In order to get your arms around the knowledge that I want to convey to you, I’d like you to create a positive image of yourself and your surroundings two years from today. Make it as vivid as you can. What does your home and office look like? What type of people will you be surrounded with? Spending time with? How does it feel getting up in the morning? How’s your sleep? Try to think of the colors, smells and sounds. Make it as vivid as you can...feel the warmth and deep appreciation of others. Got it?

Now…

What’s it going to take to get you from where you are today to that future you? If we were casually talking about this two years from now, what specifically has to have happened?

Now, think about your existing patterns, your work habits, the quality of your time management skills and your discipline. If there were a war between your existing habits and that future image of you, which one would win out? How have you done in the past trying to change other habits...drinking, smoking, working out, weight loss, or what about acquiring new skills? Most of us have at least a shelf full of self-help and business books and tapes…well? What specific changes can you attribute to these great resources?

Some of us have walked on hot coals, gone parachute jumping or bungee jumping to face our fears and form new habits. How has it worked? For most of us, the answer is not very well. It may have felt great at the time and we may have gotten some short-term pump up, but nothing really stuck to your ribs. So, back to that image you created...is it compelling enough to cause you to take action in the present and make some changes? What’s it going to take to get you from where you are today to that future you? What specifically has to happen to get you there?

Peter Drucker said that there are two fundamental questions that every professional must have clear and focused in business. I believe they apply to life as well.
1. What are you focused on day to day?
2. How are you getting from where you are now to where you want to be?

My entire management consulting practice revolves around answering these two questions for and with clients. Before I get into the details concerning how I ask, challenge, facilitate, and nudge clients into a higher level of clarity (and thus results) on these critical questions, let me paint a picture about where we’ve been, are, and seem to be going at this time. In this white paper, I will focus on what I believe is the biggest single problem entrepreneurs and professionals face today and then offer some solutions. These solutions are designed to get to the heart of the matter — tools that you can use right now to help you take your life and business to the next level and keep growing from there.

THE EXTRAORDINARY TIMES WE LIVE IN TODAY

Fortune, Forbes, The Wall Street Journal and much of the business press have dubbed this “The Age of Uncertainty.” Since the larger economic picture impacts us all, the following is my take on our current economic environment.

Corporate revenues and earnings continue to disappoint, retail sales are sputtering along with real job growth. Many firms in the Silicon Valley, where I live and work, are into or beyond their third re-organization (which means layoffs and more work piled up for those “lucky” enough to be retained). Manufacturing is down and dipping again. Investor, consumer and business confidence are all down, not to mention the stock market.

In a fairly unheard of move, two of the 12 members of the Federal Open Market Committee dissented from the decision to hold rates where they were at 1.75% in the September meeting. Unemployment is at 5.6% and rising: growth in personal income
and consumer spending is still holding up
and despite predictions of a real estate
bubble, housing prices continue to hold their
own.

Trillions of dollars have been wiped off
the economic map in the last few years
(since Q4 2000). Venture capital
investments are at their lowest level in four
years. Many people who had a shot at
retiring with some dignity have come to the
realization that it’s back to the old drawing
board. Our deficit has swung by $400
billion (to the red) in the last year alone and
many businesses are struggling just to stay
alive. September 11th, corporate greed and
institutional distrust are forcing people to do
some serious soul searching about what
matters most and where to go from here.

The number of multi-millionaires in the
Silicon Valley increased by 10-fold in the
1990’s only to have that number slashed by
95% since. Not long ago the hottest topic in
the hallways and cafeterias was stock
options. Today if you earn your bonus and
have steady employment, you feel fortunate.
The bursting technology bubble looks more
like the mushroom cloud from an atomic
explosion and “tree hugging” (staying with a
firm for 3 or more years) is back in vogue.

THE GROWING CONFLICT
BETWEEN OUR PERSONAL AND
PROFESSIONAL LIVES

Regardless of recent economic
circumstances, I see a major trend picking up
speed. A growing number of entrepreneurs
and professionals are increasingly frustrated.
Whether or not they’re doing well financially,
more and more tension exists between their
professional and personal lives. More and
more time is being spent handling insignificant
details. People are moving from one crisis to
another, and if you ask what specific things
they accomplished last week, or even
yesterday, you get blank stares and glazed
eyes.

For a lot of professionals and
entrepreneurs, things are getting overly
complicated. Managing the never-ending
barrage of conflicting priorities, shifting
customer needs, extended sales cycles and competitive pressures is wearing people out. Deadlines are being pushed back to the point that upon completion, it’s anti-climatic. And on those all too rare occasions when a deadline is moved back by a client, you can almost hear the collective sighs of relief vibrate throughout the organization.

There’s no time to get away from the business, no time for revitalization or reflection. The original reasons that attracted us to entrepreneurialism in the first place like personal and financial independence, fulfillment, and maybe even some fun, seem like distant childhood dreams. Those who have achieved financial independence have come to realize that it’s not about money at all — it’s about freedom.

So, the satisfaction continues to slip. On the opposite end of the continuum, in those few businesses that are actually doing well at the moment, the growth often comes way too fast. In this case, the pace is equally frenetic. There’s no time to reflect, no time to enjoy the journey, much less the outcome. There is no time to plan properly because things are basically out of control.

THE DRIFT EFFECT

Perhaps the number one reason businesses fail has to do with a lack of thought given to “working on the business, not in the business.” This means there’s a lack of strategic thinking, basic discipline, integration, and process improvements. We all have the same number of hours in a day. It’s what we do with those hours that ultimately creates the difference. The vast majority of entrepreneurial firms never break through because they constantly shift from sales to fulfillment and back again. I call this pattern “The Drift Effect”. It’s like the captain points off in the distance and says to the crew, “See that island? That’s happiness…so let’s get there quick!” But what actually happens is that as the captain becomes aware of urgent cash flow needs he/she says, “Uh Oh, we need revenues

and profits, everyone over to the starboard side!” So everyone runs over to that side of the boat and works directly or indirectly on sales…then, when the pipeline’s full, the captain realizes that the firm may be over promising and under-delivering so he/she yells, “Everyone on the port side of the boat! We need to focus on fulfillment.”

And everyone runs to the other side of the boat. And so it goes. The boat keeps splashing about, listing from side to side, drifting along with the current, not really getting closer to the Island of Happiness and very often moving further away.

THE BIGGEST SINGLE PROBLEM ENTREPRENEURS AND PROFESSIONALS FACE TODAY: THE WEB OF ENTANGLEMENTS

Do you ever feel proud of what you’ve achieved so far in life, yet are too worn out and bogged down to set and meet exciting new goals? Are you too frantically busy to even find a moment to think about tackling additional projects? When you reach this point—and all high-achieving individuals do, sooner or later—it doesn’t mean that you need to work even longer hours, or that you lack the potential to climb to greater heights in your chosen career. It just means that you’ve stumbled into an all-too-common pitfall, one that can be fixed if you’re willing to re-evaluate and reconstruct the structure and substance of your life as a whole.

