with a variation at potentially peak time.



(The "Holiday Pack And Ship" promotion was mailed on behalf of a group of stores, whereas the prior examples were mailed by individual stores.)

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Use best practices

Paul Bobnak, writing for Who's Mailing What!, listed five best practices for that advertisers should incorporate into their unaddressed advertising mail campaigns. These are:

1. Highlight your offer



Paul writes, "A lot of EDDM (and mail in general) floods the eyes of the recipient with too much copy, burying the offer — if there is one."

This postcard mentions the offer twice on the same side, so readers can't miss it.



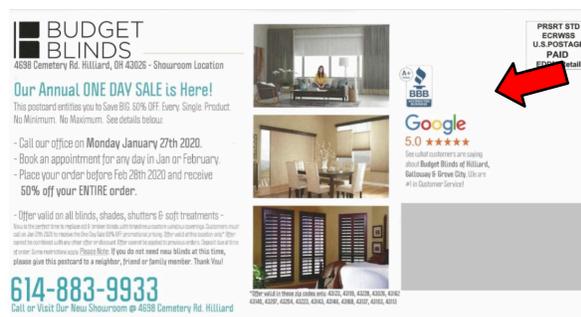
Also, the offer is prominent on the other side of the postcard.

2. Simplify Complex Information

The same campaign uses a checklist to compare the features of two different home warranty products to help readers decide which is best suited to their needs.

3. Leverage your endorsements

Paul writes, "People trust other people's opinions, especially from respected, impartial, and authoritative sources — especially when they're local or regional."



This Budget Blinds franchise puts logos from the Better Business Bureau and Google to demonstrate social proof — that the store is trusted by other consumers."

Also, note how the endorsements are presented in a single graphical block.

4. Build on local ties

This promotion by a real estate firm lists

Continues on the right

MEMBERS-ONLY LIVE DIRECT MAIL INSIDERS' CALLS ON ZOOM
(All 90-minute calls start at NOON Eastern/11 AM Central/9 AM Pacific)

ALL Members

March 10th

April 14th

May 12th

FULL Members

March 24th

April 28th

May 26th

These calls will be recorded and posted on the Private Members' Site for future reference.

Why Us?

- TIM Realty offers a combined 50 years of Real Estate expertise.
- We have a strong marketing presence in the area.
- We provide viral exposure on various social media platforms.
- WE HAVE DIRECT BUYERS**

SOLD BY TIM IN LAST 2 MONTHS

- 3508 Segovia St, Coral Gables, FL
- 3655 SW 25th, Miami, FL
- 2156 SW 24th Ter, Miami, FL
- 2650 SW 29th Ct, Miami, FL
- 1781 SW 23rd St, Miami, FL
- 2010 SW 25th Terr, Miami, FL

Contact Experts

DR. MICHAEL SETBON
Sales Director
(850) 238-2808
dr.michael@timrty.com

BRITTANY BORGES
Realtor Associate
(305) 776-3690
btborges@timrty.com

In this digital era, make your listing go viral!

recently sold properties as proof of its performance and as a tie in to the community.

(We should point out that this list is difficult to read.

Also "TIM" in the sub-head refers to the company, TIM REALTY, and not a person. A small copy change would fix this issue.)

5. Include a map

Paul writes, "When you want people to walk in the front door of your business, it helps to show where that door is on a map.

Sparks 3080 Vista Blvd. (770) 626-4444

WE DELIVER

FREE 2 Liter Soda with Cream

STOPPING BY?

MEDIUM 2-Topping Pizza Other Code: 3858 + 10/31/2018 \$8.99	PIZZA GUY DEAL Large 2-Topping Pizza Other Code: 3857 + 10/31/2018 \$13.99	THE BIG GUY X-Large Pepperoni Other Code: 3853 + 10/31/2018 \$14.99	FAMILY SPECIAL 1 Large Pepperoni, 1 Large Cheese, 1 Large Veggie Other Code: 3754 + 10/31/2018 \$39.99
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Pizza Guys, a chain of shops with dozens of locations, puts a map of its nearest location on its EDDM mailings."

For more offers, visit savewithcaasco.com/judymclarlane

Windsor

Today, technology allows for maps to show the recipient's location (in red) and local businesses (in blue), like this example from the

Canadian Automobile Association.

