THE *POWER* OF
FOLLOWERSHIP

Volume 1

How to enhance your ability to consistently produce excellent results that add greater value to your boss.

EDWARD J. MURPHY

Founder of The Effectiveness Institute

WHAT OTHERS SAY
ABOUT THIS PLAYBOOK

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"I highly recommend the playbooks from The Effectiveness Institute as required texts for new leaders and a review for seasoned leaders - as a reminder of what they should be doing. These playbooks are unique because they're replete with valuable information that you can learn today and use tomorrow. If you want to become more effective and essential to your boss, these playbooks are for you."

- Dennis D. Cavin
Lieutenant General, US Army (Retired)
Vice President Army Missile Defense Programs
Lockheed Martin, Corporate Business Development

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"I recommend these playbooks because Ed doesn't theorize; he draws on his extensive experience from many years of service in the US Military and from working as an Executive Coach in Corporate America. His keen insights and practical advice make his playbooks required reading for anyone trying to consistently produce excellent results and add greater value to those who helped produce those results.

- Lee Lacy
Assistant Professor
US Army Warfighter Program
Command and General Staff College

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"The playbooks from The Effectiveness Institute will help you become more effective at work and in life. They will also help you unlock your potential and direct your team to greater success. I highly recommend these playbooks."

- Lance Revo
Principal Engineering Design Specialist
Cyber Security at AREVA NP

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INTRODUCTION

*"Followership is a discipline of supporting
leaders and helping them to lead well."
- Reverend Paul Beedle*

This Playbook is about **FOLLOWERSHIP**!

**Followership is your ability to consistently produce excellent
results and add greater value to those who helped
produce those results-especially your boss.**

Followership is also one of these eleven Core Competencies of your
effectiveness and success at work and in life.

*Followership, Delegating, Planning, Organizing, Communicating,
Problem-Solving, Decision-Making, Awareness, Training,
Motivating and Character.*

This Playbook is for everyone in the workforce who reports to another person for
their work assignments. This includes employees working for an employer and
small business owners, entrepreneurs, and the self-employed working for
customers, clients, or patients.

*Simply stated, this Playbook is for you regardless of
your occupation, position, or level of authority.*

You may not realize that of all the core competencies, *Followership* is the most
important component of your effectiveness and success at work.

If you fail to add value to your boss, follow his instructions, or meet his
expectations, well, you can guess the consequences.

To become more effective, you'll need to be thinking one or two steps ahead of
your boss to anticipate, see around corners, smell out mistakes before they
become problems, and catch problems before they become a crisis.

Many *Followers* don't understand how to contribute to their boss's meetings,
provide feedback, or *take-charge* to resolve problems, achieve goals, or conduct
activities and projects.

They're also clueless when it comes to uncovering hidden expectations,
managing risk by conducting a risk assessment, anticipating unintended
consequences, 2d and 3d order effects, or collaborating to build consensus with a
team - all of which are addressed in this Playbook.

Without these abilities, you'll be wasting your career sitting on the sidelines, watching others move ahead while wondering why?

Also, if you're uncomfortable being a follower, get over it, and realize that:

You'll always be working for a boss - whoever pays you for your products or services.

You'll always be a follower of someone - whoever pays you for your work.

I speak from 24 years as a US Army Officer and 20 years as an Executive Coach in Corporate America in Seattle, San Diego, Kansas City, and Phoenix.

As an Executive Coach, I was blessed to work with some of America's most successful men and women, including hundreds of business executives, teams, and small business owners.

I documented what they said, did, how they did it, what worked and what didn't. But, most importantly, I documented how they made people feel.

As a result, I learned that the most effective and successful people stood out because they were able to do these two things better than anyone else:

First, to consistently produce excellent results.

Second, to add value to those who helped produce those results.

This Playbook will enhance your ability to do both.

The fact is that you may be the top producer, but if you haven't added value to those who helped you, especially your boss, you'll never become effective or successful, period.