Let me explain. Whenever opportunity and the ability to grow combine in a way that allows us to reach meaningful new goals—either in business or in some other realm of life—things tend to go smoothly for a while. We learn from unfamiliar experience, amass new knowledge, and perhaps even gain and exercise a certain amount of wisdom.

But eventually, over time, we reach a point where the skills and information we possess are incapable of carrying us any further. The new relationships we’ve forged and extra obligations we’ve taken on gradually fill up all the time available, and then some. Once-novel ways of thinking
and behaving harden into habits, which repeat the same actions over and over instead of providing perspective on “the big picture” of our lives and our infinite capacity for further growth and accomplishment. Insights and schedules that proved important when we were in hot pursuit of a previous goal simply aren’t enough any more. They’re powerless to catapult us to “the next level.”

Professionals and entrepreneurs are feeling a growing tension between home, family, and work. In spite of the economic challenges we’re experiencing now, one could easily argue that the opportunities are arguably the best in the history of the world. At the same time, the knowledge and skill bases of many professionals are at an all-time high, but their ability to seize the moment is actually being stretched beyond the breaking point.

Does any of this sound familiar to you? When we reach this unfortunate state, we’re caught in something I call the Web of Entanglements. It’s as if we’re flies stuck in a giant web of dated skill sets, unproductive meetings, meaningless busy work, and appointments that bear little or no relationship to the goals and dreams closest to our hearts. And the more we flail around in this sticky mass of habits and obligations, the more stuck we become. Frustration mounts, dreams stagnate, and relationships suffer. Perhaps worst at all, boredom and exhaustion start to seem normal.

The Web of Entanglements is a growing senior executive phenomenon of intense stress, anxiety, guilt and frustration. It’s the biggest single contributor to lack of focus, clarity, and fulfillment. Bottom line, this is why so many executives are so unfulfilled and dissatisfied with their results and lifestyles today. Having worked with high-achieving individuals and teams for the last 25 years, I can say without reservation that the Web of Entanglements is the #1 problem facing CEOs and entrepreneurs today. I’m going to try to shed some light on this killer problem, including how it
sneaks up on us, where it comes from, and what we can do to avoid its ravages.

HARDER, FASTER, LONGER

Most of us have grown up under the Capitalistic Society model. Progress tends to be measured in accumulation of wealth terms, also known as “making a buck.” Some argue the prudence, impact, and validity of this model but few believe that there’s a better way to organize large populations. Capitalism and Democracy are a formidable combination. Any system created by and run by people will always be imperfect, but our system of government is the best anyone’s been able to come up with so far. The materialistic world keeps score and measures progress in the form of dollars or wealth.

In America, we have inherited this Judeo-Christian work ethic passed down to us through societal programming. It controls our automatic response to the Web each time we encounter it. That response is Harder, Faster, Longer. We stiffen our resolve to any new demands and face it head on with “I’ll work harder than my competition, I’ll work faster, or I’ll work longer.”

The biggest problem isn’t growing the ‘to do list’, it’s the frenetic, frenzied thinking that comes with the Harder, Faster, Longer response. As so many of us approach the game of life as a race to get more done with the throttle stuck at full out, our minds, even when we’re “off”... aren’t. They’re idling way too high.

So, how are you doing? Are you feeling the frustration, guilt, or mind traffic brought on by the Web? Well, if you are, you’re not alone!

EXPERIENCE LEADS TO MIND TRAFFIC AND A MULTITUDE OF PAST-BASED OBLIGATIONS

Think back to when we first began our professional lives. We lacked experience in the ways of the free market economy. So, we went out into the school of hard knocks (or Real World University) in search of
experience and learned about how the score was kept and the central importance of bucks. Under any econometric model, dollars flow in and dollars flow out. Deals and transactions abound. We either earn dollars or we don’t. This happens slowly at first but before too long, we’ve accumulated hundreds and thousands of transactions, or experience in the free market economy. We ultimately get comfortable enough at our respective levels of success to know how to ask for and receive dollars for whatever good or service we happen to be selling, directly or indirectly. As we matured, we originated, negotiated, and closed deal after deal until our portfolio of transactions amounted to thousands, even hundreds of thousands of transactions.

Each one of these transactions required some kind of follow-up, some long term and some short term. The deals required communicating up, down, and sideways; relationship development, personal favors, documenting details, contracts, latent communications, future commitments, ongoing servicing, paperwork, and so on. Every transaction actually added more and more complexity to our lives, more mind traffic, noise, complexity, demands, and entanglements.

Now, over time, as new opportunities present themselves, our minds are so filled to overflowing with “past-based obligations” that our capacity to respond intelligently is simply over-subscribed. We get to a point where we’re so bogged down that it’s all we can do to summon the energy to fight — just for the privilege of staying behind! Unknown to us, each transaction added strand after strand to the sticky Web Of Entanglements.

And, I’m not talking about the Internet! Like an insect caught in a spider’s web, the more it struggles, the more entangled it gets. Before we realize it we’re spending entirely too much time and energy on past-based obligations and relationships that detract from and cloud our ability to envision the future or act on true priorities in the present.
TIME STACKING —
MULTITASKING GONE WRONG

There’s another major culprit contributing strands to the Web: “Time stacking.” Many of us feel like we’re racing full-throttle through life, sometimes without a steering wheel or brakes. We’re cramming more things into each hour. As I travel on the highways, I often spot people in their cars talking on the phone with their headsets on, listening to the news or music, sipping their favorite drink, conversing with a couple of kids in short, curt grunts, growls and sounds all while trying to move in and out of traffic at 75 miles per hour. I occasionally see people doing all the above while also tapping on the keyboard of an open computer sitting on the passenger’s seat!

This is vintage “time stacking,” a dysfunctional and ineffective way of perceiving and managing our affairs. Instead of maximizing our precious time, we become unwittingly victimized by it. Time stacking leads to a stop-start existence. Where we begin to work on or make progress on a project, activity, or initiative only to be interrupted by a phone call, got-a-minute meeting, or the sound of a new e-mail landing on your computer. Before we know it, life and business is like playing chess on a dozen boards at once — all with different opponents stacked on top of each other.

Life in past decades seemed to be characterized by an easygoing and consistent ebb and flow of time. There was time to daydream, time to go fishing, time to just be. Although life in those days was actually far from perfect, the tempting illusion of having enough time is hard to shake in today’s dizzyingly complex world. The constant, unrelenting demands we deal with every day just don’t leave enough time for life, as it ought to be.

We’re rapidly becoming human ‘doers’ instead of human ‘beings.’ Though we may feel nostalgic for “the good ol’ days,” we are likely to agree with teacher and author, J. Krishnamurthi, who wrote, “Time is the
BUILDING THE ULTIMATE BUSINESS ADVANTAGE

psychological enemy of man.’¹ Time can indeed be our best friend or our worst nightmare.

