

The Bandera PROPHEET

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Gone Country

I Don't Excel

By Mikie Baker

The Bandera Prophet

Are you the creative sort? I know I am. By the time I was in sixth grade, I was whipping up the Monkees guitar logo using poster board to proudly display in my bedroom. I loved music, art and performing in front of anyone who would stand still for just a minute. I was even creative enough to keep my parents thinking I was a really good kid. But when it came to math and science, I mostly yawned in class. There is nothing creative about numbers unless, of course, you're one of the "creative" accounting types who end up in federal prison. Nope, left-brained I am not.

I tried to keep this affliction confidential as I worked through life. Sure, I could add columns of numbers and tell time, but I never enjoyed statistics or formulas. All my jobs have been of the creative type except for that teenage summer job where I was the "bookkeeper" for a golf and tennis center. My duty was to count all the money, checks and credit card receipts from two different cash registers, fill out a form and make all those amounts total correctly. I didn't have much luck making anything add up, so I'd take money from my wallet to make it right. I'm pretty sure I paid them to work there.

I stayed squarely in the creative side of business. Once, at TGI Friday's where my job title was Creative Director, I was forced by an evil boss to take one of those idiotic "What's your personality/strengths/assessment" tests. After the test in high school that told me what industry I should work in, I gave up on those kinds of evaluations. Know what that test said I should be? A dock worker.

Anyway, I took the test because everybody else in the company had to, so I was stuck. Weeks later, when the results came in, my boss called me in to the office to “go over” their findings. I was afraid I was going to get fired because they’d figured out I was better off as a dock worker.

But no, this is what he announced.

“Well, I have the results of your test. You are 97 percent right-brained and are the most creative person in our company!” No S%\$t, Sherlock.

Maybe I’ll go out and paint a dock some really outlandish colors.

Then it dawned on me that only three percent of my brain understands numbers and all those other boring left-brained things like STEM. Then something horrible happened. An Evil Nerd invented Excel and it became the new darling of the left brained crowd. If I heard, “Just whip up an Excel Spreadsheet on that!” once, I heard it five million times. All those lines and formulas can give us creative types the willies. I mean, there are straight lines everywhere!

Luckily, I was smart enough to start my own company, so I hired left-brained people to handle the numbers and the Evil Excel.

Time has moved on and now I find myself in a job where I must transfer over 3,500 names, addresses, phone numbers, emails and assorted other stuff from one Excel spreadsheet to another. It’s mind bending, eye squinting, nonstop data that make my eyes cross and my head hurt. The most creative thing about it is those zip codes that have nine numbers.

Yep, if I’m thinking that’s creative, I’ve got it really bad.

So, wish me luck. I’m 1,100 in and I should come up for a breather in a couple of weeks, if I last that long. In the meantime, I’ll ponder something creative for next week’s column because I’m just not feeling it today.