



JAM Team – left to right
George Amidon, Kaleen Barbera,
Jim Morel and Greg Heffington

JAM Sessions

Summer/Fall 2016



Thoughts on Procrastination from a Zen Master Procrastinator by Greg Heffington



Greg “Heff” Heffington RCC
Managing Partner

This article was due over three weeks ago. First I just couldn’t come up with an idea that I thought would be relevant. Then it dawned on me, “procrastination”, that would be perfect. Once I had the topic, I thought it would be easy to sit down and write it out. It certainly should have been; I am a master procrastinator and an expert on the subject matter. And therein lies the challenge. As a master, I am really good at it.

I kept thinking the clarity of mission would help me get started. Then I thought the boldness of my self-proclaimed expertise would somehow take hold and the

effort would just materialize. Then of course there is all of the other stuff on my desk and in my head that always seemed to be “more important”. I knew I needed to get it done, not only for me, but also for the rest of my partners at JAM Consulting. So why did it take me so long to get it done?

It is a question that I really had to think about before I could honestly pull this together in a way that made sense in my head and hopefully help others with the challenges of overcoming procrastination.

According to Merriam-Webster the simple definition of Procrastinate is: *to be slow*

or late about doing something that should be done: to delay doing something until a later time because you do not want to do it, because you are lazy, etc.

To anyone who knows me, they know I am anything but lazy and I certainly have wanted to write this [\(continue on page 3\)](#)

Our newest program:
**Leadership . . .
“Think Straight-Talk Straight”**

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The Millennials by George Amidon



George Amidon
Managing Partner

In our last edition, Jim touched on the impact that Millennials are having in how we do business in his article “What’s Your Value?” I would like to expand on that a little more. I read a recent article from Patricia M. Soldano and Lauren Benenati on Wealth Management.com where they shared some interesting insight to Millennials. According to estimates released by the U.S. Census Bureau this year, Millennials have surpassed Baby Boomers as the nation’s largest living generation. They represent 27 percent of the adult population and are set to inherit \$30 trillion from their Baby Boomer parents. This generation has beliefs and views independent of those of their parents. Millennials won’t engage without



From the Field

The Power of Questions

By Kaleen Barbera



Kaleen Barbera CPC
Managing Partner

Does it ever drive you crazy when people talk only about themselves? Or worse, when it seems that if you try to interject you get the feeling that it comes across as pushy or unwelcomed? Perhaps you feel like you have to fill the void because the other person seems unwilling to answer questions or offer information? Or you sometimes are so curious you get the feeling that the other person feels like they're being interrogated?

It's not uncommon that when we have something as seemingly simple as a conversation (over the phone or in person), we may experience an uncomfortable imbalance between knowing how much to talk versus asking questions. Why is asking questions so important? Because it helps to lead us in meeting a very basic human need: to be heard and understood. It's one of the reasons that so many people are addicted to the number of likes they receive on a post on Facebook, Instagram, or responses they get on Twitter or Snapchat. It is also why people become unbearably anxious when they don't get responses to their text messages. In fact, psychologists have even recognized the iPhone's "... " as the cause of an anxiety disorder that people develop when they see someone typing yet never receive a text.

There's an emptiness that takes over when we don't think others see us or are interested in who we are or what we have to say. Being aware of this can help us to understand ourselves and also focus on meeting that need in others. In a professional sense, the ultimate benefit is leaving others with a sense of comfort knowing that you truly 'get them'. Without this, it will be near impossible for a business relationship to take shape, grow, and develop productively.

So, how good are you at naturally asking questions? Take this quick assessment to see where you fall on the 'agility of asking questions' spectrum:

1. I take the initiative to greet people first, always asking how they are.
2. I always respond to an inquiry about me with a similar inquiry about the other person.
3. I always begin my **emails** to people I know with a question such as "How are you?" or "How is your week?"
4. I know the difference between a closed-ended question and an open-ended question.
5. When I am meeting people for the first time, I think ahead about what I might like to know about them.

6. I make an effort to ask people for information and focus on their answers.
7. I listen to what people are saying and want to know more by asking more questions.
8. I am curious about what other people are thinking and I am comfortable asking questions to get those kind of conversations going.
9. I don't feel the urge to respond to a comment or concern with an immediate solution. Instead, I take time to learn more.

If you answered yes to less than 3 of those, you may need to ask yourself, "Am I learning enough about others? What is getting in the way?"