The internal conflicts that arise because we don’t feel we have enough time are actually making us stressed out, unhappy, and just plain sick. Author Denis Waitley perfectly describes our dilemma:

“Today’s America seems a society that has everything going for it, yet with too little coming together. We seem to have been shoved into a race we didn’t choose and whose finish line we can’t picture. Most of us have houses but not the domestic lives we wanted. We have photo albums and videotapes of our children but not the spiritual strength that underpins healthy families. We’re extremely busy, sometimes frantically busy, but we don’t quite know where we’re going. We cope with the urgent but keep putting off what we sense is truly important. We try to squeeze in lots of fun, sometimes expensive fun, but we’re not really happy. Some of us are doing the right things at the wrong time; some are doing the wrong things all the time.”²

In opinion polls in the United States and Europe, people complain more about a lack of time than a lack of money or freedom!³ Time is truly becoming more valuable than money. Who wouldn’t lay down some hard-earned cash to buy a few extra hours for that project due at noon, for an extra hour’s sleep in the morning, or for a few more days before Monday starts because we worked all weekend?


Building the Ultimate Business Advantage

If you are finding some of the fun, excitement, and joy of being an entrepreneur or professional fading, the Web of Entanglements is a major reason. Therefore, arguably the most important skill you can develop today is learning specific ways to break free from the Web.

The Executive Survival Kit

“You’ve got to be careful if you don’t know where you’re going because you might not get there.”

—Yogi Berra, baseball player

In the last ten years, I’ve organized, funded, and challenged a group of researchers, many of whom are or have been PhD students from Stanford and U.C. Berkeley, to find the most important, most frequently cited studies on what high achieving professionals and teams should be focused on and how to move from where they are now to where they want to be.

When I first began my serious research, it became clear to me that our world was getting more skeptical and cynical and that this trend was likely to continue for the foreseeable future. So, having always been fascinated by the topic of human performance, I decided to lead with the facts. I did not want to invest in another well-meaning but potentially misguided opinion on the matter of how to improve our probabilities for success. My firm’s decade-long pursuit of relevant solutions has evolved into a synthesized, empirically validated group of concepts and tools that really make a difference for companies, teams, and individuals.

The selected tools from my Executive Survival Kit presented in this white paper will lead you on a journey from whatever Web currently entangles you to a mode of existence in which your personal and professional effectiveness is maximized. Each tool draws on strategies and exercises which I’ve tested in my Strategic Execution programs for companies and teams as well as in one-on-one “effectiveness coaching” sessions with executives, entrepreneurs, and...
a variety of other high-performing, achievement-oriented individuals.

Einstein said, “The current problems we face cannot be solved at the same level of thinking with which they were created.”

“The world hates change. Yet it is the only thing that has brought progress.” — Charles F. Kettering

By its very nature, change is unwelcome. Even positive change challenges one’s equilibrium — the relative balance one attempts to maintain every day. In other words, change causes stress, and human beings will do almost anything to avoid that ubiquitous but damaging internal and external force.

Among the most common reactions to, and defenses against, making changes are these:

- **Fear**: Fear of the unknown and contemplation of life without a familiar habit as well as the fear of coming face to face with “the new you” (despite or because of the power, confidence, and potential you might have) holds many people back from taking the first step.

- **Perfectionism**: Unrealistic expectations are the foundation of perfectionism. Perfectionists find it harder to admit to a problem in the first place. They are also notorious procrastinators due to their fear of failure. The thought of failure could destroy their perfect image and/or ability to cope.

- **Low Self-Image**: People who suffer from a low self-image may hold on tighter to bad habits as a way to punish or hurt themselves (for being so unworthy). They often have quick tempers and difficulty remembering key dates like anniversaries or birthdays. These shortcomings often hurt their ability to be involved in more intimate relationships. They often feel undeserving of being loved or insecure in their feelings or outlook.
• **Stubbornness:** An overly developed need to control often makes these people refuse coaching or help of any kind. They have a fierce sense of independence and will not allow anyone to “tell them” how to live their lives. These folks are actually out of control... not in.

• **Learned Victimization:** These are people who have often tried and failed to reach the same goal many times. They often will avoid acting in or choosing a different way even when negative consequences are certain. They get used to giving up rather than risk a potentially more successful approach. Helplessness is their watchword.

Embracing change is the first step to freeing yourself from the Web of Entanglements. Armed with an understanding of the pitfalls to avoid, you’ll be more apt to stay open and motivated to effect change in your personal and professional life.

**SURVIVAL TOOL #1: STRENGTHS THEORY**

If numbers are the barometers of success, how do we explain the following?

- Over 50% of all CEOs of Fortune 500 companies had ‘C’ or ‘C-’ averages in college.
- 65% of all U.S. senators come from the bottom half of their school classes.
- 75% of U.S. presidents were in ‘the lower-half club’ in school.
- Over 50% of millionaire entrepreneurs never finished college.
- The average millionaire entrepreneur has gone bankrupt 3.75 times. (U.S. News and World Report)

“Great athletes frequently hold double records for both accomplishments and failures. Consider Babe Ruth who for many years held the major league record for strikeouts as well as home runs.”

—Robert J. Kriegel

“If a man has talent and cannot use it, he has failed. If he has talent and uses only half of it, he has partly failed. If he
has a talent and learns somehow to use the whole of it, he has gloriously succeeded, and won a satisfaction and a triumph few men know.”
— Thomas Wolfe
Twentieth century American author

In our society, we are trained to be ultra-aware of our deficiencies, our areas of weakness or incompetence. Consequently, we spend an entire lifetime working on our weaknesses. As a result, all we get is a lot of really strong weaknesses. This is not what the stuff of greatness is about.

We’ve all been programmed to be ultra-conscious of our weaknesses. There seems to be a national obsession to fix what’s wrong. That’s one reason managers spend most of their time with underachievers. Parents and teachers tend to zero right in on a student’s lowest grades. Performance reviews actually turn into non-performance reviews. Negative gossip, daytime TV programs, and news programs are overflowing with bad news – what’s wrong not what’s right.

The good news is that if we manage our weaknesses but focus on strengths, it eventually causes our weaknesses to become irrelevant.

Don Clifton’s books, *Soar With Your Strengths* and *Now Discover Your Strengths*, provide a strong argument for why focusing on strengths is one of the absolute keys to success in business and life. The reality is that our true gifts and talents are largely in place by the age of 10. It’s a function of genes, parenting, key influencers, and culture that develop into neuropathways in the brain. The Gallup School of Management reduces strengths theory down to the following: Adults don’t tend to change that much so don’t try to put in what was left out. Try to draw out what was left in. That simple idea is hard enough.
Clifton and Paula Nelson outline the five cues to identifying your strengths or true talents:

1. Yearning: Identify the kinds of activities that you are naturally drawn to.

2. Rapid Mastery or quick learning: Identify those activities that you seem to pick up quickly.

3. Flow or the total performance of excellence: In what activities did the steps just come to you naturally, automatically, or unconsciously?

4. Glimpses of excellence: Every activity, initiative, or project is made up of a series of moments. When specifically, during what activities, have you had moments of subconscious excellence where you may have sat back and said, “How did I do that?”

5. Satisfaction: What activities do you get a kick out of doing? (Either while doing them or right after completion.) Where do you get the most emotional or psychic pleasure?

