

RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

by Rabbi Raymond Beyda

When an innovative product hits the market that price is usually way out of proportion to the bottom line cost of labor and materials necessary to make the unit. Several years later the same product, or even an improved version of the article, sells on the market for a fraction of the original price. When Sony introduced the personal cassette stereo system, known as the Walkman, the item cost hundreds of dollars and yet it could not compare to the size, features or overall quality of a product that the same company has on the market today for under \$40. What was in the first "Walkman" that the consumer no longer has to pay for today is the R&D -- research and development that the company paid for all the while that it was developing the original format for the product.

When a corporation is doing well it usually does not rest on its laurels. The successful firm looks to improve and takes part of its profits each year and reinvests the dollars earned into research and development of items that will improve the company's market share in the future.

The individual should learn from the corporation. A person should never rest on past performance. One should invest a certain amount of time and money on the "r and d" of one's personal growth. Time invested in reading or in classes that will help one grow. Money spent on tapes and books that will advance the progress towards personal profit.

Today when you are doing well -- stop. Decide how you are going to invest in yourself. Specify the areas that need improvement and "buy" the time and materials needed to fine tune yourself to a higher level of performance in the super-competitive game of life. It only takes a minute but it will keep your product line current, marketable and profitable in a fast changing world.

DID YOU KNOW THAT

One should not cover his head with his bare hand in order to say a blessing--berakha. However, the bare hand of another is sufficient to serve as a head covering. A person's sleeve is also good in place of a hat or kippah when one has to make a blessing and does not have a suitable hat. If someone already said a berakha and then realizes that his head was not covered (the kippah fell off) then it is a valid blessing --b'diavad--after the fact and one does not have to repeat the blessing.

[Source Halakha Berurah, 2:16,17]

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