

## *We're Working On the Wrong End of the Problem!*

*"The illiterate of the 21<sup>st</sup> century will not be those who cannot read and write, but those who cannot learn, unlearn and relearn."*

— Alvin Toffler, *Futurist*

Today, like never before... you must be open to change to be successful. You and your organization must constantly change and evolve to survive. You've heard it...we face more change in a year than our grandparents faced in a lifetime. For us that means Technology, Customers, Markets and Competitors.

HOWEVER; most people (even entrepreneurs) choose death over change.

In *Change or Die*, Alan Deutschman asks, "What if you were given that choice? We're talking actual life and death now. Your own life and death. What if a well-informed, trusted authority figure said you had to make difficult and enduring changes in the way you think, feel and act? If you didn't, your time would end soon – a lot sooner than it had to. Could you change when change mattered most?"

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*Are You Challenging Success?*

## *Discover Why Great Leaders Challenge Success*

As you look at why people and companies are successful, you quickly realize that they question everything.

— WHY? —

If you don't know why you are successful, and what helped you to get there, you may be doomed for failure.

Great leaders know this fact and constantly question, challenge, test, and duplicate their successes.

**Here are some tips to help you become more successful:**

- **Conduct Customer Surveys and Group Meetings.** Implement an annual or bi-annual survey of your customers and find out what they like, what they don't like, and what you can improve. Another effective way to illicit this information is to have meetings with your customers and brainstorm ways to improve. (Think about what Ford did with the Taurus. The vehicle was a direct result of consumer's suggestions). Pay close attention to the customers that are unhappy. Let them speak about what they would like to see improved. Then fix it. Whenever possible, allow employees and key personnel to be present.
- **Conduct an External Assessment of the Competition.** Take a look at what they offer and what improvements they are making. Ask your staff:
  - Who are our competitors?
  - Are they better?
  - Why are they better?

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### **Inside This Issue**

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2. *Discover Why Great Leaders Challenge Success*
3. *Ask the Coach*
4. *Tips to Make this the Best Year Ever!*

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- Are we better?
  - Do they have a bigger share of the market?
  - Why?
  - How can we improve to become better than our competitors?
  - Who can put us out of business?
- **Conduct an Internal Assessment.** Survey your employees and find out what improvement(s) they think you should make. (Internally and externally) Have them brainstorm ideas for improvements. You may be surprised at the suggestions and ideas that your own employees have. Another key to making this effective is to make sure you respond to the suggestions.
  - **Accept and Prepare for Change.** The only constant today is change. Create a culture within your company to embrace change and anticipate future changes.
    - Is your market place changing?
    - Any new products being introduced that is a direct competitor to you?
    - Any new competitors entering your arena?
    - Will new technology affect your product/service?



The best leaders are those who are not satisfied with complacency. Encourage everyone in your organization to keep informed in your industry and be prepared to make the necessary changes to get and stay on top.

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*Capital isn't that important in business. Experience isn't that important. You can get both of these things. What is important is ideas.*

— Harvey S. Firestone

## Ask the Coach –

### *I often find Myself Overcommitted. What can I do Differently?*

“Overcommitted” is an interesting term I hear often. Use of the term and your underlying assumptions may be a problem. The verb “commit” means “to obligate or pledge oneself,” so you may have pledged your time and energy too broadly. You are likely involved in a number of activities and roles at work, at school, in the community, and at home. You probably struggle “finding the time” and energy to keep your obligations. But are you really committed?



Reconsider the concept of commitment. Are you over-committed or are you under-committed? Over-commitment is an oxymoron. Too many “obligations” creates a watering-down effect, so none of them receive your true commitment. How might your problem look differently if you considered that you may really be under-committed to your real priorities? What new solutions does this shift in thinking generate?

If you find it difficult to say “no” or have ever used the phrase “I didn’t have time” you may be under-committing; worse, you may be blaming the clock or your other roles.

