

MATT FOLEY  
Territory Manager  
SanMar

“Everybody is in the same storm, but not everyone is on the same boat.” Early on during the pandemic, I kept on hearing this same statement from friends and colleagues.

Around this time last year, we were starting to close the country and everyone’s future was uncertain. My daughter just turned one and her daycare closed because of Covid. My wife and I still both had to work full-time. Tired and exhausted we scrambled everyday in between Zoom meetings and business calls to provide the best care for our daughter.

Mostly everyone knows SanMar by looking at the top of the ASI Supplier list. Their secret to success is the company culture and the SanMar Family Values. Jeremy Lott’s leadership team in 2020 was rock solid. Dan Tushar, Bud Schmitt and our leadership team provided the direction we needed to be successful to get us through the pandemic. We were getting weekly messages and videos from Jeremy Lott about the current state of our business. His transparency and positivity was very powerful. SanMar did not lay off any of our 4,000 employees or cancel any PO’s to our vendors overseas during the pandemic. This is remarkable and a true testament to who we are as a company.

After grinding it out for three months, finally my daughter’s daycare opened after the July 4<sup>th</sup> holiday. Those three months were the toughest and most rewarding days in our lives as new parents. My daughter Calliope’s development and vocabulary was growing leaps and bounds every day. Her personality is such a joy and we even got to see her take her first steps! Even though these were trying times, I never regretted a moment of having her home and bonding with my family.

I just celebrated my 6-year anniversary at SanMar. My days in early 2020 were full of joy and exhaustion. In July 2020, I was fortunate enough to win the prestigious Jim Armstrong Award for Territory Manager of the year at SanMar. We have about 100 Territory Managers across the country and some of the smartest and most talents reps in the promo industry, so this was a huge honor.

Even though sales were down, we did not pick up the phone and make a hard sell to clients on PPE. Instead, we called our customers from a compassionate standpoint. We let them know that we’re here to help, vent or just talk. Most conversations were not about business and more about life and health. I figured out quickly, not everyone was in the same boat as I made calls to all my top customers, whom I also considered close friends. While I was trying to multitask with a baby at home, I was on the phone with a local screen printer that had to lay off 30 production employees and was trying to figure out how to pay them so they could feed their families. I realized I needed to reinvent myself as a sales professional to help my customers because we are all in this together. I quickly collaborated with other Territory Managers across the country. We taught each other how to create PowerPoints and host virtual Zoom Meetings. We all shared challenges, success stories and best practices. Now, my days are not much different but a lot busier as we are seeing the economy bounce back!

7:00am: Check emails and organize my to do list for the day. I use Trello as a productivity tool. This app uses visual boards to help me organize my work, personal tasks, and goals for the week.

7:30am: The best part of my morning is getting my daughter up and ready for daycare with my wife. She just turned 2 years old and is such a fun age!

8:30am: Prior to the pandemic, I was traveling on the road four days a week and in my office one day a week. I typically use Mondays to firm up my travel schedule and book my anchor appointments. However, now I am booking Zoom meetings and working virtually, so I make that long walk from my kitchen table to my home office to start my day by building out my calendar, followed by handling flagged emails and prioritized tasks. I pride myself on response time and like to get back to customers immediately, if not sooner.

10:00am: Zoom meetings commence! SanMar launched over 300 products last year and we always have new products or trends to show customers. Most distributors have their first cup of coffee in them and are ready to learn! My presentations are all about education and becoming a trusted advisor. We try to partner with our customers, not just push the cheapest white t-shirt on them. And I love to do some fun trivia at the end!

11:00am: SanMar includes Territory Managers in the creative process. We are based in Seattle and this is prime time to book a meeting with any West Coast internal folks at SanMar. I am constantly on internal focus groups with our Sales, Marketing and Management teams. We are always looking for ways to improve and better serve the customer. This is also a good time to check on any irons in the fire. I check the status of any Lookbooks, Storyboards or Flyers that I am working on with customers.

1:00pm: Lunch and a temperature check or second Zoom meeting. How is my day shaping up and what prioritized tasks do I need to get done or moved around to accomplish my goals?

2:00pm: Zoom fatigue is real and I am looking forward to getting back to warmer weather in New England! I like to play basketball and volleyball at local recreational leagues in Walpole. I played tennis in college and looking forward to getting back into some leagues this Summer. But all of those are canceled due to Covid, so I try to get out of the house and get some exercise. I typically go on walks or shoot hoops in my backyard. When it was nice out, I was taking my daughter for multiple walks a day to squeeze in some exercise. Audiobooks clear my mind. Typically, I have three different types of audiobooks going that I rotate. I think it is important to take at least 20 minutes of your day to learn and improve yourself. What am I listening to right now?

Motivational: *Can't Hurt Me* by David Goggins

Business: *The Ultimate Sales Machine* by Chet Holmes

Enjoyment: Anything by Lee Child, Michael Connolly's or David Baldacci. But right now, I am listening to *Salt, Fat, Acid, Heat* by Samin Nosrat. Hopefully this will step up my cooking game!

SanMar Podcast is also a favorite! You must check it out if you have not heard the famous Yellow T-Shirt story from Marty Lott. I am also enjoying LinkedIn Learning. SanMar has enrolled our entire company and the content is excellent. Right now, we are focusing on Diversity & Inclusion training courses.

4:00pm: Emails are piling up throughout the day, so I use the Pomodoro Technique to reset my to do list and dominate my goals. If you don't know what this is, just google it.

5:00pm: Pick up my daughter from daycare. Because we are working from home, sometimes the lines are blurred and work crosses over into personal time. Because we are Outside Sales Reps, we are almost on call 24/7. However, I have made a strong effort to dedicate family time and shut down my email and phone calls from 5pm until after dinner. I will check and flag emails that come in after hours for the following business day. But mostly I am just a kid again, rolling around on the ground playing with my daughter and her new Minnie & Mickey Mouse toys!