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Coach's Corner by Jim Morel



The "Coach"
James A Morel
President

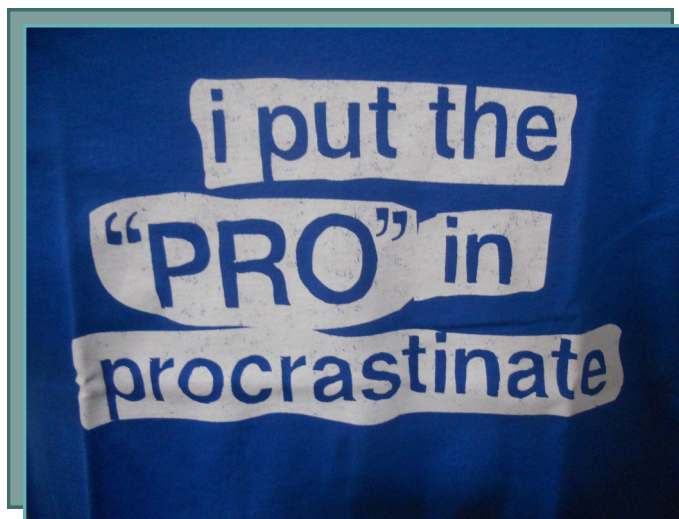
TURN SALES MEETINGS INTO TEAM PRACTICE MEETINGS

I had a conversation with a sales manager recently who complained that his sales meetings seemed to be a Waste of time. The scary part is that this is a common complaint I hear from sales people also.

If you, your team, or organization wonders why you have sales meetings, then it is time for a change. To begin, stop having sales meetings to review what is happening, what is not happening, and giving out new company changes. Instead, start conducting weekly "sales practices". This does not mean that there will not be small informational items communicated, but the focus should be on teaching your team. The same approach professional sports teams use to improve performance. (continued on page 6)

Thoughts on Procrastination from a Zen Master Procrastinator

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article if for no other reason, I want it off my mind. So in the end, I am just slow or late. Which of course is of no use in the present situation. It's like saying I am hungry because I have not eaten. All I really need to do is eat something or in this particular case, just sit down and write it. Which is of course is exactly what I am doing. So why did it take so long to get started?

Here are some thoughts. It may really have been a lower priority in terms of other things on my plate. It is easy to see that in many cases that is absolutely true. The primary driver of that is the expectations of others and scheduled events that I am a participant to, but did not drive the event. Way too many to list here, but every one of you knows exactly what I am talking about. Then there is the unannounced client calls, need for information or input that has to be in hand from me before the client can move forward on their projects. I owe a quick response to them, don't I? The "honey, when you have a minute, can you help me with this or that?" request from my wife. Certainly can't ignore that one, right? Happy wife happy life I think the line goes. Look, let's call it what it is, the "Tyranny of

the Urgent" to quote a good friend Brett Van Bortel.

Of course there is always the thought as all of this continues to eat away at the day, that I will sit down after the business day is complete and write out this quick article and be done with it. Good in theory, but once again, something happens seemingly out of nowhere. There is not enough energy in the tank to even get my brain to function effectively past what to fix for dinner, let alone figure out what to write about regarding procrastination, so I guess I will just do it tomorrow. And of course, I will spend some period of time overnight thinking about the fact that I need to write the article, so I lose sleep over it again. (Why do I keep doing this to myself?)

Maybe it's because I don't think of myself as terribly gifted writer and I want it to be perfect. Oh, wait, once again for those of you who know me, that is never going to a viable excuse. Oh man, there is that word. I didn't want to utter it, because it is such an ugly word. It can only describe the obvious and there is no way to justify it. All of this explanation is just that, an excuse. I find the time to do most of the things I

want to do, but hardly any time to do the things I can put off even though I know I need to do them. Sound familiar?

So, what to do? In my years perfecting the art of procrastination there are some sure methods of cutting through the elements of procrastination. Let me share of a few of the more meaningful ones for me. It is not to say that you don't have some of these in your arsenal already, it is just necessary for me to help if I can. Let's face it, calling it out without offering some advice on how to overcome the challenge would not make for a very good coach or consultant now would it.

So let dig in a bit.