Dr. Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, Professor and former Chair of the Department of Psychology at the University of Chicago has spent 30 years focused on the psychology of optimal experience. His breakthrough books on “flow” are based on hard research.

According to Csikszentmihalyi, we all have two to three areas of distinct strengths, special aptitudes, or skills. The more time we spend positioning ourselves in such a way where we are called upon to access these strengths, the greater our chances of getting into “flow” — a state where we lose track of time and the overall quality of our thoughts or actions during those times is of such high quality that it often and increasingly represents “genius level thinking or contribution.”

The degree to which we spend time practicing or acting on our strengths increases dramatically our probabilities for success, our chances of becoming truly...
irreplaceable. During our research into high-achieving individuals and teams, it has become clear that strengths is one of the lynchpins, the foundational blocks that can and does have the most to do with our ability to generate incredible results.

**THE ENTREPRENEUR VS. EMPLOYEE MINDSET**

Robert Kiyosaki provided a tremendous insight in *Rich Dad Poor Dad* when he laid out what amounts to the four things you can do with your life in America to build wealth:

1. Be an employee and work for someone else.
2. Be self-employed, mainly sole proprietorships like doctors, lawyers, consultants and other service providers.
4. Be an investor.

The main point is that people tend to gravitate to one of these four arenas — and often get stuck there without realizing it. The challenge in moving from one arena or quadrant (as the author calls them) to another is a lot more about changing who you are than what you have to do to get there.

There are a number of key differences between those who work for other firms and those who start and grow their own businesses. To begin with, the temperaments, personalities, and mindsets of “employers” are more bureaucratic in nature. They’re more patient with ambiguity, more team oriented, and have a higher tolerance with organizational politics. Entrepreneurs tend to be more creative, impetuous, and less able or interested in playing the political games that come with larger organizations.

Employees tend to make lousy entrepreneurs and entrepreneurs tend to make lousy employees.

**SURVIVAL TOOL #2: FOCUS**

**CHART EXERCISE**

It has taken nearly a decade to synthesize these theories into a one-page model. The feedback from CEOs and senior professionals who use this tool is
consistently outstanding. It dramatically increases clarity on the what’s and how’s of a defined area of responsibility. Team alignment, productivity, ownership, accountability, and most importantly, results, increase significantly as well.

The Process for Implementing the Strengths Theory Using the FOCUS Chart

1. Name your top three priorities or professional responsibilities and place them in the space allotted in the circle.
2. In the boxes adjacent to each third of the circle write out your key result areas, daily activities, or tasks that cause you to make progress on your three top priorities over time.
3. Choose one area at a time; reflect on and identify the top three things that have the most to do with the firm’s (and your) professional success.
4. Think through the tasks involved with the performance of each of the top three priorities you listed. What goes into making progress in each of these areas? What specific tasks do you have to engage in or do in order to accomplish or gain positive momentum in each of these top three areas?
5. Rank each individual task beginning with areas of “giftedness.” Use your own experience, feedback from others, and wisdom to establish your gifted tasks. Place an “A” next to each of these tasks (A+ in school terms).
6. Rank the next group of tasks “Excellent” (A to B+ in school terms) based on how well you think you perform them. Place a “B” next to each of these tasks.
7. Go through the lists and rank the tasks with an average (C in school terms) rating. Place a “C” next to each of these tasks.
8. Rank the remaining tasks using the letter “D” for underachieving (D to F in school terms). These are tasks that you dislike and are, for the most part, incompetent in.
9. Review the lists and make sure each task listed has a reference letter next to it.

10. Next, beginning with “D”, decide on whom you will assign to these tasks. You can consider individuals who are currently on staff, consultants, or part-time independent contractors. You can barter, trade out, or hire as resources dictate. The person should be gifted or, at a minimum, excellent at these tasks. You then begin managing the process, flow, and outcomes in these areas instead of doing them yourself.

11. Next, move to the C’s (average) and do the same as above.

12. Ultimately, you want to delegate the B’s (excellent) as well. This will allow you to spend the vast majority of your time on your most gifted areas. This will increase your joy, fulfillment, happiness, and effectiveness on job-related responsibilities. You will actually get energy instead of expending it. Burn out, depression, and a reactive decision-making style will dissipate.

13. Your personal and professional relationships will substantially improve as will your sense of balance and excitement.
FOCUS CHART EXERCISE

Corresponding Activities:

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Top 3 Responsibility

Corresponding Activities:

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Top 3 Responsibility

Corresponding Activities:

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Top 3 Responsibility
Show your completed Focus Chart to those who will serve in a supportive role for you. This tool will help them understand precisely what they’re to do and how it fits into your ability to lead the enterprise and lead your own life. Essentially, these tasks become their “job descriptions.” Employees, partners, and vendors work best with clarity—this tool and process will create this. Use the chart during performance reviews as well.

The goal is to spend as much of your time as possible on your areas of strength. By systematically delegating your C’s and D’s to people who have strengths in these areas, over time you increase your overall output and effectiveness dramatically. Instead of actually “doing” these lower ranked tasks yourself, you delegate and begin to manage the completion of them through others.

This tool can be used as the basis for reorganizing the entire firm. Start with the senior management group and allow this methodology to cascade down and across the organization. Research has shown that progress will be significantly enhanced if a competent coach assists you throughout the implementation.

This tool, the Focus Chart, has many uses. First of all, think about job descriptions. They’re used to attract, screen, and guide a new professional. In practice, I’ve never run into a person who, after being hired, can remember anything of substance about their job description two or three weeks after starting. Why? Because they are nearly always woefully incomplete and as the organization and individual work together, new roles and areas of concentration almost always emerge, changing, often fundamentally, the job description.

Focus Charts, not job descriptions, should be used when hiring anyone. If management cannot generate a clear and relevant Focus Chart detailing the Top 3 Areas of Focus (the What’s) and the specific activities that go into the furtherance of each priority (the How’s), then they
should not hire a new person in the first place! Setting a new person up for success requires thoughtfulness and clarity about how they will utilize their abilities to add value to the organization. Job descriptions are totally inadequate for these purposes.

The way to cut down on interviewing time, increase retention, and improve overall productivity and performance is to maximize the use of the Focus Chart in interviews and reviews. If you use the Focus Chart to hire new talent, ask the interviewee to fill out and rank their strengths in each of the line items that describe what and how they’ll do their job. Give them a simple test assignment to get confirmation that their perspective on what they’re good at matches reality. Use the Focus Chart in all performance reviews to root out problems and fine tune the job responsibilities with the individual. Think through the tradeoffs that will need to be made if you hire this person. How do their abilities fit with the other people on the team? Will you need to adjust other people’s roles to optimize performance?

Every person in the organization should have a Focus Chart. As jobs and functions change and evolve, use Focus Charts to more clearly track and monitor the evolution and overall contribution to revenues, profits, and organizational output. Clarity is power and ambiguity about what people should be focused on and how allows mediocrity, contentiousness, and inefficiency to take hold.

In one organization I recently worked with, we had the entire department complete their Focus Charts. The manager reviewed and refined them and each person was asked to trade one of their D’s or C’s for an A (one of their own areas of strength) contained in someone else’s Focus Chart. It increased teamwork, output, and performance tremendously for everyone in the department.

