**<https://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newSTR_MurphyLaw.htm>**

**Example of How Murphy's Law Can Help**

**When Things Go Wrong**

*Simon L Tod had recently been promoted to the role of Production Manager at a toy manufacturer. He felt honored to have been chosen, and knew it was because he had always worked hard. But as the peak production season loomed, he was feeling more and more stressed. Things kept happening that he wasn't expecting, and they always seemed to go wrong at 5 pm on a Friday, or just as the team were starting work on an urgent order.*

*Simon mentioned his concerns to his boss, who suggested he apply Murphy's Law to his work to identify what would go wrong and when.*

*So, on Monday Morning, Simon drew up a list of the key things he had to do that week, when they needed to be completed by, and some of the ways they could go wrong. He also estimated the likelihood of things going wrong in this way. His list included the following items:*

| **Task** | **Schedule** | **Risks** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Stuff batch of 1,000 teddy bears | Delivery to Customer by 8am on Wednesday | Stuffing machine will break (10% chance) Stuffing Machine operative off sick (5%) Courier company won't deliver on time (5% chance) |
| Assemble 2,000 toy cars | 1 to boss for his son's birthday (on Friday). Remainder to Customer any time on Friday. | Wheel supplier sends wheels late (20% chance) Wheel supplier sends wrong size wheels (10% chance) |

*On Monday, everything progressed to plan. It was all looking good on Tuesday morning too. But after lunch, when there were still 200 teddy bears to stuff, Simon was called to the workshop by an anxious Quality Control Supervisor who was holding quite the lumpiest teddy bear he'd ever seen.*

*Simon picked the toy up and squeezed it. Instead of being soft and cuddly, it seemed to be filled with solid items that crunched against each other. Soon, all became clear: the stuffing machine operator had managed to fill the teddy bear stuffing machine hopper with car wheels. The machine had broken these up as they passed through it, but it had still managed to fill the bears. All of the car wheels were now in little fragments; Mostly inside furry bear bellies.*

*As Simon stood holding the crunchy bear, he saw the courier company van draw up outside the loading bay doors. He now realized that Murphy's Law had predicted that something****other than****the risks he'd predicted would go wrong, just before the deadline. This allowed him to stay calm and think fast.*

*He got his packaging supervisor to print out extra labels to put on each bear's box, offering $200 to the first purchaser who sent a bear back to the factory, un-tampered with, correctly identifying what the bear was filled with. The crunchy bear line turned out to be one of the company's bestsellers that year.*

*Simon ordered more wheels from his supplier, who thought the teddy bear story was so funny that he gave Simon an excellent discount, not only on the repeat order but on future orders of the wheels too.*

*That left one problem to resolve – a little boy's birthday present. The new batch of wheels couldn't get to the factory till Friday morning – which was too late. So Simon suggested that his boss bring his son down to the factory after school on Friday for a special treat – to see his new car have its wheels fitted. The little boy was thrilled and so didn't mind the fact he'd not has his present at breakfast that morning.*

By apply Murphy's Law, and expecting the unexpected, Simon L Tod remained in control throughout a week that would otherwise have proved to be very stressful.