Sink Handle Episode 44

Hello, everyone, and welcome to Episode 44. Today, I really want to go back to basics on something that I think is one of the most important things in your life. And that is so I mean, I could really nerd out on this stuff, really, like embarrassingly nerd out on this stuff. But today, I really just want to go over the basics of them. What is an SOP? And why is it so important? So the first thing is that SOP stands for standard operating procedure. And basically, it's just the instructions to do something. It's the instruction manual for the thing, whatever the thing is, it's a way that we can document something so that it can be shared, or remembered. Just write it down. So you can remember for the next time, it's what are we doing? Why are we doing it? How do we do it? When does it get done? Who does it? Who keeps all of these things running? There are a ton of different ways to make it as SOP. We could Google this and nerd out for days on end easily. least I could. But what I mean by my whole focus when I'm making an SOP is that I'm creating something that I can hand to someone who has no idea about the process. If it's to set up an account for something, let's say they've never set it up, they don't know the systems, they don't know anything. And they're handed this instruction, this fop for that task, and they can do it from start to finish without help. That is my ultimate goal.

Okay, so why are SOP so important? Why do I get so excited about talking about them? Why is it a huge part of my business is documenting and creating recipes and processes for other business owners? It is essential for growth is said essential. Like, if you want to grow your business, you need to have systems and processes documented. That's it. There's no way to grow and keep all of the things running the way you want them to be. Without them. Because the biggest thing is business owners, especially in the beginning, create businesses that rely solely on them. Most of the time, especially if like we've left corporate or something like that, we create this business around us, right? We do a thing, we create a business, we're not usually creating a business that's like an empire thing, right? Like there's some, like a startup company might come in and think, Oh, well, I'm gonna create this entire huge business. But a lot of us, small business owners are creating businesses around us what we do and what we offer. And that's great, except that you become the bottleneck because all the knowledge is in your head. So anytime you want someone to help you, you have to take time out of your day to train them. You have to take time out of your day to manage them and explain things and answer questions. You become this great big bottleneck that everyone has to wait for to get their work done because they need answers from you. And that is unmanageable. At any time. Really, I can't stand micromanaging anyone. But when you get bigger and everyone's waiting on you, that is an enormous, enormous pain in the ass, frankly, and it stops all progress. So if all the knowledge is in the one person that business owners head, unless you hire a team of psychics, no one knows how to do anything but you. That means you have to work all the time and do all the things. And that's usually what people get burned out doing. Right? They have to do all the things. And they think I can't get help, it would be too complicated. And it's too much to manage. People don't want to bring on a team or bring help on because they don't want to manage people. It's exhausting. It doesn't have to be. But that's most people's perception. It's gonna take too much time. I can't train people. Everyone depends on me for everything. That's where SOPs come in. That is why all procedures and systems here are so vital. It gets that knowledge out of your head. And somewhere people can go and get it without bothering you.

Even if you're not trying to like hire someone or get help or delegate this point, your business, just having things written down is very helpful. Even when it was just me and my business I was writing things down because there's always those things that you only do once a month or once every six months and you have no recollection of how to do them the next time you get there. And now you have to look everything up and figure it out. And now you don't remember what it is. Or it's complicated, right, like putting code on a website, if you have to build a new page for something, and then you have to relearn the thing. It takes a while, right? And then all of that time spent reinventing the wheel, learning to do the same thing over and over again, where if you just written it down, you could literally just pull it up, go, Oh, that's it, there it is, there's code two seconds later, you're done.

So even if it's just for you, even if you don't plan on getting any help at all, it's a lot easier if you can remember what the hell's going on. I use them a lot, just to remember, like, I have one, I have an SOP, that breaks down how to create all the stuff for each episode of the podcast on the website. So the code I need for this color, the this I need for that, how to pull the information from here to there. Because half the time I'm doing this, I'm really tired, because I put my own stuff off, and I'm working on client work all day, I'm tired by the time I get to my own website. And now I can't remember where the button is to click the thing or whatever. I just made myself an SOP I pull it up every single time I put up that website page. It's easy. I copy and paste. And it's so much easier. The other thing it does is it makes my work consistent. Every title of every podcast is put into the website, the exact same way, all the SEO is the same. All the keywords have the same, everything's put in consistently. Every page has a template, everything's consistent. So if you go through my website, every page will be consistent. If you are doing any other work, if you are paying bills, or whatever, whatever, whatever you want to do, if you consistently do it the same way, let's say and you want help doing it, having all that written down, that someone else can follow your exact instructions, that no matter who's doing it, and when it's happening, or even if you're in the room, it gets done exactly the same way. And especially for small businesses who are putting out product all the time, that's not an actual physical product, right? Like if you're making something, you want it to be a consistent looking product. But when you're delivering something like design work, or whatever it is, you want that that work to be consistent. I take it as a badge of honor that my clients never really know, who am I team did the work. Because it's so consistent, we as a team are just good. It doesn't need to be me. There's lots of times I felt like in corporate like it was an obvious thing, you could tell who did the work, because one time it was really good. Oh, that must have been Mary. But this time it was kind of half assed, and that must have been built. You don't mean like you could tell the work but making things systematized and having slps makes it consistent. And clients love consistent work. They love knowing that they can rely on you that it's always going to be good. There's also a thing of less errors, which clients also love to if you have someone guessing of how to do something each time and they're like trying to remember the seven steps of a thing. There's a good chance someone's gonna guess wrong, right? They're gonna forget that there's that step. I forget things I've done all the time, because I'm in a rush or I'm just not there today, you know, whatever the thing is, if there's six steps, and I forget one, well, now there might be an error. And depending on how intricate it is, or how expensive it is, that could be a really big problem.