People started to appreciate skill sets and gifts of one another in a very personal way. The department began to know with
much greater conviction who the go-to person was on each project. Everyone felt more valuable and excited to be there because the organization put them into positions that allowed them to shine. They increasingly spent more of their time on things that came easily, on activities they enjoyed. When a manager would ask someone to take on a task, the person would be able to see immediately the impact that doing so would have on their overall focus and discuss it with their superior.

**SURVIVAL TOOL #3: DESERT ISLAND TOP FIVE**

Imagine you were stuck on a desert island and your only way of communicating with your office or team was with a cell phone that, due to a number of reasons, would only work once a week for five minutes. What five things would you most want to know that would tell you the most about how things were going in the overall organization, department, or job function? If you ask a CEO or any person in the organization about the five key results areas that reflect the most on their overall progress, what would they be? A CEO might have revenues, accounts receivable, revenues per employee, and profitability measures. A CFO might have cash flow, fixed and/or variable expenses, stock price, and number of employees. A VP of Sales and Marketing might have number of new clients, products, or services sold, number of presentations made, number of high probability new clients and customers, and number of calls made to prospects.

Everyone in the organization should be asked to create a list of the top five key results areas that translate into how well they are performing their jobs. These Desert Island Top Five lists should change as jobs or critical areas of focus change. They should also be reviewed regularly. Specific goals should be created for each person with their full participation and then monitored. In the absence of specific measures, people will invent their
own or drift and those measures may or may not be true gauges of what matters most or how well they are performing their jobs.

The Desert Island Top Five are keys to creating accountability on a person-by-person basis. Everyone in the organization needs to take ownership of the success or failure of the firm. If you don’t set up the critical milestones that let you (as CEO) and them know what is most important in the performance of their role or function and your expectations on their ability to add value in revenue and profit terms, they will tend to drift along or under perform. Ambiguity and mushy thinking in any organization is deadly.

A person’s Top Five should be related to or natural extensions of their Focus Charts. Remember, the Top Three priorities or responsibilities in the center of the Focus Chart are the what’s; the lines in the related boxes are the how’s. The Desert Island Top Fives are performance measurements that should be in place to help the person know how well they’re performing their job or role, from a financial perspective. It keeps them thinking about results, especially financial results, creating a direct link between what they do and the economic viability of the firm.

SURVIVAL TOOL #4: TIME CHUNKING vs. TIME STACKING

“Men never plan to be failures; they simply fail to plan to be successful.”

—William Ward

Our best preparation for tomorrow is the proper use of today.

—Anonymous

Don’t say you don’t have enough time. You have exactly the same number of hours per day that were given to Helen Keller, Pasteur, Michelangelo, Mother Teresa, Leonardo da Vinci, Thomas Jefferson, and Albert Einstein.

—H. Jackson Brown Jr.
One of the secrets to making the most of the time available is understanding the difference between “fixed” activities and “variable” activities. Fixed activities are those that absolutely, positively have to be done at a particular time, no matter what. Variable activities are everything else.

The goal is to stop treating everything that comes to your attention as a critical priority that must be attended to NOW. This is one of the worst by-products of the “do it now” time management philosophy. You cannot let the less important drive you away from those few activities that really make the difference for you personally or professionally.

If you consider goal-driven action steps to be non-negotiable, fixed activities, you’ll get more done than you ever dreamed possible. Activities that bring us closer to our carefully imagined goals must be scheduled first — and all other variable activities squeezed in around them.

If we don’t reserve room for the highest priority items early on, they probably won’t ever take place. It’s human nature, and the nature of the beast called life in America. Relatively meaningless, time-sucking, life-draining activities will swallow up all 24 hours of the day before we even realize they’re gone.

This basic insight has worked like magic in my own life. It gives me the leverage I need to schedule my actions and commitments in the proper sequence — from most important to least important — on a daily basis. As a result, I accomplish a greater variety of things than ever before, and enjoy more free time, too.

There’s nothing really new about this information. Much of the time management literature we found stresses the importance of using this technique in your daily planning. But few provide a tool that actually helps us think in these terms. For this reason, I found that the concept was one of those that sounded great but was difficult to execute in the real world.

The “busyness” syndrome was the vicious cycle I had fallen into. At the end of
each day, I would look back and find, to my amazement, that I was incredibly busy, yet I couldn’t recall putting any major accomplishments in the win column. I never seemed to have time to focus on the new marketing plan, the research review and synthesis, or the critical correspondence piling up. I was reacting to my environment, not proactively controlling or responding to it. When the phone rang, I’d take the call. When I was interrupted, I’d stop what I was doing to allow the “interruptee” to take me away from my priorities. Very often, other people’s urgency became my own. It doesn’t take much to take us off our most effective path.

I often reflect on an exercise I use while teaching kids about life skills through my nonprofit organization, How To Get an A in Life. Using the metaphor in Stephen Covey’s classic, The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People, I show a gallon-sized clear glass container and fill it up with big rocks. I ask the kids, “Is it full?” They say yes. Then I take coarse material with small rocks in it, pour it in and it fills in around the big rocks. Then I ask, “Is it full?” Now their antennae are up so some say yes and some no. Then I add fine sand to the glass jar. As I jostle the jar around, quite a bit of fine sand gets through. I ask again, “Is it full?” Now the kids don’t know what’s coming next so I add water. Now the container is finally “full.”

Life works like this. Our days work like this. If you don’t begin each day having reserved time for the big rocks (the real priorities), life has a way of filling up the day with the small stuff that when taken together, doesn’t amount to much. You get the picture. It might remind you of the challenges you face each day.

So, you’re probably wondering how I stopped this unproductive pattern in its tracks. I decided that I’d have to completely re-think my time usage and the mental hurdles I’d put in the way of real progress. I no longer wanted to piddle away my days in a morass of details and
unimportant trivia. It was time to take charge.

Ted Geisel, better known as Dr. Seuss, put a lot of plain hard work into writing his beloved children’s books. He once said “There is no simple way, and the discipline is essential. I never leave the room during my work day, even if all I do is sit there.”

My goal was to access breakthrough thinking and genius level thought more often and more thoroughly. Instead of being a victim of time stacking, I experimented with proactive time chunking. Like Ted Geisel, I religiously set aside two- to four-hour chunks of time to work on my top priorities, no holds barred. Instead of treating every demand, project, or issue as if they were all equal, I developed a hierarchy of priorities that became my roadmap to achievement.

NOW IT’S YOUR TURN: GRAPH “HOW DO I CURRENTLY INVEST MY TIME?” AND “HOW SHOULD I INVEST MY TIME?”

Evaluating your current and proposed time usage patterns will nudge you toward greater awareness of how you habitually spend your time, and which patterns of activity in your life demand change.

