



Again ...

It's sometimes a bit difficult to remember just which episodes I have written about here in this A Story A Week series. There are so many of them now, that I'm a bit afraid of repeating myself excessively; we all know people who frequently tell you something without remembering that they have already told you that story. And sometimes of course, they have told you more than once. I'm frequently finding myself in this situation down in our workshop - on a daily basis - and it's not (just) because I'm getting old!

We now have five ladies working here as printers/printer trainees (not counting the young high school girl from next door, who is rarely here these days due to her studies). They range in age from (exactly) 20 to (exactly) 50. None of them are here five days a week. Their schedules (and responsibilities) are so diverse that it would be impossible to have them come here on regular hours, so we use a 'signup sheet' system, and they make their own decisions on when to be here (after consulting with me on how the assignments for the current print jobs are being distributed).

So on any given week, T-san might be here on Monday, Tuesday and Thursday, while M-san will make it on Monday and Friday, with I-san perhaps only coming once, on Tuesday. Some of them have 'regular' days; for others, it's more random.

What this means is that I am frequently put in the situation of repeating myself. When there is some workshop news, or tidbit of information that has come from outside, I tell this to the people who are there that day. But I can't possibly keep track of 'to whom I have told what'. Did M-san hear the news that we have found a new young carver? Does S-san know that I'll be downtown next Friday? I have no idea.

So we have a double-trouble situation; some people get skipped when there is a piece of news, and some people frequently find themselves in the "Dave, you told me that last week," position. I have no idea how to avoid this. We could perhaps put up a bulletin board for the actual 'news' type items, so that people would be kept in touch that way, but we can't possibly post all of our conversations that way.

And the situation is exacerbated by the fact that I have a responsibility to teach them how to do their job, and it involves a myriad little details. Have I already mentioned to T-san that we shouldn't wash the brush that way? It seems that I was talking about that topic just the other day ... but to who?

In the perfect ideal situation I would only have to explain each thing once. The information would then be passed from person to person around the staff, and everybody would always be 'in the loop'. That doesn't happen of course; we are all in the same situation - *nobody* knows who knows what. So a dozen times a day, it seems, I find myself prefacing some remarks with, "Did I tell you about ..."

All I can expect is that we all must be fairly tolerant - both when we are forced to listen again while a neighbouring worker is brought up to date on a recent development, or when we find that we have been left out when something is going on.

But one thing I have learned; if I cut down on the 'stories' that I tell them, and mostly stick to the basics - their work procedures - then I don't go too far wrong. I have to avoid becoming that old guy who is endlessly coming out with, "Did I ever tell you about the time I ..."

I'll save *that* kind of stuff for this A Story A Week!

Hey, where are you going?

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