So having it all written down, everything is easily followed, makes so many more less errors, and saves money. And clients are happier. It was also, as far as I'm concerned, the most vital way to have a team. I have an agency, obviously. And we have five people on the team, including me. I'm also the agency

coach and the director of operations certification. This is my biggest, biggest, biggest advice, always, your systems have to be good. If they are not good, everyone is kind of doing their own thing. They're guessing it's what's expected of them. They don't know what's going on. And you will micromanage the hell out of your life. My team is so good. They know exactly what I expect. We have SOPs for I think everything at this point. I'm sure there's stuff we haven't gotten to yet but the team communicates better. I know what's going on better because we have the systems in place. And to run a team like that to have that communication. There's less confusion, there is less anxiety. It is the essential part of my agency. If I didn't have these systems, if we didn't have these SOPs we didn't have a vault of information that my team could go to all the time and not have to ask me personally, at this, this place, it would be a disaster. But right now I love it. I love having a team by Team was the greatest. And I couldn't do it without that I couldn't do it without slps being able to have someone come in and help me with a client and two days later know exactly where everything was, because it was so easy to find everything. And if she needed to know something, there was documentation on it. There were so few questions with onboarding this time, because we have really, really built out all of our systems. It is the easiest and most reliable way to delegate.

I remember when I was in corporate, I think it was Lehman Brothers. And anytime a new, what do they call them client service, something's whatever the ops person on the brokerage team, when there was a new one that got hired, they would always have to sit with one of us for weeks on end, there was no training, you were just you just sat with the other person until you picked up enough of it. And then you got to sit at your desk for a while. And they hoped you figured it out. And you had to ask 1000 questions, and you never really knew what was going on. That is ridiculous. The amount of time taken for training in an already busy environment was ridiculous. And here, I was virtual. I've never been in the same room as anyone on my team. Well, that's not true. Three of my team members, I've never been in the same actual room with them. So how am I supposed to sit and teach them everything all day like beyond zoom calls all day? That's ridiculous. Who wants to live like that, and who would hire if that was required? And I think a lot of people don't get help, because they think it is required. For them to have to sit and train someone know, having things documented and written out means that I can hand someone, I can send them a folder in a drive with all of the onboarding information. This is how we work. This is how to track time if we need to, this is how teamwork works. This is how to put tasks in. And I think this is how it'll get logged in here is where my LastPass stuff is like all of that onboarding stuff can go through, they can do it on their own time when they have time to focus on it instead of me them having a calls and organize it. No, everything is just written down. They get to review it. They have questions they can ask me. But they're smart people, I'm hiring smart people, they can figure this stuff out. The other great thing about writing things down in a process is finding the holes in your processes. So if you think you have a system all set up, and then you write it down, and you hand it to someone who doesn't know anything about it, and they can't get their way through it, you will find that there are parts of your processes that are there's huge holes in them. This is a big thing that I come into businesses because I haven't been in the business before. So being there and being given instruction. And when the instructions start on Step four, and I don't know what steps one through three are, I can't do any. So being able to write it down, and then having someone who doesn't, who doesn't know anything, really kind of just try to walk through it. And you're like, yeah, I get it. I understand step four. But we're step one, like, Where's the website? Like, where's the login? Oh, that's a silly thing. But that's kind of stuff you Those are the questions that are going to keep coming back, people are going to come

back and ask you all these questions. So having a really good process where all the holes have been found. Because you've written it down, and you've worked your way through it. They don't come back to you with 1000 questions. Now. That means you don't micromanage that means you can go on vacation. That means you can sell your business. When you're finding these holes in the processes, you may also find places where you think that safety procedures are not really in place. When you read something, when it's written down and you read something, you're like, Oh, that's where we do it. Oh, that's not safe.