"Time blocking" has and will continue to be one of the most effective means of dealing with procrastination. It is what I am doing right now. I have put everything else on hold while I write and refine this article. My daughter is in town and I promised her that I would spend the rest of the day with her once I got this done. It is amazing how much I am getting done because I have left everything else on the sidelines to be done after this article is finished. I use it all of the time, I just don't use it effectively

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The Power of Questions (continued from page 2)

Perhaps you don't know what to ask, you don't know how to ask questions, or you simply lack curiosity. Maybe you just don't think about asking questions or what is to be gained from it. In addition to meeting people's innate need to be heard and understood, as well as building better relationships, asking questions can also help us avoid making stupid assumptions. Have you ever jumped to the wrong conclusion simply because you failed to gather additional information first? Yep. It's happened to all of us. So, how can we improve our ability of asking more questions?

1. Curiosity is key! Talk yourself into being curious if you have to. Genuine interest will help people feel comfortable that you truly want to learn more about them.
2. Open ended questions are better at creating dialogue. Get comfortable with them by using them.
3. Think about what you already know about that person, and focus questions on areas of relevance to begin a dialogue.

4. Read the tea leaves. If someone starts to become evasive, think carefully about your approach and topic of conversation. A lighthearted, rapport-building conversation shouldn't make anyone uncomfortable, but an in-depth, solution-oriented meeting might present obstacles. The situation should indicate whether you need to know if you've hit a nerve by openly acknowledging their emotion, or that it's best to change the subject.
5. Think about logical 'discussion points' or topics, instead of individual questions. For example, when meeting someone for the first time, ask about their history and background, their current situation, their goals, plans, or what they think their future holds. This way you keep the questions more open and less direct.
6. Context is helpful. For example, in a business meeting it always helps for the other person to know WHY you might

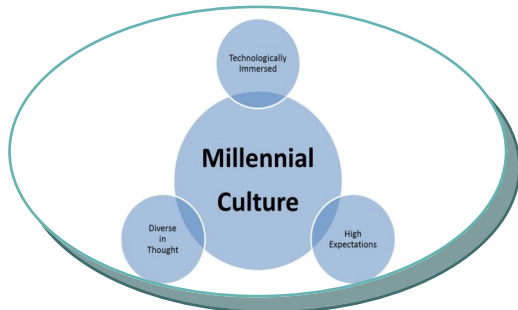
be asking the questions you're asking (e.g. 'to better understand you,' 'to better understand how I can help,' 'to see what might be the best solution,' etc.).

7. If you ask, be willing to listen. Don't forget that the question is pointless if you don't pay attention to the answer.

Based on what I've shared, hopefully you can either build or enhance your brand by being the one person that is less about telling, and more interested in what others have to say. Good luck!



The Millennials (continued from page 1)



trust, require personalized attention and embrace quite a different outlook from the Boomers.

Millennials' skeptical attitudes and sharp opinions aren't without merit. They grew up in an era of some significant failures: The tech bubble implosion of 2000 and the financial crisis of 2008 have left them wary and don't embrace the long-term positive investment views held by their boomer parents.

In addition, they grew up in the internet era with the world's accumulation of knowledge instantly accessible to them.

These two factors alone make the Millennials' attitudes and opinions quite different from their predecessors. It colors how they think about issues of trust, dependence and security.

In their article Soldano and Benenati shared research that shows:

- 40% of Boomers say that, generally speaking, most people can be trusted. A mere 19% of Millennials agree with that.
- 50% of Millennials consider themselves as political independents, compared to Boomers at 37%.
- 29% of Millennials are religiously unaffiliated, compared with 16% of Boomers.

Millennials and technology go hand-in-hand. Communication methods will continue to change and the challenge will be adapting to those changes. According to a 3 year study by Scratch/Viacom Media

Networks, 71% of Millennials would rather go to the dentist than listen to what banks say. Another 33% believe they won't need a bank.

In a white paper by David E. Morrison, M.D. "Some Challenges of Managing the Millennial Generation and Their Dependency on Social Media", Doctor Morrison shares some interesting insight as to power social media has in the development of executive presence for this generation.

Research shows that:

- 25% connected to a device within five minutes of waking up;
- 80% sleep with their phones;
- 40% do not "unplug," ever; and
- Most send 100 texts a day.
- For the past 20 years there has been a 40 percent decline in the markers for empathy among college students, most in the past ten years. (Empathy is a part of many of the positive qualities of executive presence.)

