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## Return Service Requested

1 Travis Delves Into a 37-Year-Old Mess

2 Dust in Our Lives

3 Make Sales From the Heart Without  
Draining Yourself

Easy March Madness Chili

4 Inside the Hot New Pet Tech Market

## WEARABLE TECH ... FOR YOUR PET?

### DOG AND CAT GADGETS ARE HITTING THE MARKET

If you don't have a smartwatch or fitness tracker, you almost certainly know someone who does. Wearable tech is big business. Companies have already introduced options for adults and kids, and the next frontier is tech for your pet. Pet wearables are already on the market, and consumers have shown a willingness to spend money on their furry companions. So, what does pet tech do — and is it worth your money?

A missing pet is every owner's worst nightmare, and sadly, many animals don't make it home safe. Microchipping has become common, but a standard chip only assists if someone else finds your pet and brings them to a vet or shelter. Wearable GPS technology, however, tells you how to find Fido now. With a small device, owners can constantly monitor their pets' locations and quickly find their whereabouts if they get lost.

Most pet GPS trackers also serve as activity monitors. Owners of outdoor cats can keep tabs on where they're spending their time and whether they might be encountering dangerous situations. You can



also learn whether your pet is getting enough exercise or if you need to increase their playtime.

It's fun to see a map of where your cat has been — but seeing the world through their eyes is even better. Pet cameras attach to animals' collars and record everything from their point of view. If you regularly leave your pet in someone else's care, the camera can function as a safety device to ensure they're being treated properly — and that you're getting your money's worth.

Wearables for your pet also provide convenience. For households with multiple pets, there are now food and water bowls that dispense only when a certain microchip is present. And a pet sensor for your doggie door is practical if you want the dog to go in and out of the house without bringing along other animals.

If you're worried about your pet's safety, investing in one of these devices can give you peace of mind — money well spent. But if you're just curious about how many steps your cat takes each day or hate getting up to feed the dog, it might be worth waiting. As they become more commonplace, pet wearables, like their human counterparts, will eventually decrease in price.



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## TREASURES FROM THE ATTIC (AND OTHER STRANGE PLACES)

### My Adventures in a 37-Year-Old Mess

My wife Kaye and I have lived in our current home for 37 years — and this year, we're moving! I'm excited about the new house we've chosen nearby, but there's one thing I didn't bargain for when we started browsing real estate listings: the 37-year-old piles of stuff in our current house that need to be cleaned up.

Kaye and I started cleaning just before Christmas after climbing into our little-used attic for the first time in years. We were on the hunt for a wooden doll crib my father-in-law made 40 years ago. We wanted to give it to our granddaughter for Christmas, and it had been in the attic for at least 20 years!

Eventually, we dug it up entirely covered in dust. We also found my mother-in-law's golf bag, which Kaye estimates she stored away up there 15 years ago. That discovery kicked off what I'm guessing will be a seven-month spring-cleaning project, starting with our daughters' bedrooms.

We raised all three of our girls in this house, and their bedrooms upstairs still hold remnants of their childhoods. There are probably 25–50 hangers filled with clothes in each of their bedrooms. Kaye always reminds them to look through those clothes when they visit so that they can save anything they'd like before we give it away, but they never do it. Now their time is up! We're in the process of going bedroom-by-bedroom and choosing what to keep.

**"Eventually, we dug it up entirely covered in dust. We also found my mother-in-law's golf bag, which Kaye estimates she stored away up there 15 years ago."**

Kaye is taking the lead on the cleaning process, but I pitch in on nights and weekends. There's also one place in the house that requires my personal attention: my office. I have a four-drawer filing cabinet and two lateral cabinets stuffed full of years of reports and other paperwork. There are 15-year-old insurance policies, ancient equipment calibration reports, and plenty of other things I don't need. Just last year, I invited a shredding



company to our house to shred 28 boxes of files while I watched, and I'll probably have another 28 ready by the time I'm done cleaning!

These piles of paperwork can be annoying to get rid of, but sometimes it pays off to keep everything. Just a few weeks ago, I was reminded of that when I brought Kaye along with me to a project at a priory in Georgetown. We were talking to one of the nuns there, and my wife mentioned the work I do regarding mold.

"Oh, so you're the mold guy!" the sister said. We had a good laugh, and on our way home, Kaye brought up a long-ago project where I'd also been dubbed "the mold guy."

Fifteen years ago, I'd worked on a mold problem for four schools on the northside of Dallas. The kids there had all jokingly called me "the mold guy" when I visited.

"Don't you remember the drawing one of the kids at Northampton Elementary School made for you?" Kaye asked.

I didn't remember, but after searching through our many storage boxes, Kaye managed to find it. The drawing is signed by a fifth-grader named Douglas Pitts, and it shows his school with a "Main Building Closed Due to Mold" sign in front of it. He even captioned the building "The Mold Palace!" I couldn't resist framing the artwork. It now has a pride of place in my office.

If you're spring-cleaning this season, I hope you uncover some hidden gems like this one.

*Travis Weir*

# DUST IN OUR LIVES

Our October newsletter introduced a book titled 'Healthy Buildings: How Indoor Spaces Drive Performance and Productivity.' The following article discusses another of the nine foundations of a healthy building discussed in that book.

Concerns involving dust are taking the forefront of indoor air quality (IAQ) investigations. It is so important that 2 out of every 5 surveys that we have done in the last five years have somehow been related to dust in the indoor air.

But dust is a general term that covers lots of things. Particles from fibers, epithelial (skin) flakes, dirt from someone's shoes, pet dander, and other biological contaminants can be present as dust in an indoor environment. And how do we know which one is causing the problems?