What new skills or abilities have you acquired in the last twelve months? What contributions have you made to your current position since this time last year?

And, most of all, what are you doing about it?

This Playbook is unique because it:

Gives you the most actionable tactics, techniques, and tools needed to consistently produce excellent results, which is why it's called a Playbook.

Teaches you the best practices used every day by the most effective and successful people in their field, which you were never taught in school.

Provides you with step-by-step instructions explaining what and how things should be done that you won't find anywhere in academia or Corporate America to help you maximize your true potential.

Contains everything you want to know about *Followership*, plus everything you didn't realize you need to know about how *Followership* enhances your effectiveness and success in business.

This Playbook is my way of "*paying it forward*" to you and all those I leave behind, something I never had. May it serve you well!

I know that by learning, using, and sharing the best practices found here, you'll be well on your way to becoming more effective and successful.

Remember, no matter how good you think you are, you can always be better.

So, what are you waiting for? You have too much to lose by not taking a more active role in your Professional Development.

When you're ready to *elevate-your-game* to the next level, join us on this incredible *Journey of Discovery*.

Also, if you feel this information could help someone else, please let them know. If it turns out to make a difference in their life, they'll be forever grateful to you, as will I.

Never STOP Learning!

Ed

Founder of *The Effectiveness Institute*
email: ed.murphy77@gmail.com

Stop wishing you were better and do something about it today!

1

THE POWER OF
FOLLOWERSHIP

*"Followership, like leadership, is a role
and not a destination."
- Michael McKinney*

This Paybook will give you a far better understanding of *Followership*, its definition, importance, and how to enhance it.

**Followership is your ability to consistently produce
excellent results and add greater value to those who helped
you produce those results-especially your boss.**

Followership is your ability to take direction well, get behind a goal, be part of a team, and deliver what's expected. The effectiveness of a follower is as important to the team's success as the effectiveness of the boss.

Here, you'll learn how to use the most actionable *tactics, techniques, and tools* needed to Master the Art of *Followership* and add greater value to your boss than ever before. As an executive coach for over 20 years, I know what your boss and customers expect, especially when it comes to your effectiveness and success at work.

Effective people know that their *Followership* is critical to their effectiveness and success at work. By learning, using, and sharing these *best practices*, you'll be well on your way to becoming the person who adds the greatest value to your team - making you essential.

Also, to make this Playbook easier to understand, I'll be using the term "boss" instead of leader, employer, or customer. I do this because if you're an employee, your boss is your employer. And if you're self-employed or a small business owner, your boss is your customer, client, or patient.

So, let's get to work!

Leadership and *Followership* have always been inextricably linked because one cannot be effective or successful without the other?

You can't be a leader without simultaneously being a follower of someone.

The history of America is replete with examples of people who were wise enough, smart enough, and driven enough to realize their shortcomings and seek out and hire the best and the brightest followers they could find to help them become more effective, successful, and rich.

To become a more effective follower, it helps to understand your boss's roles, stresses, and responsibilities. You'll often need to be thinking one or two steps ahead of your boss to anticipate, see around corners, smell out mistakes before they become problems, and catch problems before they become a crisis. That's what gives followers their value - their credibility.

What's the difference between followership and leadership?

Followers drive tactical success, and bosses propel strategic accomplishments.

Effective people not only get things done but also support the company. They make the goals and vision of their bosses a reality and add creative input to improve things. Therefore, it's in your best interest to master the *Art of Followership,* which will make you an invaluable team player.

Which is more important: Leadership or Followership?

In my view, *Followership* is far more important because:

Most people don't want to be or will never be selected as a boss. Most people are quite happy working on staff somewhere.

You don't get to choose your position, title, or level of authority. Your boss does that. Instead, focus your time and energy on becoming the best follower you can be because that's what your boss expects and pays you to do.

Everyone can be an informal leader exerting considerable influence behind the scenes. However, you don't need power or authority to consistently produce excellent results.

BY KNOWING WHAT

COMPANIES NEED TO SURVIVE

"It is the men behind who make the man ahead."
- Merle Crowell.

