

A Framer's Bedtime Story



Once upon a time there were three little pigs. But they weren't ordinary pigs. After years of dreaming, they each opened up their own frame shop. Though they were all brothers, they had different ways of doing business.

The first little pig's name was Hardy. He believed that the secret to being a successful framer was to work hard. His younger brother didn't disagree, but he also knew the value of education. He figured that if you worked hard and did a lot of things, but they were the wrong things, it wouldn't help. His name was Ed. (Get it? Ed—Education? Pay attention!)

The youngest brother, Goya, looked up to and learned from his older brothers. He worked hard. He educated himself about proper framing, management and marketing. He even knew how to price things properly and do the books, just like his brother Ed.

The difference was that Ed loved to cut specialty mats. He would spend hour after hour cutting mats in every shape and color. One time, old Mrs. McDonald came in and had him design a mat with cut-outs of 14 different animals. It took him seven hours, and he charged her \$32. He knew he should have either charged her more or changed the design to two or three animals, but he didn't think she'd pay for it and he wanted to do it—bad. You see, Ed knew he should have used those seven hours to shop for new mouldings, redo his price sheet and clean up the store (he's a real pig, you know!). Instead, he worked hard, knew what he *should* be doing, but put it off.

Each of the three pigs had all been open about six months, and each brother was working very hard. Then it happened. The W.O.L.F. showed up. You know, the

“We-Objectively-Label-Framers” group. Customers. They come in, look around, maybe use your services, and draw a conclusion about your business. They label it.

Hardy was working hard, but he didn't know what he was doing. He used masking tape to attach the art and he thought that acid-free matboard was a marketing gimmick. His customers labeled him, “Hardy the Hack.” Customers stopped coming back, and he went broke. He blamed it on the economy.

Then there was Ed. He know what he was supposed to do, but didn't do it. A lot of customers really liked him, but they didn't like his assistant, Rudy. Ed knew that he should have fired Rudy, but he cut great mats and you know how hard it is to find a great mat cutter. Rudy was rude to so many customers that they stopped coming back. Ed didn't price things right and the store was a pig sty. His customer's labeled him “The Greatest Mat Cutter Ever” but he still went broke. Ed said it was the Democrats' fault.

That left only Goya. His store was clean and his help was friendly *and* knowledgeable. He continually monitored his costs and he not only knew what he was supposed to do, he *did* it. He was happy—and successful. His customers kept coming back, he made a healthy profit and he invested in mutual funds. He hired his brothers Hardy and Ed and they regularly complained that the only reason Goya was successful was because he had a better location and got lucky.

And that's the end of the story.

Wait! Some of you may ask, where did Goya get his name from? Simple. *Get Off Your Ass*. Sorry if you're offended. (“Butt” didn't work. Goyb looks like an eye test.)■

by Jay Goltz