If you can target your audience geographically, it may make sense for you to test unaddressed advertising mail for your business.

If you do, keep these best practices in mind.



JICMAIL, the London-based organization that monitors direct mail in the UK, recently published a report that reveals 10 essential insights about door drops.

While specific to the UK, they probably apply elsewhere. The insights are:

1. Door Drops are a super touchpoint.
2. Door Drops generate reach and make an impression.
3. Door Drops gain attention.
4. Door Drops attention is cost-effective.
5. Door Drops drive engagement.
6. Door Drops drive customer behaviors throughout the customer journey.
7. The Response Rate Tracker shows increased ROI.
8. Door Drops have audiences of untapped potential.
9. Door Drops purchases are omnichannel.
10. Door Drops are trusted.

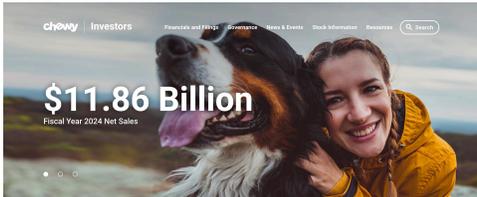


We must stress that these insights are not opinions; every one is backed by current data.

You may access the full report by using this QR code:

Mailing of the Month: **Chewy, Inc.** Ft. Lauderdale, FL

About Chewy, Inc.



Since 2011, Chewy, Inc. has offered products for pets to customers in the US (and, since 2023, in Canada) through its online store. Its stated mission is "to be the most trusted and convenient destination for pet parents and partners, everywhere. We view pets (and pet parents) as family and are obsessed with meeting their needs and exceeding customer expectations through every interaction."

(In 2019, private equity firm BC Partners purchased Chewy.com through its PetSmart brand for \$3.35 billion in cash. The company later went public, although BC Partners effectively controls the business.)

In 2024, the company had net sales of \$11.86 billion and 20.5 million active customers.

Chewy is a large user of direct mail.

About this Campaign

This is a customer **reactivation** campaign — note the headline on the outer envelope: "\$20 off your next order of \$49 or more* plus **fast. free delivery.**"

To place a "next order," one must have placed an order previously. This campaign has been widely mailed since September 2023 and is a "control" mailing.

(* The copy associated with the asterisk is on the reverse side of a card inside the mailer, so we do not know what the restrictions are. Likely, it's just an expiry date, since the purpose of the campaign is to have a previous customer order again as quickly as possible.)

Comments on this Campaign



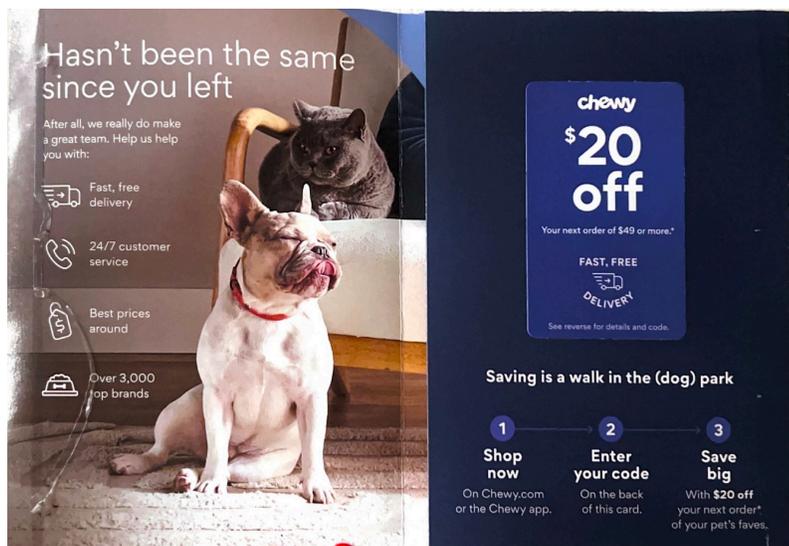
There's a rule that's as old as advertising itself, about kids and dogs in your messaging. In short, use them!

Both kids and dogs evoke emotional responses from readers (or viewers), and that's a good thing.

Given this, it is impossible to imagine that pet business Chewy wouldn't use dogs (and perhaps even cats) in their direct mail campaigns.

