

If you know a company — customer, supplier, friend, or your own — that could benefit from improved operations, let us know.

Your best interest is our best interest.

The Finish Strong® monthly e-newsletter is for business leaders who recognize Operations as a strategic function that creates competitive advantage, profitability and brand loyalty in the marketplace.

HOBBY, SERIOUS HOBBY, OR PROFESSION?

Many of you golf. Some do it for fun and simply keep score because that's part of the game. Others are more serious, competing with themselves. Did I get around the course in fewer shots than last time? Continuous improvement is important to these folks.

And then there are the pros. They not only are committed to continuous improvement of their own game; they continually benchmark themselves against the very best. They know who can drive best, who can putt best, and they know the best at every other aspect of the game. That's called benchmarking.

Businesses are the same way.

Some figure as long as they keep their nose to the grindstone and turn a reasonable profit, they're okay. Sounds like a hobby.

Some focus on continuous improvement, making sure they are better today than they were yesterday. Absolutely going the right direction, but with no concept of how they compare to the competition. Sounds like a serious hobby.

And then there are the companies that work to get better than the competition every day. They know the weaknesses that cost them the most, the strengths that help them overcome poor performance in other areas. They can distinguish a "hail mary" success from a repeatable one. They know how they stack up against the competition, and against the very best, piece by piece as well as in total. Sounds like a profession.

Whether you golf, ski, bike, run or garden for fun outside the office, make sure that inside it you run your business like a pro.

DOES THE UNITED STATES HATE WINNERS?

The "robber barons" of the early 1900s built very successful businesses that had grown to dominate their industries. In the 1970s, IBM dominated the emerging computer industry. In the last 2 decades, Microsoft has dominated the personal computer operating system and office software industries.

The US government, in each case, brought suit against those companies with the intent to reduce their market shares.

The recent financial crisis has left us with the term "too big to fail."

The US government reaction to Toyota safety problems seems to have greatly exceeded its reactions to equally or more dangerous safety problems of other auto manufacturers (Honda, Mitsubishi, Nissan, Chrysler, GM, etc...). Is that because Toyota has been so successful in recent years?

Inappropriate behavior of leaders brought forth anti-trust laws and caused the financial crisis. It is a fact that the companies are/were large. Same with Enron, and other notable "failures." But is large evil?

Parity in sports makes for better competition, but prevents any one team from dominance over time. Parity in business sounds "fair" but does the US really want to punish success? Morality cannot be legislated, and punishing all successful companies for the behavior of a relative handful of individuals seems a poor attempt at that.

FINISH STRONG®

The Starting Pistol
George F Will:

"Part of the beauty and much of the moral seriousness of sport derives from the severe justice of strenuous play in a circumscribed universe of rules that

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protect the integrity of competition. Records are worth recording, and worth striving to surpass, because they serve as benchmarks of excellence achieved under the pressure of competition.”

The Tape

Rebecca Morgan:

“Business, when losing is not an option, is the same way.”

REACH FULCRUM VIA SOCIAL MEDIA

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