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Too many notes?

by BRIAN LOCKHART

I attended an information session a few years ago designed to help landowners decide if having an electric power-generating windmill on their property was a good idea.

It was all very professional, with the speakers being experts in their field.

The experts were very thorough and explained the entire process.

They had graphs and charts, and examples of the devices you would need to have placed on the property to do measurements of all the factors that would determine if the location was suitable for a windmill.

The weather devices would record things like wind speed at certain times of day, the amount of sunny weather versus cloudy days, air pressure, and how constant the wind speed was over a period of time.

In the end, it would all go on a graph of some sort to measure if your property was at a suitable place and elevation.

As the presentation continued, I sensed a feeling of uneasiness in the audience. I don't think everyone was expecting so much pre-planning, as it all seemed a little overwhelming.

That, along with the cost of around $10,000 for the preliminary findings to be completed, seemed to deflate much of the landowner's enthusiasm for putting up a windmill. After all, $10,000 is a lot of money just to find out your farm doesn't have a lot of wind.

At the end of the presentation, there was a question and answer period.

One older woman raised her hand and asked, probably what everyone was thinking ? ?what if you don't want to go to all the trouble and expense of this preliminary study??

The presenter, who was probably expecting this question, simply smiled and said, ?then you just put up a windmill and see what happens.?

I thought that was a very clever and common-sense answer. I was expecting the presenter to give a long and detailed answer about why you need to spend the time and money on the study.

Instead, he boiled down the entire process to a single solution.

Many times projects are stymied, slowed down, or more expensive than necessary because of the red tape and nonsense that goes into planning.

While a good plan is necessary to start any project, the old phrase ?too many cooks spoil the broth' is very true. Many good plans have been ruined because there is a committee involved in the planning.

For some reason, everyone on the committee will feel the need to throw their two cents into the concept to make sure they feel validated.

I've come across this before when working on different projects. The best projects involve working with a business owner who may have a company employing less than 50 people.

Usually, the owner and maybe one of his associates will take a look at it, or possibly he will give it to the marketing or media person to review. The result is usually either a thumbs up or a request to change a few things. Easily done ? you change what they want, and you're good to go.

The worst case is when you hear, ?it has to be reviewed by the committee.?

Now you have ten people who each have to throw in their input to prove they are earning their salary.

Anyone who works in a creative type of industry knows what this is like. For some reason, creative types always think they know better than the other guy in the same business.

Photographers are notorious for their criticism of other photographers' work. I don't know why that is.

I once did a photo shoot at a local historic building with three models. I got the location for free with the deal that the building could choose some of the photos for their brochure.

However, when I brought them in, the woman who was running the place at the time on a temporary basis was rather critical of my work.

I asked her what the problem was. She replied in a rather snooty way, ?I have a degree in photography, so I'm very particular.?

I replied, ?Yeah, so do I, but I'm working as a photographer, not sitting behind a desk like you. That sure says a lot.?

It was kind of rude, but it sure shut her up and took the snootiness out of them.

In the 1985 Academy Award-winning movie Amadeus, after the premier of one of his works, Mozart asks the Emperor what he thinks of the performance.

The Emperor thinks for a moment, then says, ?there are too many notes.? Mozart's reply was, ?there are just as many notes as I required ? neither more nor less.?

I think that reply says a lot.

Sometimes you've got to just take something for what it is and appreciate the work that has gone into it.