First, divide the circle labeled “Where Do I Currently Invest My Time” into five pieces representing the five activities that most frequently fill each of your waking days, and in what proportions. For instance, it’s easy to calculate the percentages based on the hours per day you’re awake. If you sleep eight hours, you’ll have about 16 hours per day of time to invest. If your workday is ten hours, a pie slice labeled “career” should account for 60 percent of your pie. Four hours of television would be 25 percent. Two hours, or 12 percent, could be family time. One hour, or 6 percent, would probably be personal hygiene and one hour might
include miscellaneous household or recreational activities.

Next, divide the circle labeled “Where Should I Invest My Time?” into pieces that represent how you feel you should be spending each day, based on your newly defined goals and priorities. This exercise will pinpoint, in more precise terms, exactly what adjustments must be made to maximize your number one resource and most irreplaceable asset: time.

You may be dismayed at first by how different the two pie charts are from each other. But don’t despair! As you repeat this exercise at regular intervals in the coming weeks and months, you’ll gradually close the gap between these two circles, as if building a bridge between two islands. As you grow more comfortable using the pie charts as a feedback mechanism, the two circles should start to look more and more alike. Be sure to set expectations with others as to when, how, and what constitutes an acceptable interruption.

Involve them in the process of making you, and ultimately themselves, more effective.

An old Irish Prayer hanging in my office reminds me that a balanced approach to time investment yields the greatest dividends:

- Take time to work, it is the price of success
- Take time to think, it is the source of power
- Take time to play, it is the secret of perpetual youth
- Take time to read, it is the foundation of wisdom
- Take time to be friendly, it is the road to happiness
- Take time to love and be loved, it is the privilege of the gods
- Take time to share, life is too short to be selfish
- Take time to laugh, laughter is the mask of the soul.

— Irish Prayer
Proactively setting aside time for what’s important is the only way to actually get down to the business of life achievement and gain a new understanding of where you need to invest your most precious asset—your time.

**SURVIVAL TOOL #5: Preparation • Achievement • Revitalization System**

Over the past 20 years, Americans have increased the number of hours spent at work, while cutting back on time devoted to leisure pursuits. In 1975, an average work week was 43 hours and leisure time was 24.5 hours. Twenty years later, the work week average increased to over 50 hours while leisure time was reduced to 19 hours.

A few decades ago, people’s success levels were often measured by how much leisure time they had. Going on holidays was a status symbol. The month of August was nearly always taken off, a tradition that is still largely intact today in several European countries. People used to wash their hair once every week; now many make it a daily routine. Many kids and adults are on a treadmill called “what’s next?”, never living in or aware of the precious nature of the ‘moment.’ The goal seems to be simple enough — get the maximum amount of stuff done faster.

Research has shown that there is a better way. To counteract the tendency of most people to operate in a crisis management, urgency-based, reactive mode, the Preparation-Achievement-Revitalization (PAR) system instructs individuals to separate and prioritize activities according to the type of activity. By segmenting each day into preparation and achievement chunks, and scheduling full days of revitalization, the high-achieving individual begins to perform at much higher levels of productivity and effectiveness while also increasing their levels of rest, revitalization, and creativity. The result: a much higher quality of life and quantity of time to devote to enjoying life.
Life achievement is largely based on momentum. Taking the time to plan your time wisely—utilizing the PAR system—leads to productive, effective professional results and fulfilling, balanced personal outcomes. The PAR system utilizes a 24-hour biological clock, with allocation of days planned in advance. The PAR categories are as follows:

**Preparation Chunks:**
At least a two- to four-hour chunk of time devoted to handling paperwork, answering emails, details, and activities that are necessary to clear the mind or reduce mind traffic. Preparation chunks and revitalization days set up better achievement chunks.

**Achievement Chunks:**
At least a two- to four-hour chunk of time devoted to your top three priorities with a special focus on financial results and the creation and growth of key relationships. These relationships are likely to translate into measurable monetary enhancement over the next 90 days or play a significant role in enhancing greater peace of mind. During Achievement Chunks, the ultimate goal is that up to 80 percent of the high-performing individual’s day is focused on accomplishing the top three priorities.

**Revitalization Days:**
Revitalization days are totally free from moneymaking activities. They are designed for complete rejuvenation and carefree pursuits. Research has shown that one day completely free from work-related responsibilities produces several times the quality of rest that mixing partial rest with work-related activities in the same 24-hour period does. This positive effect is multiplied further with consecutive revitalization days.

Who would you rather do business with or work with? A fragmented, somewhat disheveled person who looks exhausted or a fresh, clear thinking,
enthusiastic one? Well, we are not machines. The human biology demands time to replenish. If you don’t make time for this as you go, your body will ultimately tell you that it’s time to do so or worse, have to overcome a serious illness. The Japanese actually have a name for death by overworking.

The law of attraction is very real. Strength attracts strength and is repelled by weakness. Some anthropologists believe this trait is in our genes from many thousands of years ago when, if a tribal member was injured in a hunt, he most often was isolated in the cave and starved to death. People want to be around healthy, successful people. So, revitalization isn’t a nice-to-have, it’s a must-have.

Studies show that revitalization plays a critical part in achievement. The average person can experience what’s called the “revitalization effect.” Every time we get totally away (and the key word is totally) from money-generating activities, the average person experiences eight to 14 days of high clarity and achievement upon return. Think about it … after you’ve been able to get away for an adequate period of time (which varies based on level of exhaustion before leaving, stress hardiness, personality, and temperament, etc.) you come back clearer, calmer, and able to focus more on truly important things. The same feelings you had about people, circumstances, and events before you left somehow shift to a more levelheaded, less stressful place.

The typical high-achieving person operates at 25 to 40 percent effectiveness during the typical day without revitalizing. After revitalizing, that range goes up to 35 to 80 percent effectiveness. The bottom line is that with revitalization, your effectiveness, clarity, focus, and ability to relate to others almost doubles. So, would you rather work the basic 220 days per year with minimum days off and operate at low productivity or work 180 days and double your output? The case for time away has been scientifically validated, but most people still
hang on to harder, faster, longer. Some of my clients are shocked that I actually recommend that they take eight or more weeks of vacation a year. However, their results speak for themselves. The cumulative positive effects of revitalization infuse their personal and professional lives with greater energy, creativity, and work output.

SURVIVAL TOOL #6: STRATEGIC DECISION FILTER

According to Inc. Magazine and the American Management Association, eight out of 10 new companies fail and go out of business within two years. Of the remaining two, one will fade away before the third year anniversary. Only one in 600 will grow to $10 million in revenues and less than one in 1000 ever hit $50 million in revenues. There are lots of opinions as to why the probabilities for success are so low.

Every enterprise needs to clarify, align, and manage people, processes, and technology. Decisions that are made purposefully and by default in these critical three areas have an inordinate impact on success, growth, and/or failure.

One of the most important keys to starting and running a thriving organization has to do with managing conflicting priorities. This is manifested in decision making. The average professional makes over 1,327 decisions per day in their waking hours. The vast majority of these are made at the unconscious level. But when we actually notice those that need to be made, it is there that competitive advantage is either made or buried.

Decision making has a lot to do with wisdom. Wisdom is doing the right things in the right ways, with the right people, at the right times, and for the right reasons. Wisdom is a function of decision making. Because professionals’ and entrepreneurs’ futures depend on their ability to make good and wise decisions, I have explored this area in some detail.

