

BEYOND THE  
**CLOCK**

AN ENTREPRENEUR'S MANUAL  
TO SANITY

FOUNDER C.E.O.  
**Winner** believer  
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BUSINESS OWNER  
OWNERSHIP DIRECTOR

DESIGN  
**Deadlines** RISK  
TIME MANAGEMENT  
SUCCESS BRANDING **PROFIT**  
CUSTOMER SERVICE  
Consistency Motivation  
**Marketing**  
PURPOSE VALUE  
Research  
DEMOGRAPHIC  
**GOD**

by  
Shawn E. Robinson

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## **Beyond the Clock**

An Entrepreneur's Manual to Sanity

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## INTRODUCTION

What parts does a watch need to work? Battery, Electronic stepping motor, microchip, Quartz crystal oscillator, gears. Let's be completely honest, most people don't really care. People that want to know the time, they only care about the **RESULT**. They care how that **RESULT** impacts them, personally, physically, emotionally, or mentally. Like a clock, no one really focuses on what gear turns what gear, they only care about the result of the time being displayed and how that time governs their life. But if a gear is off sync or a battery has died, then the intended purpose of the watch has not met wearer's need and becomes useless and they must seek other options to get what they expected. My goal in this book is to point out and ensure that you, a small business owner/ entrepreneur, pay attention to the aspects of your business and the gears which keep turning.

I'm Shawn and I wrote this book to assist potential and current entrepreneurs to not make the same mistakes I did. The goal is that after you read this book, you will take an honest look at your business and make the adjustments that are needed to be successful. I want you to think! I want you to love what you do! Owning a business can be frustrating, especially when you've tried everything and aren't receiving the results you worked so hard for. We will cover things that books won't. We will take a long stare in the mirror when it comes to examining our businesses.

Who am I? I'm an entrepreneur, owner and creative director of 727 Marketing LLC. I've been building, growing and learning my business for over 15 years. I graduated from The American Academy of Art with a design in 3D Animation and Modeling. My business focus is branding, marketing, and the strategies which work behind the scenes to impact the result. I am also a Minister at Be Whole Christian Center ([www.bwccministry.com](http://www.bwccministry.com)) so we'll also take a scriptural approach from time to time. I believe no matter how many strategies you throw at a thing, or how much effort you push something with, you want the Will of God to align you to the things and decisions He has over your life. He has blessed you with certain talents and skills to be used for His glory. I won't be preaching throughout this book, but we will give credit where credit is due. I hope you enjoy it and look forward to your feedback.

My clientele ranges from Ministries, nonprofit organizations, corporations to Personal Chefs, Motivational Speakers, first-time authors. I enjoy seeing people succeed at what they do. What I noticed was that people became so focused on what their specialty was, but when it came to understanding their branding identity, they took short cuts or just didn't get the importance knowing their market and demographic. Even though they had this remarkable product there advertising, logo and other branding didn't reflect who they are as a business. Another excuse was that they didn't have a lot of money for a large marketing firm. My solution was to give them what they needed and provide an economical option that will both express their uniqueness and professionalism, which derives from strategy and planning. So that's how 727 marketing LLC was born.



I believe in hard work, dedication, and being reliable. No, this is not the objectives section of my resume, but these are the principles I live by in everything I do. Business mimics your lifestyle. If you are unorganized, you'll be unorganized when it comes to inventory and invoicing, which will lead to loss of money or "insert big word here" misappropriation of company funds. Which biblically speaking, means you were not a good steward over your funds. This means, at the end of the year, our good friends at the IRS may have an unfriendly conversation with you. Let's begin the path toward your success!





