

Blocking Tackling

By Carrie Ellis, Editor, Chem.Info

If you hang out with sports lover and editorial director Jeff Reinke for any amount of time, you are bound to stumble across some of his sage advice. I find that one of the more profound, or at least one of the most relevant in my life, is: “You have to remember to block and tackle.” And what good advice considering the regular season of football is on the horizon. Go Packers! (And yes, we’ll be just fine without Favre, although I wish him the best personally ... not so much professionally anymore.)

Some times, especially when you find yourself already hunkered down, feet planted with your game face on, it’s difficult to remember that while the glory of the game comes from being on the offensive, it’s being on the defensive that typically gives you the opportunity to take the pigskin and run. Translation for the processing marketplace? It’s the little things that seem to swallow up the eight hours or more from day to day, yet it’s these same things that make tomorrow more fluid and these same things that set your facility up for operational victories.

For example, I knew at some point this week that I’d need to write a blog. Yet between populating the Chem. Insider Daily every morning, ramping up for a looming website overhaul, returning long overdue e-mails and furiously scribing for the next print issue of Chem.Info, that small goal got lost. I was too busy gazing into the crystal ball of my calendar — which is dotted with future deadlines — to prioritize what was important in the present.

What time is it now? It’s 5:30 a.m. on the last day of the workweek — the last opportunity I have to connect with you before leaving off for the weekend and the last opportunity to write this blog.

Then it struck me. What is my worst self-critique as far as work habits are concerned? Time management. I may consider it my arch nemesis, yet it still needs to be blocked and tackled over the course of the day.

This epiphany thankfully unlocked my writer’s block and led me to pass on the same advice that I’ve found helpful countless times in my own work environment. If only I would’ve analyzed my poor blocking and tackling earlier in the week, then I would be sleeping right now and better prepared for my workday with a little less anxiety. But hey, I sacrifice all of this in order to better prepare you for your workday in the hopes that you find it just as useful.

On a side note: It’s invaluable to familiarize yourself with your own shortfalls, so you

Blocking Tackling

Published on Chem.Info (<http://www.chem.info>)

can create and memorize a smarter playbook, even if your only opponent is you.

Most of us can agree that one thing the recession has done is increase the pressure on individuals within a company — any company by the sounds of things — by extending job responsibilities in order to reduce overhead and streamline workflows. Thus, what used to take four to six hands to do now only takes two, or in other words, one person is essentially doing the work of two or three. I think that, in my case, I'd be able to keep a college intern busy simply answering the more than 100 e-mails I get as an editor every day. (And no, I don't have any applications to dole out, although I wish I did.)

Make sure to prioritize even the seemingly insignificant line items of your to do list. It's the walking the plant floor, the machine maintenance, the energy monitoring, etc. that ensures that you minimize plant downtime and maximize your value within the context of a facility. It's not putting out fires that qualifies you for your job; it's making sure that the fire extinguisher is always at the ready and in the most accessible of areas.

So get out there and do what you do best. And yes, inevitably you'll get interrupted — whether it be a scheduling error or an equipment failure — but even those interruptions should be part of your strategy and prioritization. And remember that while you're doing it, you're not only blocking and tackling, but you're also setting yourself and your company up for a touchdown and a win.

Thoughts? E-mail me at carrie.ellis@advantagemedia.com [1].

Source URL (retrieved on 04/02/2015 - 5:56am):

<http://www.chem.info/blogs/2009/08/blocking-tackling>

Links:

[1] <mailto:carrie.ellis@advantagemedia.com>