Have you ever tried to figure out what was most important and what wasn't, especially when there were too many things to do and too few people and hours in the day to get it all done?

As an Executive Coach, I often asked senior executives, *"What matters most to the survival of your company?"*

The first answer I normally got was *People*. And people are an important resource, but not the most important resource. Just quit your job and see how quickly you'll be replaced. Some said *Technology*, which is important, but again, not the most important. So, what really matters most?

The only people who don't struggle with this question are the self-employed and Small Business Owners. These guys get it.

They'll tell you that the most important thing to any company is Positive Cash Flow (or PCF).

The company can't pay their people without PCF, and they're soon out-of-business - game over! According to the Small Business Administration, this is the reason 80% of start-ups fail within their first three years.

But what about your business unit? If you can link what you do for your company's *PCF* and how it has improved or achieved better results, your business unit is *essential* to your company.

In the same vein, if you can't be directly linked to one or more of the activities that generate *PCF*, you could be considered *non-essential* and therefore *expendable* - not a place you want to stay for long. So, what activities generate *Positive Cash Flow?*

What activities generate Positive Cash Flow?

Increase Revenues: To increase revenues involves those in sales, marketing, sales support, business development, or strategic development. For example, can you find new and innovative ways to sell more products or services, like bringing in new customers, selling more to the same customers, discovering

new uses for old products, and finding new ways to bring more money in the door? This is how revenues are increased.

Decrease Operating Costs: To decrease operating costs, or save money, is everyone's job. Can you find and recommend new and innovative ways to reduce costs like consolidating, eliminating, cost-sharing, getting a better price from a supplier, conserving, saving time, or being more effective, efficient, and consistent? This is how Operating Costs are decreased.

Better use of available resources: Everyone's job is to better use the resources they already have. Can you find new and innovative ways to better use the resources your company already has, like streamlining, eliminating redundancies, consolidating, conserving, waste reduction, process improvement, reducing the time required, becoming more efficient, doing more with less, better-maintaining equipment and vehicles to extend their service life, and finding quicker or easier ways of doing things? How much money or time could be saved annually? This is how to better use the resources of your company, which saves money.

Protect the company by anticipating problems today to save money tomorrow: Anticipating problems today to save money tomorrow is also everyone's job. Since lawsuits are expensive, can you find ways to anticipate problems today to save money tomorrow, like creating important policies and procedures, creating better contracts, ensuring the right insurance is in force, ensuring compliance with outside agencies, creating better physical and cybersecurity procedures, creating better property accountability procedures, or eliminating unsafe conditions? This is what saves money tomorrow by anticipating problems today.

What matters most to Private-Sector Companies?

The *Private-Sector* is part of the economy owned by private groups and is created to generate a profit. Their focus is on *Positive Cash Flow,* so they don't go out of business. It employs workers through individual business owners, corporations, or other non-government agencies. This includes companies like Microsoft, financial services, law firms, newspapers, aviation, hospitality, or other non-government entities that maximize profitability.

What matters most to Public-Sector Organizations?

The *Public-Sector* is the part of the economy, which provides a service to the public to help improve their quality of life, livelihood, and the betterment of the community, rather than profit generation.

However, their focus is also on *Positive Cash Flow,* so they can continue to receive the funding needed to pay their employees. This includes organizations like public schools, the military, police, fire, and public works.

Funding for some organizations comes from city, state, and federal tax revenues. Others receive funding through grants or donations. Regardless, all *Public-Sector* Organizations must maintain *PCF* to continue to operate.

> The bottom-line is that Positive Cash Flow is the lifeblood of all businesses regardless of their sector.

To learn more about how to measure and assess members, team, and system performance, see Chapter 34.

BY KNOWING WHAT
BOSSES NEED TO SURVIVE

"It takes half your life before you discover
life is a do-it-yourself project."
- Napoleon Hill

Every boss needs effective followers who can solve problems and achieve goals. And any effective follower knows how to turn any assignment (a problem, goal, event, or activity) into a simple project and manage that project to completion.

