

Everyone Needs a Backup Plan

By Jody Nava

We were recently faced with a decision that at one time or another we all will face. A close family member was going to pass away. This is a difficult time for everyone to deal with but if you are a small, family business like us, the decision can be even harder.

What do you do? Does one of you go and one of you stay? Do you close up the shop? Do you only go for a few days? Do you wait? For each of us these decisions are personal.

Since New Year's Day my husband Robert has made four round trips to the Denver area and I have made two. The biggest decision was the trip we made together for a week because we had to close the shop. It seems like it shouldn't be a hard decision because family comes first, but even then the doubts and questions are in your mind.

How much money will we lose during that week? How many customers will we lose? What will we come home to? How far behind will this put us in money and sales?

I can honestly say that I am glad we made the trip. It is hard to watch someone die but to know that you were there to help them and your other family members through the difficult time is priceless.

This would have been a lot harder if we did not have a few things in our favor. The first is we have great, loyal customers. Second, we have a neighbor in the building that opened up our door so our customers could get their finished product that we left laid out for them. And most importantly, we had another shop that we trade back and forth with that helped us out.

Recently on the Electrical Rebuilder's Association Web site there was discussion of how to deal with another shop borrowing parts, units, etc. As I stated on the Web site we borrow parts back and forth with this shop all the time and have for years. Don't get me wrong, I don't kid myself that another shop wouldn't love to pick up some of my business just like I would love to pick up some of theirs, but I still have faith in the

goodness of other people—especially during a time of crisis.

During the week that Robert was gone and I was on my own this other shop offered to help in any way they could. They asked how we were, and even delivered a unit that I needed to buy from them because I had no way to pick it up. So when the time came for Robert and me both to go I placed a notice on my door about our closing and left the name and number of their shop. Granted, I may just be lucky and these guys are honest and caring people by nature, which they are. The point is we are rebuilders by trade—but we are people first.

If you had an emergency and needed help or had to close your doors for a week is there another shop you could count on to help you out? More importantly, if another shop in your area had to do the same could they count on you? Make a backup plan, and make an effort to be a part of someone else's.

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