

## **Is Your Business a Well-Engineered Money Machine?**

Many modern machines are engineering marvels. For that matter, even some not-so-modern machines were engineering marvels at the time those machines were built. Let's face it – for their time, the wheel and the lever were even engineering marvels. Sorry, my engineering background comes through from time-to-time.

I remember visiting a US Mint operation when I was an adolescent. I was young, naïve, and easily impressed, but near as I could tell, those printing presses were pretty sophisticated. I've been around enough modern printing facilities of various kinds to guess that the US Mint probably now has some incredibly well designed machines. Those machines are made up of a whole bunch of subsystems, each one complex in its own design, allowing the subsystem to complete specific functions as effectively and efficiently as possible. But this is not the real marvel of the machine. The real marvel is that these very well designed subsystems are all linked together into a larger system to form one machine, a machine that prints money really, really well.

If an automaker sets out to build an exceptional car, logic would suggest they find the best engine in the world and the best transmission in the world and put them together in the same car. But that is not what the automakers do. Why? Although the subsystems may be the best in the world doesn't mean that together they form the best drive train in the world. This pair of subsystems,

coupled together, might actually create a very poor drive train. An exceptional car has a great engine and a great transmission, but more importantly, an exceptional car has a great combination of an engine and a transmission.

So if you look at your business as a money machine, you have to ask the question: is my business a well-engineered money machine? Or would someone look at your money machine and conclude it was designed by Rube Goldberg?

Fundamentally, it doesn't matter how good your business may be at one particular part of the process of turning ordinary inputs into profits, turning ordinary inputs into *extraordinary* profits requires a system that is good at all of the parts, and just as importantly, that all of those parts work really, really well together.

Designing a business should be approached just as carefully as Boeing approaches building a new airliner (okay, 787 batteries aside!). If you really want to build a great money machine, learn to be a systems engineer of business processes. Most businesses are highly complex machines with lots of moving parts, operating in continuously changing environments.

The greatest online shopping website in the world is worthless if you can't fill the orders that are placed through it. How well engineered is your money machine?

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