

# FENESTRATION REVIEW ON

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## **BUILDING HERITAGE**

Brother and sister team  
up to find success in the  
window business



# Flavour of the month

by Rich Porayko

**S**ummer in Coquitlam: my favourite time of year. On top of the usual long weekend shenanigans, my family and I are known to enjoy an occasional delicious ice cream cone from time to time. There is a great hand-crafted ice cream shop near our home at Rocky Point Park in Port Moody. My son likes Cotton Candy and the wife prefers Maple Walnut. I'm always interested in trying new flavours and am happy with anything that has chunks of goodness. You don't get a body like this eating quinoa.

I may be fond of the flavour of the month in my personal life, however Work Rich isn't a big fan. I remember attending a meeting in a previous life where we discussed an upcoming marketing promotion. We talked about the terms, content and, among other details, the timeline to go to market: approximately three weeks. The next morning I received an email with a photo of a competitor's promo and a note saying I needed to put something similar together and get it out right away. I dropped all of the time sensitive projects I was working and whipped together a similar (but better) promo with the details from the previous day's meeting. Feedback was fast. It looked great, however the product had changed. Now the plan was to promote a completely different product. Back to the drawing board. A new mock-up lead to new feedback, a new format, new photos and new text. By the end of the day it was a new promo with nothing remotely similar to the previous day's meeting or even the example from the competition.

And, like that, the project died because they weren't set up to do the promotion in the first place. Misfire. What a waste of time and opportunity during an exceptionally busy time. It was a classic case of not sticking with the plan and having a series of kneejerk reactions.

There is nothing wrong with changing your mind. Tweaking details. Wordsmithing. Swapping out photos. Kyboshing the whole project. It's expected. But when a project is completely turned upside down from the launch date to the product type, it can cause a lot of chaos, unhealthy stress and lost opportunity with your team.

I've written several times about marketing guru Seth Godin who talks about throwing ideas against the wall and seeing what sticks. He keeps what works and discards what doesn't. I love this philosophy and frequently practice and preach about it. It sounds basic but there is a systematic strategy involved and it works.

I'm a big believer in continuous education in all forms. A former boss of mine would frequently attend executive conferences and seminars. He would come back from a course with new ideas on how to improve the business. Many of these were excellent and I learned a ton from him. Implementation wasn't without its drawbacks, however, and, like clockwork, halfway through developing and executing one of the breakthrough ideas, he would lose interest. He would attend another course and come back charging in a different direction. It killed momentum and he lost trust from his employees with perpetual changes in direction. Every company can live in the muck for a few days but if you are perpetually struggling, you're in trouble. It creates dysfunction. Ever wonder why you're not making more profit? Dysfunction eats profit for breakfast.

Many aspects of business are seasonal and can be planned a year in advance. I often compare marketing to an operations schedule. Marketing has production times, resources, bottlenecks and delivery deadlines just like production does. Promotions can be easily planned on a basic calendar and shared. I prefer quarterly or bi-monthly promos as it can often take 30 days to move the needle. Creating a simple calendar doesn't mean it's written in stone. Entrepreneurship needs to be flexible so promos can be shuffled around, parked or added as required, however people can still have visibility of what is coming down the pipeline.

The best leaders that I have worked with have a consistent vision and communicate it early and often. The details in the plan might change but the overall vision is rock solid. This is the real world and dysfunction still happens but it should be the exception to the rule. If it is happening on a regular basis, look inward.