## SECTION 1

**Decide to do what you love. So, you want to start a business using the talents God has birth inside you? You're tired of your regular 9 to 5, and before you go off on your supervisor, you want to make sure you have something lined up.**

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I hate this dirty job, this boss makes me sicker than putting mustard on French fries (if you like it, then I may have just lost you, sorry). Yeah, I know the title is long, but many of us have a similar story. You have a desire to work in your calling, to do what God put you on this earth to do. You sit at your desk or deal with customers/clients and say to yourself, there must be more to this. I love to... why can't I do it for a living? Why Can't You? Why haven't you started? What's holding you back? Most people answer these questions with a negative response. Well... I don't have the time or money. I don't know where to start. **JUST GET IT DONE!**

There is no time like the present. Stop allowing negative thoughts or people stand in the way of what God has birth inside you. You will hear me say that often throughout this book. If God has blessed you with it, use it. Your gift may be just the thing that's needed to change the world, to bring peace, or at the least, bring a smile to someone's face. Just get it done! The beautiful thing about learning in the 21st Century is that you have Google and YouTube. You can research anything, I mean anything! Take the time to research, you may be pleasantly surprised how prepared you really are.

Don't think your gift or talent is too small or insignificant. If you're good at tying shoelaces, there may be a market for you.







## SECTION 2

### BRANDING AND MARKETING, WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE?

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# BRANDING

speaks to what people think about your business. It's a feeling! It's not just a logo or website. Branding is a complete overview of how individuals perceive your business. We live in an ever-changing world. As business owners, you represent your brand. Your job is to ensure the client believes you are the best.

# MARKETING

speaks to how your “brand” is delivered to the consumer. It’s a conversation! In marketing, we speak to specifics and how they can be targeted for the best success. It’s how we position ourselves to the consumer and gain their confidence. It comes down to understanding your consumers and how they purchase. How will your product or service bring elevation to their lives?

We now know branding is about a feeling and defines the identity of a businessperson. With, what feelings does your brand present to your consumer? Who are you appealing too? How can you make your client’s life easier or more enjoyable? Before you begin designing logos or flyers, you want to really do your research in order to understand how to target that specific demographic. You created your business not just because it’s your dream, not just to make money, but hopefully to serve people. The research you gather at the beginning will yield less stress and greater results.

Logo - This is an exciting part of developing your brand. Your logo is the mark/symbol that will define the look and flow of your brand. But where do you start?

When I meet with a client about establishing their brand, there's always feelings of excitement and nervousness. Very few know exactly what they want, that's why it's always good to partner with a designer. The right designer can grab you by the hand and walk you through the process. There are a lot of options when developing a logo, there are do-it-yourself apps, there are websites that allow you to partner with someone and you never have to meet in person or you can partner with an experienced designer that will again take you step-by-step.

## ***THE LOGO IS THE HEART AND SOUL OF YOUR BRANDING***

The logo is the heart and soul of your branding. It's a key component of the overall process. Here are a couple of questions to think about when developing a logo:

- What image (s) represents your business (animal, symbol, shape)?
- What industry are you in and what does your competition's branding look like? Are there certain marks that should be represented based on the industry you're in?
- What colors would you like represented (traditional logos contain 2 to 3 colors)? *Colors play a huge part and invoke feelings and emotions. Pick wisely!*
- What will your logo be used for and placed on?

These questions are also important because they deal in the realm of cost-efficiency. A good logo should always be able to be converted from full color, gradient and black and white.

## **STEP 1**

Define who you are: When establishing your brand, it's important to define the personality of the company. If you are an entrepreneur or personality, then you are your brand and the same applies. When your clients think of you, what immediately pops into their minds? Do they think modern, playful, serious, sophisticated, spiritual, smart, creative, etc? Once this is defined then it gives birth to the direction you take with your branding/marketing/ advertisements. If this is defined successfully, it makes designing logos or setting company colors easier. Consistency is what powers a great brand. Colors and fonts motivate brand recognition.

## **STEP 2**

Research your competition: It's very important like the Song from Rage against the machine to know your enemy (Ya got to know, ya got to know. That's when I say go, go, go!). Maybe enemy is a strong word, but knowing your competition is very important and an often underutilized step. Everyone has their favorite burger spot. There is something about the way they prepare their food, maybe it's the customer service, or maybe it reminds you of a childhood memory. Whatever it is, it's your favorite. Because there is something that makes it stand out to you, your goal is to ensure that clients have that same feeling about your business. If you don't do the research and figure out what can make you unique, you will just be duplicating something that has already been done and people will just go to the original, just because it's been around longer.

