

"5 Nines VS 4 Sevens"
or
Business (N)*
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5 nines beats 4 sevens every time - in business that is.

We know of companies that boast of 95%+ shipping on time - and 96%+ shipping accuracy or whatever. We all have heard about what those figures translated into other industries would mean - disaster to medical or airlines for example 5% failure in either is unacceptable - getting that (or should be) may in our industry too.

Of course it's all relative - relative to each industry - I guess. I think we all need to raise the bar and carry it out to 5 digits and strive for 100%. In the computer industry for a server operating system, the five nines (99.999% uptime) are a measure of reliability that translates into just over five minutes of server downtime per year. To borrow the phrase from Accenture (formerly Anderson Consulting) - "Now it gets interesting!"

If you shoot for 100%, how do five nines fit into your business? What's it translate into? Then more importantly is it acceptable to your customer? Are you sure? Have you asked? Does your competition do better?

Remember, on-time accuracy today is a given - along with a competitive price and quality (plus speed, value, convenience and specific solutions).

If you've got all that (and/or more) then work on the five nines. If not - chuck it - go to Las Vegas and try for four sevens - but the better odds and pay off is five nines in your business - go for it. The other guy who's trying to make you toast is doing it already.

It's not one thing - it's a thousand things - it's everything you do - it's Business (N)*

Think about it.
George J. Hayward

(N)* = Nth degree