

THE BRIGHT SIDE® OF CHANGE

Written by Donna Rae Smith

It's the Little Things That Count: A Riveting Story

You probably think you know the story of the Titanic. The famous luxury ship sank catastrophically after hitting an iceberg in the North Atlantic, right? Well, it turns out there may be more to the story. In recent years, [scientists have asserted](#) that mediocre-grade rivets played a significant role in the tragedy. The ship may not have sunk so rapidly—and more lives may have been saved—had better quality rivets been used on the stern and bow.

I find this story fascinating because I believe it has great relevance for businesses today. It's not hard to imagine the pressures faced by the Titanic's ship maker—including supply and labor shortages and time requirements for launch—that were likely being juggled. We've all experienced those kinds of pressures, even if we weren't building the world's most heralded ship.

As we feel ourselves pulled in a million directions, and needing to do whatever we can to stay competitive, we may think the answer is to cut corners. There's a strong temptation to focus on the high-profile, on what we think is going to get attention or get noticed. The tendency often becomes to overlook or neglect the underbelly, those elements of our business where we think no one's looking. And yet often those little things count far more than we realize.

Leaders are the keepers of all things big and small. They need to raise awareness that little things, as well as big things, have a long-term impact on business outcomes. Attention to the small stuff really does count: the rewards can be anything from customer loyalty, to sales, to the prevention of monumental safety disasters.

[This article](#) has it right: always strive for your maximum best, and don't settle for "good enough." Maintain perseverance, consistency, and focus for sustainable success. There is no substitute. Think about what you could achieve if every person in your organization understood the value of, and took pride in, doing the small stuff well.



The Experiment

1. What are your company's titanic projects? Ask your team to list potential small things that could destroy the value of the projects.
 - a. Brainstorm possible solutions to prevent or protect these small things from negatively impacting the outcomes.
2. When have you paid attention to the small stuff and generated a long term WIN?
 - a. When have you seen this in others?
 - b. What did they do and what was the sustainable win?
3. Identify 3-5 little things you need to pay special attention to that will assure your commitments to your clients are met and exceeded.

THE CONVERSATION: Share the results of your experiment in the comments below or contact the author directly at donnarae@bright-side.com.

ABOUT DONNA RAE SMITH

Donna Rae Smith is a guest blogger for Smart Business. She has forged a career, enterprise and an applied discipline on the practice of teaching leaders to be masters of change. She is the Founder and CEO of Bright Side, Inc., a transformational change catalyst company with an emphasis on the behavior-side of change. For more than two decades, Donna Rae Smith and the Bright Side team have been recognized as innovators in executing behavioral strategies coalesced with business strategies to accelerate and sustain business results. Bright Side®, The Behavioral Strategy Company, has partnered with over 250 of the world's most influential companies. For more information, please visit www.bright-side.com or contact Donna Rae at donnarae@bright-side.com.

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