A great tool to help you manage conflicting priorities in a hurry follows. I call
this tool a Strategic Decision Filter. I’ve adapted it from the work of Dr. David Maister of Harvard. The purpose of this tool is to help decision makers quickly scan the nine scenario filters below, select the top three or four that are most important, and then use them to make critical decisions that have to do with strategic alliances, new products or services, how to grow the firm, etc. These filters help the decision maker prioritize, clarify, and select the principle drivers that underlie every significant decision a firm makes.

Select the top three or four filters based on your desired outcomes, and then create a plan for evaluating, implementing, tracking, and changing as necessary, those that are most important. Decision analysis, an offshoot of statistics, can get extremely complex. One of the things I really like about the Strategic Decision Filter is its simplicity and common sense effectiveness.

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<tr>
<th>STRATEGIC DECISION FILTER</th>
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<td>Most likely to occur</td>
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<td>Quickest impact</td>
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<td>Most permanent impact</td>
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<td>Least disruptive to existing operations</td>
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<td>Most visible to key stakeholders</td>
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<td>Quickest payback</td>
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<td>Least up front costs</td>
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<td>Easiest to implement</td>
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SURVIVAL TOOL #7: TRIPLE A’S:
ACTIONS, ASSIGNMENTS, AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Another critical tool in your Executive Survival Kit is the Triple A’s List.

Every person in the organization has their own way of keeping track of critical actions, projects, initiatives, or to-do’s. Some do it with computers, some manually, some are organized, and many are not. That’s part of the problem, there’s no process for keeping track of and discerning what’s most important to get done, day-to-day, week-to-week, quarter-to-quarter.

So to begin with, everyone needs to be able to communicate precisely over time. Each firm needs to be sure everyone knows the key terms, phrases, and definitions for every key concept or tool. Just as every organization or group of people will create their own operating culture, they will also create their own dictionaries, vocabulary and nomenclature. These things are critical to the success of any organization and should be driven by leadership and not allowed to just happen. Nature abhors a void. Entropy will emerge in nature but firms tend to move with greater alacrity if they are purposefully led.

Execution is everything. You can take a decent idea and implement it well and wind up with a success. Yes, strategies are crucial but tools that can simplify and improve individual and joint execution are at least as important. This is arguably the greatest failing of small firms — the inability to create, track, and modify critical processes. As firms grow, they tend to have too many processes. Every organization has about 12 to 20 processes that need to be mapped out — put into critical paths and improved. But, if you want to accelerate output, you need a process for capturing crucial follow-up actions.

Triple A’s are a list of prioritized actions, projects, and follow-up items that everyone in the firm has. Each person’s list should be different. All that’s involved in Triple A’s is listing the item or action first. A date for completion or milestone accomplishment is
then put down in writing next to it. That’s it. Never split the accountability for a project in two, having co-partners.

**ADDITIONAL TIPS FROM THE EXECUTIVE SURVIVAL KIT**

Today most meetings are a waste of time. People don’t look forward to them. Entrepreneurs tend to do them on the fly and that means communication and accountability is nowhere near where they could or should be. Most meetings are used as deadlines to complete work product. Too many are actually used to get work done.

But meetings are crucial. Assigning an individual to be responsible for creating an agenda, soliciting the input from those involved, and sticking to the agenda is key.

There are five kinds of meetings:
1. Informational
2. Status, how are we doing?
3. Problem solving
4. Decision making
5. Combinations of the above.

To improve effectiveness, begin to use meetings more strategically. Determine in advance what the objectives are, what outcomes are expected, have an agenda, and stay on track by knowing how decisions will be made.

Imagine how good your meetings can be if you used the tools discussed in this white paper. Ask, How’s your focus? (Using the focus chart). What percentage of your time should be spent where in an average week? (Using the Time Usage Charts). You determine alignment; identify roadblocks, and ways of dealing with them. If a conflicting priority comes up, use your Decision Making Filters and always, always review Triple A’s.

I also very strongly recommend that you schedule frequent, *in person* meetings with a professional coach, mentor, or friend as you work your way through the tools. Admittedly, it’s possible to significantly improve or even partially remake your life simply by reading this white paper in isolation and completing the series of tasks.
it specifies. However, my work with organizations, teams, and individual clients has repeatedly shown me that sustained interaction with an interested person is an amazingly powerful tool for bringing about deep, long-lasting personal growth and behavioral change.

Even if you don’t choose to hire an official effectiveness coach, many other opportunities for interactive learning are open to you. For instance, you might enlist the services of someone you respect who is committed to goal setting and self-improvement and willing to put aside time for regular meetings with you. This person might be a teacher, psychologist, religious leader, successful relative, or perhaps someone who has already served as your mentor in a workplace setting. Alternately, you and a like-minded friend or colleague can agree to complete the program together, trading encouragement, feedback, and insights every step of the way.

The advantages of working with someone else are many, varied, and not to be underestimated. They include:

- A heightened sense of accountability. It’s infinitely easier to stay motivated and steer clear of procrastination when you know that someone else whose opinion you value is watching.

- Reliable access to constructive criticism and honest feedback from someone whose insights and perspective you trust.

- Increased opportunity to discuss emotionally charged issues and talk through key decisions as they arise.

And believe me, they do arise!

Ultimately, of course, the decisions you make about how seriously to integrate these tools into your life are up to you. They offer nothing less than an opportunity to redesign or reinvent yourself according to your own highly personalized specifications.
These same principles apply to teams and organizations. A firm’s leadership (no matter how few in number) must set aside the time for strategic thinking and the creation and execution of an operational road map. In my experience, if a business venture doesn’t exhibit the discipline and willingness to conduct “breakaway sessions” on a regular basis, they’re almost always destined for failure. Further, they must make it a top priority to implement productivity tools to ensure timely and consistent progress and course correction.

Breakaway sessions are times when the firm’s leadership gathers away from the office to focus on what people should start doing, stop doing, change, or do in a different way. These sessions must involve an experienced facilitator or consultant who holds the group accountable for making decisions and creating plans for executing priorities.

In our Strategic Execution Program, we are often asked what’s the one key to growing a successful enterprise? My answer is always C+C=C+A. Clarity (on the who’s, what’s, where’s, when’s, and why’s) combined with Communication, both quality and quantity leads to Commitment on the individual level, both head and heart, and Alignment on the group level, where everyone’s pulling together and accelerating output.

The more you ask of the future, the more opportunities it will actually provide for you and the people and organizations
you care about. As John Scully, former CEO of Apple Computer and PepsiCo once said, “The best way to predict the future is to invent it.” Your future is in your hands. Good luck and enjoy the personal odyssey you’re about to begin.
STRATEGIC EXECUTION

Each year, organizations invest enormous resources on planning and developing elaborate systems, processes, and procedures that are well intentioned but fail during the implementation phase. In spite of best efforts, organizations become reactive and bogged down in “people problems.” Management spends more and more time being internally focused instead of externally focused on customers, opportunities, and competitors. Individuals exhibit “mushy thinking” and are not focused on true priorities that lead to tangible results. This situation makes it more and more difficult to forecast accurately.

