

Since right around Easter time, Joanne and I have been wearing a Fitbit. We did this partially out of curiosity and partially because we are both trying to get in better physical condition. The first time I heard about this device is when our daughter Emily came home for a visit one weekend and started randomly walking around the house because she was so close to achieving her daily goal of 10,000 steps. Honestly, at the time I thought it was a little weird. That is until I caught myself doing the exact same thing just a few weeks ago.

For those of you who are unfamiliar with this device, it is an activity tracker, wireless-enabled wearable device that measures data such as the number of steps walked, distance covered, calories burned, active minutes and sleep patterns. We wear ours in a specially designed band on our non-dominant wrists.

The Fitbit also has an accompanying web site and app that we downloaded to our phones. Being the competitive couple that we are, we are comparing our statistics on a daily basis. OK, we actually compare several times during the day. More often than not Joanne will have taken more steps during the day, and I will have more active minutes.

In the three months I have worn the Fitbit, I have come to realize that it is not 100% accurate. For example on a recent work day, my Fitbit registered 7,200 steps, 1 active minute and almost 3,000 calories burned. I only wish I could have burned that many calories! I know it is wrong because when I use the elliptical machine, it says I burn about 600 calories in 45 minutes of hard work. But I don't care that the Fitbit is completely accurate. It is my reminder to get out of the chair and get moving.

As small business owners and managers, sometimes we need reminders that we need to do the activities that make us better. Routine takes over and we have a tendency to do what is comfortable, not necessarily what will be best for advancing our companies. I have taken to putting reminders in my Outlook calendar to make sure that I try to do those tasks, just so I will not forget. My challenge to you is remind yourself of the good activities that might have been forgotten, and get back to doing them.

I think I will continue to wear the Fitbit and compare my activities with Joanne. More than likely she will have more steps, but the reminder for me to get more active is right there on my wrist. The competition will be good and in the end, I hope to lose weight and be in better shape, which just might include random walks around the house.

*Small Business Today is a bi-weekly feature written by Tom Friedman, market president of First National Bank, Ames-Ankeny.*