We routinely collect counts of airborne particulate matter when we do IAQ surveys. The results of these counts show whether the smaller respirable particles are elevated, and we can also determine whether the large non-respirable particles are elevated. Usually, when it's the large particles, that leads us to look for recent construction, cluttered workspaces, large numbers of printers or paper shredders, or even dirty air filters. Many of those sources are no-brainers. The smaller particles are often harder to pinpoint, and since those are respirable, they often affect occupants with allergies, asthma, or some other respiratory concern.

Dust often acts like a chemical reservoir that carries lead, chemicals from scented items, consumer products, paints, glues, and dyes from building materials and furniture.

Dust gets into our bodies in 1 of 3 ways: through the air we breathe, through our skin, or through incidental ingestion.

Walking through a dusty area can cause the airborne dust "Pigpen-effect" named after Peanuts' cartoon strip character. (We all remember the cloud of dust surrounding Pigpen when he walked



around the neighborhood.) Working in a dusty office can encourage the absorption of chemicals through our skin when it settles on or comes in contact with a dusty surface. From there, those chemicals can permeate our bodies. Finally, eating at your desk or any dusty environment during the workday can allow particles that have settled on your food to be ingested. None of these paints a pretty picture when considering your exposure to dust.

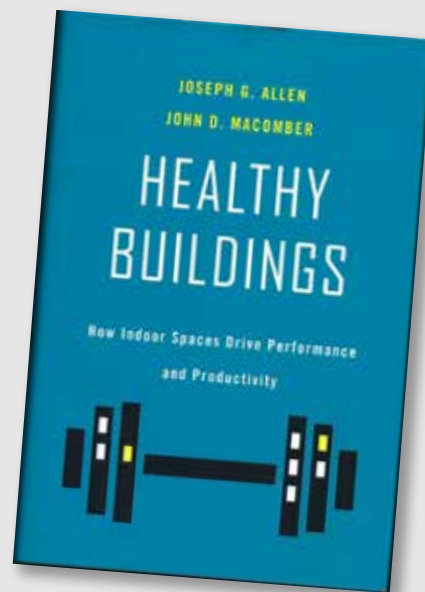
So, what are our usual recommendations when we find elevated airborne dust levels?

Dust horizontal surfaces (desktops, shelving, moldings, personal items) regularly. This may require office occupants to clear their desktops and other work surfaces to allow custodial access.

Vacuum carpeted floors regularly using a high-efficiency particle air (HEPA) filtered vacuum. (Using any lesser quality filter may pick up larger dust particles and shred them into the much smaller respirable sizes.) Nonporous flooring (vinyl, composition, or hard tile) should also be mopped on a regular schedule to capture the dust that settles there.

Consider cleaning carpeted areas using hot water extraction methods at least semi-annually. Follow the cleaning by thoroughly drying it using active air movement (floor fans) rather than relying on the building's HVAC (heating, ventilating, and air-conditioning) system. The HVAC is not designed to dry the wet carpet materials rapidly, and taking too long to dry could encourage mold to develop.

If you think the complaints you are hearing are due to dust, consider having us visit and sample the indoor air to confirm your suspicions. Then when your cleaning is completed, we can do post-cleaning air sampling to gauge how successful your cleaning efforts were.



## SELL HAPPINESS WITHOUT DRAINING YOURSELF

### HOW TO MAKE SALES FROM THE HEART

In life, you might feel pressured to smile even when you're unhappy, and the same is true when trying to please customers in your business. As the best marketers know, happiness can't be bought, but it can be sold. Selling happiness and fulfillment is something companies do every day — and for genuine, great reasons, too.



But how do marketers display those positive feelings all the time? How do you remain an effective leader, fulfilled business owner, and ambitious individual when imposter syndrome strikes?

#### Don't 'trade' your happiness every time.

It's hard to approach sales or marketing with a generous attitude if you're already giving away a lot in your personal life. Do you ever exchange your money for temporary happiness, like a car that you can barely afford? What about spending too much time on certain tasks you dislike or with a group of friends you don't really care for?

Make conscious decisions to trade your money, time, and effort for happiness — and nothing less. That means cutting out unhealthy decisions that might've been useful coping mechanisms at one point of your life but are no longer necessary to help you thrive.

#### Selling happiness starts with possibility.

Even when you and your employees don't feel 100%, remember that happiness starts with a common truth: Anything is possible. When you're happy, it can feel like the world is full of opportunities. That's something

you want to share with your customers, whether through friendly one-on-one interactions or through your marketing campaigns.

#### Give customers happiness, and give yourself purpose.

When a business sells happiness, it doesn't always directly convert into happiness for anyone else. Maybe they're not in need of your service or product and simply aren't receiving your messaging the same way they will later. However, when you shift your focus from selling to providing people with a sense of happiness and/or peace, you might surprise yourself with how meaningful and fulfilling your company's content, marketing, and overall mission will feel for you and your team.

Happiness can't be bought, but it can be sold effectively to make the world a better place. We hope these tips will help make you and your team become more fulfilled marketers!

## TAKE A BREAK!

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## EASY MARCH MADNESS CHILI

Inspired by MyRecipes.com

### INGREDIENTS

- 2 lbs ground beef
- 2 tbsp chili powder
- 1 tbsp Creole seasoning
- 1 tsp ground cumin
- 2 16-oz cans diced tomatoes
- 2 16-oz cans small red beans
- 2 8-oz cans tomato sauce

### DIRECTIONS

1. In a deep pot, brown the beef, stirring often.
2. Once beef is cooked, add chili powder, Creole seasoning, and cumin, cooking for 1 minute.
3. Stir in diced tomatoes, beans, and tomato sauce and bring the mixture to a boil.
4. After the mixture boils, reduce the heat to low and let chili simmer for 15 minutes.
5. Serve with toppings of choice, like cheese, sour cream, or chives.