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Thoughts on Procrastination from a Zen Master Procrastinator

(continued from page 3)

all of the time. This morning, it is different. It is effectively being used with fantastic results.

“Do the worst first” is another effective tool to overcome procrastination. It helps when the thing you are putting off is not something you really want to do but perhaps it is something that stands in the way of a favorite activity or engagement. Here I will use the idea of going to the river to try and fool a fish or two. There is very little in my life that brings the peace and tranquility to my overactive brain the way standing a river casting imitation bugs and such to rising trout or even drifting a nymph to feeding fish below the surface. Catch and release is the game, but catching is not nearly as important as standing in the river. So if I really want to go fishing, I will purposefully put something in front of me that I am not thrilled about doing, just so I can reward myself with the better

thing (in this case standing in the river), no matter what the better thing is.

“Accountability” works well if you choose to bring someone else into the picture. What you are looking to do is to make sure someone else is looking over your shoulder checking in with you to see how you are progressing towards your stated goal or progress on a specific task or tasks. My best accountability partner right now is my wife Barbara, mostly because she always wants to know how I am doing. That is especially true when it comes to the proverbial “honey do” list. When it comes to business, I use my client expectations as my accountability partnership. They have needs, I have opinions or insights and they know they can hold me accountable to deliver the information on their schedule, not mine. That only works because I

take that accountability very seriously.

Of course, there are many other ways to overcome the power of procrastination, but these are the most common and the ones I resort to more often than not. Hopefully one or more will work for you as well.

Now, I need to start thinking about next quarter’s newsletter article. It will likely take me a while to knock it out if this quarter is any indication. Be Good to yourselves (and don’t put that off).

Heff!

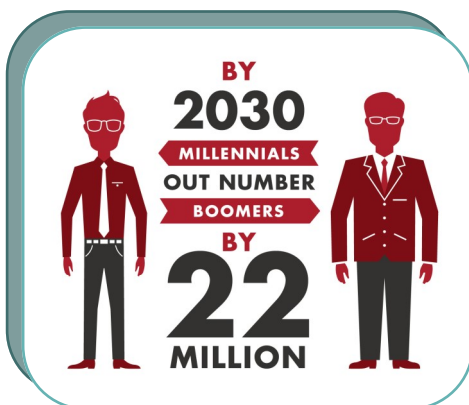


The Millennials (continued from page 4)

What does all of this mean? That developing relationships will be more critical than ever. Whether you are engaging them as a client or hiring them as an employee, getting to know who they are and understanding their goals will be critical. We all have a tendency to view the present based on the past. The idea that “when I played the game was tougher – today’s athletes are soft” or “when I grew up I walked to school 5 miles every day – uphill both ways!” In order for us to be more effective we will need to be more aware of both ourselves and those that we interact with. Expecting others to change to fit our view is both unrealistic and unproductive.

For more on Dr. Morrison’s white paper visit our website and for Patricia M. Soldano and Lauren Benenati article: Do Millennials Need Family Offices go to WealthManagement.com.

As always good luck and good selling!





The "Coach"
James A Morel
President

Coach's Corner

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Early in my sales career, a friend of mine was promoted to sales manager and was my new boss. In our first sales meeting, he announced he was conducting our sales meetings differently. Our meetings became team practice sessions. He asked each of us to offer skill topics to practice during our meetings. Each sales person was given a topic: cold calling, in-person sales calls, asking questions, closing the sale, etc.

Our sales meetings were no longer a painful event. Each meeting had three components: recognition, communication, practice.

Here at JAM Consulting we conduct our sales workshops with the same interactive practice of basic sales skills. For more information on related programs, check out our website.



"Instead, start conducting weekly sales practices".

Jim Morel



George Amidon
616-901-0735
george@jamconsultinggroup.com
Kaleen Barbera
630-999-7312
kaleen@jamconsultinggroup.com
Greg Heffington
970-227-4418
greg@jamconsultinggroup.com
Jim Morel
630-253-6738
jim@jamconsultinggroup.com



Why JAM Consulting?

"Our clients say what they appreciate most is that we help them become the best version of themselves as professionals, creating greater success.

We believe in maximizing an individual's potential, which leads to both opportunity and differentiation in a highly competitive landscape.

We do that through coaching, developing, and delivering relevant and insightful programs specializing in executive presence, communication, sales, and leadership. Our extensive expertise in those areas and the additional resources we access provide a unique edge to our clients and separates us from the competition."

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