Business journalists report that many firms are caught off guard, never achieve traction, or simply miss the mark for a variety of preventable reasons. Too often, businesses with truly viable market opportunities fail to get off the ground or falter as the firm moves from one stage of growth to another. A significant number of enterprises never rise above mediocrity or, just as often, wind up over promising and then under-delivering to their stakeholders.

The principal reason for these business failures has more to do with poor execution than a lack of strategic direction. Research shows that high-achieving teams are focused on execution, not theoretical construct. Strategic planning is great, but execution is really everything.

The Dudeck Group’s Strategic Execution Program (SEP) is a customized process that provides clarity, accountability, and positive momentum for an entire organization. It forces the firm’s brain trust, the executive team, to take periodic, much needed, purposeful, and productive “time outs” to focus on the most important strategic and operational priorities. This is something organizations and individuals often overlook while immersed in everyday business activities.

By working through the Strategic Execution process with the executive team, SEP leaders identify the organization’s true
priorities and most compelling opportunities. Once objectives are established, an “executable vision” is created along with the specific actions that each member of the executive team will take over the next quarter. Achievement of these objectives leads to stability, growth, and a sustainable competitive advantage.

The initial two-day session generates immediate impact, momentum, and marked improvements to daily problem solving while it also recaptures excitement and confidence about the organization’s future strategic direction and prospects for growth.

**STRATEGIC EXECUTION**

**PROGRAM FORMAT AND METHODOLOGY**

The Strategic Execution Program begins with a two-day offsite, supplemented by four, one-day follow-up sessions that are held quarterly. At the initial session, the executive team will reach consensus on the who, what, where, when, how and why’s of the existing and future business as well as their individual roles. All sessions are expertly facilitated and highly interactive. The process emphasizes actions and execution rather than the creation of yet another overly complex plan that gathers dust.

Top executives will focus on the 10 most important strategic and operational considerations that every business has in common. Each of these 10 factors are evaluated, prioritized, and projected over five years, along with their corresponding key result areas. As mentioned, the 10 factors are forecasted over the next five years, hence the name “10 X 5.” In order to ensure a customized experience, each participating executive fills out simple but comprehensive surveys in advance. These survey answers, along with those attained during sessions, are synthesized into an actionable, coherent matrix with specific numbers, responsibilities, actions, and time frames attached to the completion of each item. The 10 X 5 matrix becomes the heart of...
of a plan of action that is then followed and implemented over the next 12 months and beyond. The process results in simplicity and a clear articulation of what needs to be done, how, by whom, and when.

Each quarter, key executives reassemble to discuss achievements and specific action items while they reformulate their top priorities for the next three months. The SEP process provides a method of measuring, monitoring, and adjusting individual and collective performance while highlighting the “vital signs” for timely diagnosis and real-time adjustment. The process emphasizes the use of the Executive Survival Kit, a set of simple but profound tools that produce practical, implementable solutions. Some of the tools contained in the Executive Survival Kit have been highlighted in this white paper.

Throughout the program, participants are exposed to a variety of concepts, tools, models, and surveys that are customized for the organization’s industry, culture, executive team profiles, and competitive circumstances. Having four quarterly follow-up sessions show the team and the organization that leadership is serious about and truly committed to excellence. It also accelerates the creation of positive results while increasing the alignment, momentum, and productive output of the executive team.

Overall, Strategic Execution dramatically increases an organization’s probabilities for achieving success. The Strategic Execution process has been painstakingly developed, finely honed, and delivered to over 300 firms in the Silicon Valley and throughout the United States.

STRATEGIC EXECUTION PROGRAM BENEFITS

Roadmap for Success

- Builds consensus around strategies, time frames, priorities, goals, measurements, assignments, and accountability
BUILDING THE ULTIMATE BUSINESS ADVANTAGE

- Provides a method of implementing and following up on critical operational and strategic priorities
- Simplifies and de-mystifies the complexities and constraints of the existing business model
- Produces practical, “implementable” solutions that are customized for the industry, culture, and competitive circumstances

Executive and Organizational Effectiveness
- Defines executive roles, responsibilities, and day-to-day priorities and improves ability to manage effectively in the long and short term
- Solidifies the right values as displayed by key executives and the organization
- Increases shared sense of urgency and improves commitment to teamwork
- Fosters executives who think strategically, execute purposefully, avoid reactive behaviors, manage with clarity, minimize second-guessing, and praise confidently

Functional Excellence and Employee Productivity
- Assists in finding, attracting, and retaining the right people
- Shifts operating culture from a defensive to an offensive mindset
- Minimizes distractions, wasted time, and resources by enhancing the individual and collective focus of the executive team and ultimately, the organization
- Creates a tight framework and system for accelerating growth and measuring progress for CEO and executive team use
- Enhances the revenue stream and profit margins by increasing quality and quantity of productive output
Revenues, Profitability, and Growth

- Improves the revenue stream and profit margins through focused energy on key objectives
- Allows the organization to capture and act on the best ideas … low hanging fruit
- Identifies gaps or deficiencies in the service delivery process, organizational structure, business model, and strategies
BIOGRAPHY OF JOHN DUDECK

John Dudeck is President and CEO of The Dudeck Group, a firm that provides Strategic Execution Programs for high-achieving individuals and teams. Mr. Dudeck is a prolific author and lecturer on personal and professional effectiveness. His national reputation as a thought leader exists because he combines rigorous theoretical and conceptual frameworks with highly practical, “implementable,” solution-based thinking.

His unprecedented review and synthesis of thousands of scientific studies, journals, articles, books, and tapes on human performance forms the basis for his acclaimed consulting services. Mr. Dudeck’s own stellar track record of success in business along with his experience coaching a number of Silicon Valley’s most influential CEOs, entrepreneurs, and top-performing teams make him an increasingly sought-after consultant. Mr. Dudeck is the author of two upcoming books based on his research findings in the area of human performance and consulting programs.

In 1995, Mr. Dudeck founded a nonprofit 501(c)(3) educational organization, How To Get An “A” In Life, Inc., to provide teenagers with life skills and leadership training. The program has received a nomination for the Thousand Points of Light Award through The White House. He was also awarded Humanitarian of the Year in 1997 by the Silicon Valley Athletic Club.

Mr. Dudeck has appeared on NBC, ABC, and affiliates, has conducted numerous radio interviews, and has been quoted and interviewed in a variety of publications including The Chicago Tribune, Los Angeles Times, San Jose Mercury News, and The Wall Street Journal. He has conducted seminars and provided keynotes at the Stanford Graduate School of Business, University of California at Berkeley, various financial services, organizations, and associations, the 1997 Peach Bowl, and many others.


The Commercial Investment Real Estate Journal named Mr. Dudeck one of the Top 10 professionals in commercial real estate in the U.S. He was also the youngest person in CB Commercial history to make the Top Twenty List.

Mr. Dudeck holds a B.S. degree in Public Administration from Indiana University and holds certificates from Stanford University.