## STEP 3

**LOGO TIME:** Previously, we discussed logos in detail. Many people say they want a logo but really want a graphic image. What's the difference? The difference between a logo and a graphic image is flexibility and usability. A logo should be able to transcend size and color. The general design theory logos should only contain two to three colors, white being the third. Gradients can be applied, but a great logo looks great in black and white.

When developing your logo you should think about what type of applications (paper, shirts, bottles, vehicles) you will be applying the image to. Is it going on print material and/or clothing? This is important because it allows the designer to create various applications. What do I mean? Can I put any kind of image on a shirt? Remember that clothing comes in different sizes, colors, styles, and types. You may want something super graphic, but it will affect the reproduction cost, look, and appeal.

Graphic images can add unlimited amounts of color and detail. This is your opportunity to go crazy with the design. Usually, they are used for direct ad campaigns or specific products. Usually, I would use a graphic image for items that I know the reproduction cost be lower such as digital campaigns or for specific product lines. For example, if you sell pop (soda is part of the word, but I'm from the Midwest, so...) for a certain flavor you may want to do something unique that makes it stand out. You see, this technique is done with a lot of craft/microbrewery beer packaging.



**LOGO**

**VS**

**GRAPHIC IMAGE**





## STEP ..... 4

Step 4: Targeting/ knowing your audience: I know you just what to get to the fun stuff, designing business cards, ads, and your website. Just be patient, Rome was not built in a day and neither will your marketing strategy. But if we work hard now, it will allow for more precise targeting and more efficient money management. If I sell denture cream, chances are, you're not marketing it to teenagers. Demographics are key. Demographics look at, age, gender, education, family size, economic status, etc. These are just to name a few. Once we understand our audience then we can see what appeals to those markets and we then can save time and money when it comes to attracting them to your business. Listen, denture cream for a 16-year-old sound like an awesome idea, but you may want to give them a couple of decades times five before you put all your eggs in that basket.

Also, we must look at media that will be impacted and reachable through social media, television, radio, or maybe even a good old-fashioned newspaper. My father used to get up every morning and go to the neighborhood newspaper stand to see what was going on in local and national news. Then when he got home from work, he would turn on the local news. I bring this up to say that you wouldn't market him through social media, you would appeal to what media he relates to most. Know your audience! Spend less time guessing! Research (this word again)!



# STEP 5

Okay, the moment you been waiting for ... Design of Marketing Material: Fill in the blanks

**Define your business, Who we are:**

.....  
**Who is your competition?**

.....  
**What makes you unique?**

.....  
**What statement do you want to make with your logo?**

.....  
**What applications will it be applied to (Clothing, digital, print)?**

.....  
**Who is your demographic?**

**Age?** .....

**Gender?** .....

**Education?** .....

**income?** .....

**Family size?** .....

**Marital status?** .....

**List the others** .....

.....

Once we have defined these things, we can now structure our advertisement to focus on appealing to those groups. If my business sells cat pants (Why, cat pants? I don't know, just go with it) We sell custom cat pants created to make any cat feel like a superstar. We'll look at who would be the ideal candidate/sucker (sorry) that will purchase something so amazingly wonderful. We may look to different social media groups of cat lovers, connect with local pet stores, and pet owners to see if this is something they would be interested in. Google cat pants, see who else is doing the same thing and how yours can be different. Maybe they use polyester which causes the cat to shade more, so you use a wool-cotton blend that feels more natural and more preferred in the cat community. I don't (If you start selling cat pants and become successful, I need my credit \$\$\$). This just takes the principles that we have been talking about and applying them.



+



=

**CAT  
PANTS**

## SECTION 3

# IS CUSTOMER SERVICE REALLY THAT IMPORTANT?

YES

NO

MAYBE

**Seriously?!?** In short yes, VERY! Turn the page, we'll begin discussing effective customer/client service and how it impacts your brand.

Be the business that you would shop at.

**STOP!** Really stop and think. Would you shop with you?

**Would you spend money on the product or service that you offer?**

**Are you consistent?**

**Do you value your clientele?**

**Do you exemplify excellence through your product, service?**

**How is your customer/client service?**

**Do you care about what your client needs?**

So, if we take an honest look, some of us may not shop with ourselves. Some may just need a few adjustments of the gears. Listen, I believe you are talented, highly knowledgeable, and amazingly skilled at what you do. I just want to ensure that everyone else does on a **CONSISTENT** basis. Let your work speak for itself. You can be confident, but your work, timing, and the presentation should speak volumes over any words that could come out of your mouth or post to social media.