What is important to you?

What opportunities do you have that relate closely to your core goals and purpose?

Have you prioritized your opportunities before obligating yourself? “Over-committed” people prioritize their schedules. The person of integrity schedules his or her priorities. Consider this critical distinction before you make promises in the future.

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*There is no use worrying about things over which you have no control, and if you have control, you can do something about them instead of worrying.*

— Stanley C. Allyn

Continued from page one – **Problem**

**THE BAD NEWS:** Although we all have the ability to change our behavior, we rarely do. Research shows odds of nine to one...when faced with the dire need to change, we won't. How many of you made, and stuck to, a New Year's resolution? We are 30 days into the New Year...how's it going? Will you make it through the month? The odds are not in your favor.

**Insanity** – doing the same thing and expecting different results. We KNOW we should change, but habits, attitudes and behaviors make us regular practitioners of insanity. What is the answer for businesses, entrepreneurs and professionals, wanting to create and maintain a competitive edge? John Kotter, recognized leadership expert says, *"The central issue is never strategy, structure, culture, or systems. The core of the matter is always about changing the behavior of people."*



There you have it. To change your results, you must change your own and others' actions.

**THE GOOD NEWS:** Change is possible and the formula includes common ingredients. So what's the secret to significant, sustainable change? It's not tough to do, just tough to maintain.

Deutschman's Relationship, Repeat and Reframe model includes: Building relationships with someone or a group that believes in you and that you trust. Utilizing the new relationship(s) to learn, practice and master new success habits and skills. And, through the new relationships and repetition, beginning to look at things in ways that would have been foreign to you before.

**To HAVE you must first BECOME.** Rarely do people consider what they have to change about themselves to meet their goals. To have a six-figure income – become a person with skills and capabilities worth someone paying you that amount. For a great relationship with spouse and children – become someone they see as worthy of the relationship. To have a single digit golf handicap – become a golfer with the skills, discipline, and attitude required for that level of play.

If, when faced with death, only 10% of people will make sustainable change, how can organizations hope to make change stick? Too many people look for a fast fix. Change is a process, not an event. The best thing you can do is become someone who learns, unlearns and relearns...faster than your competition.

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*How far you go in life depends on your being tender with the young, compassionate with the aged, sympathetic with the striving and tolerant of the weak and strong. Because someday in life you will have been all of these.*

– George Washington Carver



# ONE MINUTE IDEAS

## Follow The Money –

Americans can get a better look at their federal tax dollars at work on a new Web site that debuted in January 2008.

Assembled by the White House, the web site, [www.usaspending.gov](http://www.usaspending.gov), lets taxpayers see who gets about \$1 trillion in government contracts and grants. It's searchable by recipient and by congressional district and has a place for users to 'sound off' with their comments.

It's a small but important step toward greater transparency in government, which can only help deter waste and abuse.

Check it out at:

[www.usaspending.gov](http://www.usaspending.gov)



*As a manager the important thing is not what happens when you are there, but what happens when you are not there.*

– Anonymous

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Professionals”*

## *Tips To Make This Year The Best Ever!*

### **Create a vision for your company**

A vision statement crystallizes what you want your company to look like in the future. It is a clear image of the end result. (Even though you may never really have an end)

### **Create a vision for yourself**

Describe your future the way you would like it to be. Avoid slipping into the negative of what you think your future may really be. Allow yourself to dream big. Now write it down!

### **Set personal and professional goals**

Set goals that will take you closer to your vision statements. Start with only 4 or 5 goals for each personal and professional vision statement. Make sure each goal is necessary and sufficient. Also, each goal needs to be **SMART**: Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistically high, and Time bound. And again, *write it down!*

### **Have fun**

I have never heard anyone laying on their death bed saying: "I wish I would have worked more." Take time for yourself, family, and friends. Enjoy life!

*"Nothing was ever achieved without dreams, goals, and actions!"*

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