Notice the dog on this 6x9 outer envelope... happy, playful, energetic. By implication, that energy comes from the good food and other pet products that

Chewy sells to "pet parents." This campaign illustrates how selecting the right images can enhance its look (and performance).



For example, take a close look at the image on the left-hand side of the inside panel of this mailing.

It's as if the dog is saying, "Hasn't been the same since you left," which just happens to be the headline on this panel.

(Perhaps the cat is thinking the same thing!)

The panel on the right is actually a flap that opens (middle image). What cat lover hasn't seen their cat playing with a box?

As importantly, the image complements the message, "Find whatever they're into. Get all their essentials and still have time to play."

It is a similar situation with the image on the back of the outer envelope (bottom image)



We imagine that, for this campaign, the creative team's # 1 task was selecting the images they would use, and rightly so!

Solid Art Direction Makes The Campaign

In the May 2024 issue of this report, we interviewed Rob Davis, "the best direct mail designer today."

Our conversation began with Rob saying this: *"Design is often considered the 'step-child' of copy. For so many years, I've fought that fight, just to get people to appreciate a little bit more what designers do and how much of a collaboration it is with the copywriter."*

You need both copy and design expertise for your direct mail campaigns.

This mailing's stats from Who's Mailing What!

Left: WMW!'s "score" for this campaign (0 to 100)

Center: This campaign's most recent mailing date

Right: One star indicates a "control mailing; 3 stars, a "grand control."



Images courtesy of Who's Mailing What!

Beyond The Mailbox

The Three Pillars That Build Business Category Kings

by David Baer

Most business owners think competing means being better than the next guy. Faster service. Lower prices. Friendlier staff.

But that's not how you win.

The businesses that truly dominate, those that capture 76% of the market value in their category (Harvard Business Review (<https://hbr.org/2016/01/how-unicorns-grow>), aren't playing the same game. Rather than compete, they create a new category of one.

This is called Category Design, and it's the difference between fighting for scraps and owning the largest wedge of the pie.

Why Most Businesses Get Lost Amongst the Noise

Walk into any market and you'll see dozens of businesses offering basically the same thing. They promise the same experience... the physical location has the same features... and many boast the same "We're the best!" claim.

Potential customers can't tell one business from another. So they pick based on price or convenience or whatever their cousin recommended. And that's how a business becomes a commodity.

Category design flips this on its head. Instead of trying to be the best coffee shop, you become the first "third place between home and work" (that's what Starbucks did when they began). Instead of selling better computers, you sell "technology that just works and looks beautiful" (which is Apple's play).

You're not better, but different in a way that matters.

When you successfully create and dominate a category, you capture the lion's share of the value. Not 20% or 30%, but 76%!

Before you think this result is reserved for big brands, it's not.

You can be the category king in your local market or with a specific subset of customers or by solving a problem uniquely. Here are a few made-up examples to illustrate my point:

A locksmith only restores antique locks in historic homes. Instead of competing on price with every other locksmith, he charges premium rates and builds a waitlist. He created a category where he's the only player.

A tax accountant only works with tattoo artists. That's it. She knows every deduction specific to their business, understands cash flow patterns for that industry, and speaks their language. Every tattoo artist in her area knows her name. General CPAs can't touch her rates because they can't match her expertise.

A wedding photographer only shoots on film and delivers printed albums six months after the wedding. No digital files. No instant gratification. She positions her service as "heirloom photography for people who value permanence over posting," and commands premium rates that other photographers envy.

I hope you see the pattern. Each of these businesses carve out a specific category, own it

Continues on the right

completely, and become the obvious choice for their specific type of customer.

The Three Pillars That Make You King

You need to align three things: brand identity, brand promise, and brand value.

Think of these pillars as the foundation, the commitment, and the secret sauce. Get all three right, and you're not just positioning yourself in the market... you are repositioning the entire market around you.

Brand Identity (How You Want to Be Seen)

Your brand identity is the distinguishing characteristic that sets you apart from the competition. An example:

You're hungry and you want something quick. Two sandwich shops are in the same block: Jimmy John's and Subway.

Jimmy John's built their identity on speed. Walk in, place your order, and by the time you've paid, your sandwich is wrapped and waiting. They stripped out everything that slows them down. The business is built on a limited menu, efficient prep and assembly line precision.

