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Procrastination

By Paperitalo Staff

One of my jobs, as a liberated, modern husband, is to wash the towels each week. I usually do this on Monday. It is a fairly easy chore: gather them up from the bathrooms and kitchen and throw them in the washing machine. An hour later, throw them in the dryer. No big deal.

Folding, however, is another matter. Sometimes I don't get around to that until Tuesday. This past week, I did not get around to it at all: My wife found the towels in the dryer on Saturday as she got ready to dry the first load of wash (she usually does the balance of the laundry on the weekend).

We can smile and laugh at this little incident, but we all procrastinate for some reason or another, and we do it in all aspects of life. Our procrastination at work is especially destructive and harmful. First, it may mean that a particular action is not taken in a timely manner. Second, it causes us personal stress, which is probably harmful to our health in the long term.

Some managers (not effective ones) believe procrastination is a viable management tool. Their theory is that by procrastinating, the best decisions get made, and often are made without them taking a stand. This is foolishness.

Of course, decisions can be made in haste without all the facts, but that is not what I am talking about here. I am talking about just simply putting off decisions.

We live in an industry today that suffers from a generation of managers that put off decisions. It was less risky for them personally to decide not to or to delay building modern facilities, change processes (business as well as technical) or do anything. They smiled, got along with everyone and waited for retirement. I hope, for the sake of our industry, most of them are gone now.

Industries are not built nor do they thrive by procrastination. Builders and doers create, build and preserve industries. These are the people we need to nurture and promote in our industry as time moves forward.

In safety, we have instilled a need to be proactive. We have learned that being a procrastinator does not work. Be proactive and alert to safety issues this week and we will talk next week. ##