## **SECRETS OF CUSTOMER SERVICE**

You're amazing at what you do! You are the best to ever do it! Your opinion matters and what you say is the truth and the way it should be done. Unfortunately, our clients aren't Us! So, they come at you to render a service for them and nothing they want may seem feasible. For example, you're a zoologist and they are requesting that you merge a lion with a monkey. I'm not an expert in this field, but I'm sure that's impossible. But what we tend to do in those situations is to try to reason with the client and say let me see what I can do.

Knowing full well you're going to just procrastinate for a couple of weeks, then tell them what you could have told them from the beginning. Trust your knowledge/skills and be confident in your judgment. It only hurts you in the long run. What happens is you spend so much time complaining about how it's not possible when you could have provided that client with the proper explanation of why it is different (never ever in a million years going to happen) and then begin to work on a solution that may help. Maybe we can't biologically create a liokey (lion + monkey, lol) but maybe I can have an artist sculpt or draw you one. If that doesn't work, then that's not your client.

## EVERY CLIENT ISN'T YOUR CLIENT

Say it with me, *every client is not your client*, stop trying to make them one. Clients come with some of the most outlandish thoughts and ideas. Some even feel that they are experts already in the thing they are asking for. But most have just researched on Google or YouTube and blew something up, now their coming to you, THE EXPERT. If you're feeling in your gut that this would be more problems than it's worth, trust your instinct.





# **You are Valuable!**

**Your  
service and/or product  
has value.**

I believe unless someone meets the value or it leads to a greater benefit, then they may need to seek another source in their price range. Desperation breeds aggravation. Meaning you devalue yourself now, most likely you'll regret the project, get upset, and not give it your all. I don't know about you, but I love what I do, and I never want to step into a situation where I can't put my best foot forward. Sure, there are times when you may barter, or you're trying to get your name out there, but bartering and name recognition have a value as well.

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**DESPERATION  
BREEDS  
AGGRAVATION**

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## **Get ready for the statement of a lifetime. *I'm apologizing in advance.***

**This is a very touchy subject. Okay, take a deep breath before we continue.**

You ready...

**Your client doesn't care about your personal issues or why you couldn't get the job done.** There is a difference between empathy and sympathy.

*The following definitions are provided by the Oxford dictionary.*

**Empathy-** *the ability to understand and share the feelings of another.*

**Sympathy-** *feelings of pity and sorrow for someone else's misfortune.*

Your client may understand (Empathy) the problem you are facing, but when it comes to affecting their bottom line, brand and client/customer service, you better believe they won't show (pity). You stepped in the arena of being a business owner, this is where hobbies turn serious.

If you can't fulfill your obligation to the client, give them timely notice. Nobody wants to be the person stood up at the prom. You never know what impact your decision may cause your client. If you happen to not be able to fulfill the obligation, PLEASE give them proper notice. If it happens to be last-minute, offer another option or offer a discount for the next time (hopefully there will be a next one). When I worked as a manager in retail, if it was our fault, we would have to offer everything and the kitchen sink (Literally) to make the client happy. The customer/client service you provide, and the genuine concern will determine how you prevail when the smoke clears. You don't want to become an unreliable business owner. It's very hard to recover your reputation.



## SECTION 4

### **“Nothing beats a Try but a Fail.”**

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To be very honest, I spent years being inconsistent and making excuses, then had to have the nerve to wonder why my clients didn't return. It's when I had a come to Jesus moment through a conversation with a good friend that opened the door to me providing better customer/client experience. My theory is to provide the service that I would like to receive myself. That perspective changes the way I handled projects, deadlines, responses to email (hard one), returning phone calls, and texts (even harder).

