

“Work the System!”

There is an old story from the years of my youth about the famous English author Somerset Maugham. Mr. Maugham was invited to his old Primary School to address the pupils on the skills required in writing the perfect short story. The great man spoke. “Children, to consistently succeed in your short story writing, you must have a system; a formula you can follow. The formula I use is this. In every story I write I always include a little bit of religion, a little bit of royalty, a little bit of sex and a little bit of mystery. Stick to that system and you cannot fail!”

After the famous writer had left, the teacher asked the children to use what they had just learnt to create their own short story.

“Now, don’t forget the four parts of Mr. Maugham’s formula” she said. “You will need a little bit of religion, a little bit of royalty, a little bit of sex and a little bit of mystery. Raise your hand when you have finished.”

Sixty seconds later, little Jimmy’s hand shot up. “You can’t possibly be finished yet, Jimmy. Are you sure you have included all four ingredients?” “Yes, Miss!” Miss couldn’t believe it, but thought she had better encourage the boy so she said “OK, Jimmy, if you are sure you have finished, stand up and read us your story.”

In a confident voice Jimmy read, “*My God, said the Duchess! I’m pregnant! I wonder who did it?*”

So there you have it! Even little Jimmy can make a tough task simple with a system!

Now, some of us are naturally methodical people and some of us are not. Sadly, I am one of those people whose brains bounce around all over the place like a drunk on a pogo stick.

What is that old saying? Some people make things happen; some people have things happen to them; and then there are some people who haven’t got a bloody clue what’s happening! Most of us feel like we are in the third category most of the time. To transfer to the first category, you will need to develop some systems.

I think many people have an abhorrence of systems because for years and years of their early employment, they were forced to adhere to somebody else’s imposed system. Systems imposed by others may not fit the personalities and working styles of all the poor toilers caught in the net.

In big organizations they are hard, if not impossible, to change. But surely most of my readers are self-employed RUMS!

Any system you decide to introduce is YOUR system. It can be easily tested; easily changed. It is not a yoke around your neck. It may even be a path to greater freedom!

Start with your Caretaking Agreement. Does it list Daily, Weekly, Monthly tasks? These are your contractual obligations and you should systemize their completion,

because if you neglect these, you are in breach of contract.

Depending on the size of your complex, how often during the month do you schedule a trial balance of your Trust Account?

The sooner you discover an error has been made, the easier it is to isolate that error. Don’t spend a whole day on the 30th trawling over one month’s worth of entries to find the error you made on the 2nd!

Do you keep a diary? It may be a big A4 model on your desk or it may be Calendar on your computer, but there had better be one. Do you have a method for recording ALL tenants’ R & M requests.

In this age of litigation, a forgotten request for a repair that leads to a tenant’s injury, is going to make the cost of buying a special book to record such things seem very cheap indeed!

I could go on, but there is no one plan that fits all complexes. Think about your own complex. What are the things that need to be done? How often? By when? By whom? Write it all down and pretty soon you will have a plan.

As a wise person once said - *Nobody plans to fail; they just fail to plan!*

If you would like to comment on anything you have read in The RAAS Report, please write to PO Box 1325, Sunnybank Hills, Qld 4109 or send an email to mike@raas.com.au.



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