There was the other kind of things you're going to find. When you write these things down here. Oh, that doesn't sound good. When you see the black and white, you really do find all these things you didn't realize were not maybe the greatest things that you've been doing. And then you can review your process and say, Well, this doesn't seem safe, or this isn't accurate. Or why do we do this? This is taking us four times longer than it should. Because when you read it all down, you realize that you have seven steps in there that no one needs. So you can be more efficient by working through that. And the biggest advantage of having the system spelled out is that you as a business owner and your brain do not need to be in the room. That means that you can take time off, you can go on vacation, which is you know, a novel concept for most business owners, right? Like we feel very chained to our computers like we can't leave our business because it can't run without us. But what if it could? What if we had systems in place that people could be you know, they could take care of things and not need you to be in the   Then there are other things that are not as fun, especially this year with COVID if you need to take time off to take care of someone in your family or get sick, you can take time off. Most of us, when our businesses completely revolve around us, mean, they revolve around us. And if we get sick, our livelihoods are dependent on whether we stay healthy. And that is playing the odds, right? We're gonna get sick eventually, even if it's just a cold.

So having these systems in place, and having people that can pick up quickly from where you've left off, means that you can go take care of someone, if they get sick, you can take care of yourself if you get sick. Or you can just, you know, go sit on the beach for a little bit because everyone needs, Everyone needs five minutes these days. The other thing is, if you have a business that you think is valuable, especially for like doctor's offices, or dentists, or things like that, where they want to sell the practice, if someone's going to come in and buy this business, and they have no idea where anything is, or where anything goes, it's a disaster. But if someone comes in and you can say, my whole business is documented, you can come in here and take over tomorrow, and you can be up and running instantly. Well, that is a huge, huge advantage. And most upper level, like business selling would not happen without this. Most people that come in to buy a business will not want to buy a business that isn't documented. Why would you going to spend a whole bunch of money on a business and you have no idea what's happening, or why it's being run that way or where everything is, how do you build things? How do you do things, right? So making your business sellable may be a big thing for some of us. And those, that documentation is going to be vital and important to that. And it's going to get much more valuable. And I think a lot of people think that this is only for big companies. But it's not. Like for me just trying to you know, build a webpage at 10 o'clock at night, when I'm really tired, being able to pull that off and just copy and paste things really easily valuable. It works for anything small by yourself all the way to huge company you want to sell those kind of processes and systems are vital no matter what size you are. So all of this to say, really important. Now you're saying I don't have time for

this, this is the biggest thing I hear when I'm like you need to get this all documented. I don't have time for this. I don't have time right now to spend on this to save time later. That is the biggest objection I hear to creating systems. Because it's you. just you're so overwhelmed that you can't do it. And you can start small, it's like building anything, right? If you thought you had to like hire 20 people tomorrow, it would be way overwhelming. But if you just got a part time person tomorrow to help you, that might be manageable, start small. It's not don't think of it as like this wave of stuff, you have to sit down and create for months on end, start small, just start getting things out of your head. And then if you really want to test how good all this is, get the stuff in place. And then take time off. Don't go completely off the grid for the testing, but try to take a week off, even a couple days off and then see if your business runs without you. And if not, why not? What do you need to fix. And then next time, maybe take a little bit longer off, see how it goes. That is the way you're going to get out of the overwhelm.

So having this all in one place, just so you can find things. But also someone else can find things right? Something happens in your in a car accident, I have like a start here in case I get hit by a bus folder. And then it kicks everyone else here's like how to do it. But even just having one place that your assistant knows, I can go look and find things so I can cover if I need to. Or I have that knowledge in a pinch. So the basics here, write things down in some way. Make a video, write it in a Google Drive, whatever it is, so that other people can have access to it if they need to. And you can have access if you need to. Make sure it covers what you're doing. Who is supposed to do it. When does it happen? What kind of software do you need? All of those things, put them all in a folder. Keep it organized, and build on it as you go. Now this all still sounds like a lot like it's still overwhelming to even think about getting this all together. Check out our Get your act together. Systems intensive. We go in it's a VIP day setup. It's one day where the beginning of the day is a 90 minute call with me and you and it's a business systems audit. We go through all your systems, what are you missing? What's going on? What do you need to create? And what recipes do you need to create that kind of thing and then you go about your day. And the Reynolds OBM team then comes in and organizes, creates a dashboard that you can find everything. And then it creates some other different tracking things you can help track your team or your URLs or whatever the thing that you think that you're going to need is and then we come back together at the end of the day for a recap call where we can kind of walk through and show you where everything is, and then you have one place and a plan to get all this taken care of. and a huge jumpstart.

So if you are interested in that, that is reydnoldsobm.com slash Get your act together. We can set up a discovery call and talk through everything and we can get your act together. So SOPs people so important, not scary, just get started. Just start right, just do it. Alright, I'll talk to you next week. Thanks for joining me this week on the sink handle podcast. I can't wait to do all of this again next week. Make sure to visit us at reynoldsobm.com for the show notes on anything we talked about today. If you love or you mostly like the show, please subscribe and rate us on iTunes so we can help more people avoid the Sink Handle It what's the word I'm looking for? It's a heartbreaker. Nope. I might be wrong on that one.