If you ever been through a fast food restaurant (not naming names). Usually, the first thing that occurs is that you must wait for the car in front of you to finish ordering and they are usually yelling at the order taker in frustration and repeating their order a million times. You wonder to yourself: What's their problem? Then it's your turn and you realize it's the order taker and not the car in front of you. Now you're repeating the endless cycle that happens all day every day. So, you pay, which is usually never a problem, then you move to the next window, the person doesn't communicate and just hands you your bag and drink (wait, did I order a drink?). You look in the bag and realize that they put onions on your burger. You then must almost jump through the car window to signal for someone to fix the problem. When they do acknowledge you, they have an attitude like they put onions on their burger. When they correct it and hand it back, you politely say thank you and you get no response back. What's the point of this story? Some of our businesses operate the same way. Reviews about how your business isn't "haters just hating" most of the time. You can tell a lot from the person ahead of you. Just like the car ahead's experience should have warned me that this was not going to be an ideal situation.



Reviews, word of mouth cause people to not want to deal with you before they even give you a chance. Sure, it could be different, but would you even take the chance? Just like you did your research, when it comes to your target demographic, they have done their research on who to shop with. Payment is never a problem, that's the most exciting part, so we work extra hard to ensure that there are no errors or complaints. Then it comes to delivering your product/service, you treat the customer/client as if you are doing them a favor. NO! Without them, you wouldn't be in business. If your business offers the ability to customize or alter based on the original selection, you cannot penalize your customer/client by being rude or ignorant when they ask you to adjust, based on the original order that was placed. Be courteous even if you misheard or misunderstood the customer's original intent.



From the famous words of Shakespeare, *What's in a name?* I believe if we address our customers as clients, it denotes a higher level of service. The same reason your popular food chain says, “My pleasure” versus “You're welcome.” Words have power and “my pleasure” gives you the warm and fuzzies.

When you begin to prepare to leave high school, there is both excitement and confusion. Excitement because you are entering into a new and exciting phase of life and confusion because soon you will have to decide what you will do for the rest of your life. When I was faced with this decision, the statement I made, stick by to this day. “I want to do something, where when I wake up in the morning, look forward to doing it.” For a long time, I worked jobs where I hated getting up in the morning, I disliked the pure idea of me making money for someone else. They’re taking my hard work and dedication while I received minimal compensation for it. Also, as I worked jobs that had little to do with my passion for art and design, I felt like I was wasting away and not living up to my calling. God called us to be mighty and I was settling for mediocrity because I was too scared to take a chance or step out the boat onto faith. **NO, I’M NOT TELLING YOU TO QUIT YOUR JOB.** But use it as a springboard to live your best life.

I can’t tell you it will be easy. I can’t tell you your business won’t fail. But like my Father would always remind me, **“Nothing beats a Try but a Fail.”** I didn’t understand until I failed a couple of times. I realized that every time I failed, I was able to learn and grow. Understanding where I made a wrong turn or what was successful, and I could duplicate or enhance. Your failures will only stop you if you allow them. Build a trustworthy support system behind you, that will want to see you succeed and will ultimately help you promote your business. That will also tell you the truth when something is whack!



**Build a following!** We jump into these businesses without testing the water first. Is there a need or even want for the product or service you're providing? Or are there so many others doing exactly what you do? If that's the case, what can you offer that's different and unique to stand out? Take people's opinions with a grain of salt, but everyone isn't a "hater." Allow those critics to help you build a stronger brand.

## SECTION 2

### Small hot coffee 3 creams 6 sugars

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People that are coffee drinkers are very picky about what they want in their coffee. When you offer to purchase someone a coffee the first question you must ask is: "How do you take it?"

Nobody assumes how many creams or sugars. How many pumps of flavor or shots of espresso, you ASK! When it comes to the products and services we offer, it doesn't hurt to figure out what people need and/or want. Look at the time of year, holidays, what people are requesting in conversations you have, what people are saying on social media. Always look for opportunities when you can meet the needs/wants of the people. Even if it's appealing to their impulsive nature, what will speak to drive them to purchase? Is it the goal of looking cool, impressing people, is it to have a collectible? Is it an educational opportunity that appeals to something that they always wanted to do? Are you offering the tools that help get them there? Keep your eyes open, people are watching, you should be looking to fulfill.



Photo by Kaboompics .com from Pexels

## RESEARCH!

We get so excited about what WE want to offer people, but don't know if they really want it. Just because you are great at something and you have the possibility to offer something unique to the market, doesn't mean the market is ready for it. YES, glitter camel socks sound like an awesome idea, but not sure if there will be a huge demand for them right now.