Subway built their identity on customization. You walk through their line and control everything. The bread. The meat. Every vegetable. Every sauce. The "sandwich artist" (their term, not mine) builds it exactly how you want it. I can tell you from personal experience, the process isn't typically "speedy."

Same product category. Completely different identities.

Neither is better or worse. They're distinct.

When you're in a rush, you think "I need Jimmy John's." When you "want it your way," you head to Subway.

Strong brand identity becomes the lens through which customers see you, and it shapes which customers come to you in the first place.

Your identity must be singular, clear, and defensible. Not "good quality at fair prices." Something specific that you can build your entire operation around.

Brand Promise (Your Guarantee to Customers)

Your brand promise is the general guarantee you make to your customers. It's what they can count on every single time.

And here's the critical part most businesses miss: your promise what you actually deliver in your operations.

Men's Wearhouse understood this better than most. Their tagline (before the company changed leadership and culture) was "You're gonna like the way you look."

It was a simple promise. And not just a slogan. It was baked into the customer experience.

When a customer walked into the store to try on a suit... as they looked at themselves in the mirror, the sales associate would ask one question: *"Do you like the way you look?"*

If the answer was "YES," great. The transaction moved forward.

If they said anything else, if they hesitated or were unsure, the associate was trained to respond the same way every time: "Then let's find something else." The associates would keep bringing options until the customer genuinely liked what they saw. The promise was baked into the flow of every customer visit.

Your brand promise should be provable. Repeatable. Something customers experience, not just hear about.

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Bad promises are vague: "We care about our customers." So everyone else claims.

Good promises are specific and operational.

The promise is your north star. Every decision, every process, every interaction should answer the question: "*Does this deliver on our promise?*"

Brand Value (What You Uniquely Contribute)

Your brand value is the thing that's unique to you which you contribute to the marketplace.

It's an outcome that didn't exist before.

Uber's value wasn't introduced as "cheaper than taxis" (though it often was). Their value removed pain points: no calling dispatch, no no uncertainty, no need for cash. They made transportation predictable and frictionless.

Zappos's value wasn't "shoes online" (plenty of sites sold shoes). Their value was removing the risk of buying shoes sight unseen: free shipping both ways, 365-day returns, and legendary customer service. They made online shoe shopping trustworthy.

Your brand value is the gap you fill... the problem you solve that others don't... the unique way you make your customers' lives better, easier, or more profitable.

Your value should be something competitors either can't copy or won't copy because it would require them to fundamentally change their business model.

How These Three Work Together

When your identity, promise, and value align, you stop competing in an existing category and start creating a new one.

Your identity tells people who you are. Your promise tells them what to expect. Your value tells them why it matters.

Together, they form a moat around your business that's hard to cross.

Look at Apple. Their identity is "beautifully designed technology that just works." Their promise is that you won't need a manual or tech support to use their products. Their value is removing complexity from technology.

Neither Dell nor HP nor others will even think about replicating Apple's value.

That's how you become a category king.

Claiming Your Place on the Throne Starts With Honest Questions

You can't fake this stuff. You can't rely on a catchy slogan on mediocre execution.

Start by asking yourself three questions:

One: *What do we want to be known for?* Not everything. One thing. Maybe two if you're being generous. That's your identity.

Two: *What can we guarantee every customer will experience?* Not your aspirations. What you consistently deliver. That's your promise.

Three: *What do we make possible that no one else does? What gap do we fill? What problem do we solve differently?* That's your value.

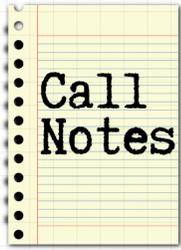
Answer these honestly. Build your operations around them. Train your team to deliver them. Make every decision through this lens.

The businesses that dominate aren't necessarily smarter or better funded. They're just clearer about who they are, what they promise, and what they contribute.

The 76% of market value waiting for category kings? It goes to the businesses that figure this out and commit to it completely.

Everyone else fights for the remaining 24%.

Ultimately, the decision is yours!



On February 10th, we continued reviewing the direct mail packages that **Michael Hill** sends for his estate planning event, focusing on the creative.

David Foley noted that the self-mailer and envelope package had been created by a business focusing on event marketing across several markets, and that the mailings were quite good for the price charged (\$0.90 each).