The reason there are focus groups is so you can gather people's opinions and make educated movements when it comes to placing your product on the market. Even if you must ask a friend or do a poll on Facebook. It saves you time, effort, and most definitely money. There may be times when you release the new hottest thing to hit the market since bean stuffed animals, but don't invest your whole life savings, without just doing some research.

Will this make me rich or why isn't it working?

Does this look like what you've been doing when it comes to your market efforts? Trying a bunch of nonspecific ads and not hitting the target, leads to exhausting resources, time, and money. When we market, the biggest thing we pay attention to is effectiveness. Are we hitting the mark?

We want to always think about who our audience is, what they need from us, and what drives their interest. Knowing your client is everything! The more information/research you can gather on the front end, the less pain and more success you'll have in the end.

Simple key things to remember, which will save you from a lot of headaches:

- Enjoy the small victories.
- Enjoy the smiles and joy that you bring to your clients.
- Don't dwell in the mishaps and failures.
- Remember, you're the best at what you do, but you can always get better.
- Hone your craft, daily!
- This biblical scripture refreshes me, Philippians 4:13. I can do all things through [a]Christ who strengthens me.

Don't allow work to consume your life. Starting and maintaining a business can be very time-consuming. Don't allow it to completely take over. You will work yourself into misery or even worse. Like I stated before, I wanted to wake up and do what I love, when you can do that, the late nights, red eyes, countless deleted, or balled up papers become worth it. It all makes when you get to look back and say, hey I call the shots.

## OUTRO ... TIPS FOR THE ROAD

**ADVERTISEMENT:** Ideally digital is the way to go, but I believe there is still a need for print materials, but only with the right application. In business, our goal is to make way more money than we spend. However, like Sol Luckman stated, “It takes money to make money.” We just must ensure that we’re planning the most efficient way to spend it. So many times, I see new business owners getting unnecessary items, such as ordering 10,000 flyers, they end up just collecting dust in their office basement. So, before you purchase, research! Below, you will find familiar items and a couple of methods on how to apply them to your specific market.

**BUSINESS CARDS:** Do not pass out without conversation. A business card is a punctuation to a successful conversation. They are not flyers and they should not be used to windshield ornaments. Don’t be afraid to pay more and order less. A lot of us (I’ve done it too) find the cheapest option, which results in a flimsy card, colors don’t match the rest of your material. Just like a good conversation, a business card should stand out and be memorable.

**FLYERS:** The goal of a flyer is not to populate or invade a potential client’s personal space or property. Promote where people would be most likely interested in what you’re promoting. I always believe human interaction and hand to hand transaction is imperative with any printed item.

Always remember your target demographics, make sure you're marketing to a group that will appreciate your content. If you're advertising a concert, flyers would be great to pass out at a concert with a similar genre or maybe even similar performers.

**BROCHURE:** Remember, people are visual, simply don't be longwinded.

**SOCIAL MEDIA:** Social media is the go-to for successful marketing in this day and time. BUILDING A FOLLOWING is key. Figure out what appeals to that audience and stay consistent. Once you get everything going, pay attention to your analysis. Check out this graph from Globewebindex and you'll truly see the impact social media plays in our daily lives.

**WEBSITES** should tell a story. It shouldn't just be a hub to store endless amounts of information. Attention spans are short, according to a study done by Microsoft, the average attention span is 12 seconds. Allow your site to speak to that desire and cause them to want to seek more. Make it interesting.

Hey,  
**It's Your Dream**  
**LIVE IT!**



The entrepreneur lifestyle is complex, exciting and most of the time rewarding. There are times when you want to pack your suitcase and never return or at least visit an insane asylum for a few nights. I promise you, the pros outweigh the cons. This manual is designed to help the beginning entrepreneur to understand what they're getting themselves into. It will also help equip them with the basic necessities to not only survive, but embrace this new journey.

Why the clock theme? Good question. When people look at a clock they only care about the time, not what makes it tick. The tools in this manual are designed to assist you in making the business not only look good on the outside, but to function properly.

***Let's take a look at *Beyond the Clock*.***



Shawn E. Robinson