That said, he offered some suggestions for improvement in future mailings, including:

1. Mail from a person rather than the firm.

Direct mail is person-to-person communication, whether sent to prospects or to lapsed or active customers.

2. Be consistent with copy.

While a small point, this is an important detail. The copy invites recipients to bring a guest to the event, although in one place it uses the word "guests." *Which is it? Singular? Plural?*

3. Include a photograph of the event's location.



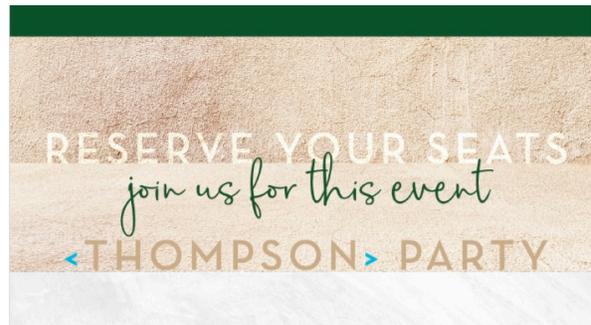
This suggestion is very specific to this campaign, as the firm's Learning Center is

located in a different building from its main office. A photograph of the event site helps attendees know that they are in the right place. (Also, since there is free parking at this location, mention it.)

4. Include a physical ticket in the envelope mailing.

While the self-mailer included a physical ticket, the envelope mailing did not. This is an easy and inexpensive fix.

However, Foley's main suggestion was to replace the back because, in its current form, it is largely wasted space. Here it is.



As you can see, this panel includes personalization, with "Thompson" being the recipient's surname.

While that's a nice touch, this panel could be repurposed to become much more useful. (Just because it's the back panel doesn't mean that it should not sell!) Here are three possibilities:

Give social proof by publishing client testimonials.

Promote the gift (a book) offered at the event.

Demonstrate expertise by sharing details of the firm's (trademarked) process for estate matters.

*For the complete presentation, members are invited to log in to **directmailinsiders.com** to view the replay.*



LEARNING TO LET GO: WHEN SUCCESS MEANS SURRENDERING CONTROL

For many business owners and professionals, holding on tightly to control feels natural. After all, your vision, expertise, and hard work got you to where you are today. But there comes a time when success requires a different approach — one that involves stepping back and trusting others to take the reins.

Here's how to recognize and embrace those moments.

Acknowledge the Limits of Your Capacity

You can't do it all, no matter how skilled or committed you are. As your business grows or your responsibilities expand, the demands on your time and attention increase. Holding onto every decision and task is unsustainable.

Recognizing your capacity limits is the first step toward letting go. Ask yourself: *Are there areas where someone else could excel while freeing me up to focus on what I do best?*

Delegate with Clarity

Delegation isn't just about offloading tasks; it's about ensuring the person taking them on has the tools and information to succeed. Be clear about your expectations, provide the necessary resources, and set realistic timelines.

Delegation done right empowers your team while allowing you to focus on high-level priorities.

Trust Your Team

Letting go requires trust. Building trust starts

with hiring the right people and investing in their development. Once you've put capable individuals in place, give them room to make decisions, even if they approach things differently than you would. Micromanaging not only undermines their confidence but also limits the potential for innovation.

Embrace the Bigger Picture

Holding on to control can cause you to lose sight of long-term goals. Instead of getting bogged down in every detail, shift your focus to the broader strategy. Let others handle the day-to-day operations while you steer the vision and direction of your business or project.

Accept That Mistakes Are Part of Growth

Fear of mistakes often drives the need for control. But mistakes are inevitable, whether you're in charge of every detail or not. Instead of trying to avoid them entirely, use them as opportunities to learn and improve. Your team's ability to recover and adapt is a sign of strength, not weakness.

Monitor Without Interfering

Letting go doesn't mean disengaging entirely. Create systems for monitoring progress and staying informed without hovering. Regular check-ins, performance reviews, or project updates can help you maintain oversight while giving others the autonomy they need.

Final Thoughts

Success often means evolving beyond the role of “doer” into that of a leader. Surrendering control isn't a sign of weakness — it's a sign of growth. By trusting your team, focusing on the big picture, and allowing others to shine, you create space for your business or career to thrive in ways you couldn't on your own.