As far as your boss is concerned, your effectiveness or value-added is a function of your ability to manage projects. And you don't need to be a *certified project manager* to manage projects successfully. All you need is a basic understanding of a few tactics, techniques, and tools, which you'll learn here.

The better you get at managing projects, the more value you bring to your boss. And for every project, you'll encounter obstacles along the way. All you need to do is to convert each obstacle into another project and make it go away.

Let's address the basics first.

What's a Project?

I define a project as any assignment that requires the effort of others. Anything you can do yourself is a task and not a project. So whenever you get stuck at work, realize there's a simple way to re-frame anything into a project to get things moving again.

What's a Plan of Action?

Every project should have a good *Plan of Action (POA),* which has at least these six components:

Objective: Who, What, Where, When, and Why (Appendix A)?

Methods: How will we accomplish this Objective (Appendix A)?

Timetable: Planning backward from today, how will we use the time available to plan and prepare (Appendix A and Chapter 5)?

Resources: What will you need (Appendix A)?

Unresolved Issues: What are all the things (questions, unknowns, concerns, shortfalls, obstacles, or problems) that could slow or stop your progress (Appendix A and Chapter 10)?

Risk: What could *reasonably-go-wrong* and how can they be *mitigated* (Appendix A and Chapters 12-15)?

If you don't know a specific piece of information, still list the category, but show a TBD (To Be Determined). For example, if you don't know the end time, show, End time: TBD.

What's a Project's Life Cycle?

Every project has at least four phases: Planning, Preparing, Executing, and Assessing.

Here's a simple *Gannt Chart* showing the four phases of a one-day project that begins in 30-days:

Typical Gannt Chart for a Project Starting in 30-Days.				
Phase	1	15	25	30
1	Planning	IPR		
2		Preparing	IPR	
3			Executing	AAR
4	Assessing			

Notice that the *Assessing Phase* is conducted continuously throughout the project and is formalized using two *In-Progress Reviews* (or IPRs) (Chap 21), numerous *Project Updates* (not shown) (Chap 13), and one *After-Action Review* (or AAR) (Chap 24).

BY USING

PREVENTIVE ACTIONS

"The policy of being too cautious is the greatest risk of all."
- Jawaharlal Nehru

How do you find problems, or do you wait until they find you? Do you know how to find and resolve things that could slow or stop your work?

Preventive Actions are all the things you should be doing 30, 60, or 90 days before any project to uncover all Pre-Problems.

This process is designed to find and correct any Pre-Problems before they get in front of your boss or the customer.

Pre-Problems include mistakes, defects, shortfalls, omissions, errors, or anything else that could slow or stop your work.

Here are the *Preventive Actions* that should be added to your *Project's Timetable*.

THE PLANNING PHASE

1. Conduct an initial Site Inspection:

Visit the site to see if it meets your requirements. If you're asked to select the best site, visit several sites and present the best to your boss. Then, gather sufficient information (like photos, dimensions, and sketch maps) to help you create your *Draft Plan of Action* (Appendix A) and prepare for your *Backbriefing* (Chapter 8). The most important issues are location, availability, accessibility, cost, and amenities when picking the best site.

2. Create a Draft Plan of Action (POA):

This is your project *Plan of Action* (POA) that includes an Objective, Methods, Risk, Timetable, Resources Needed, and Unresolved Issues. (Appendix A).

3. Identify and eliminate all Unresolved Issues:

What are all the questions, unknowns, concerns, shortfalls, obstacles, or problems (*Unresolved Issues*) that could slow or stop our progress (Chapter

10)? Each issue can only be eliminated when it's both "*known for certain*" and "*acceptable to you.*"

4. Anticipate the Unintended Consequences:

What are all the adverse outcomes (*Unintended Consequences*) that aren't expected by your actions (Chapter 11)? Work hard to find anyone who has done this or a similar project before. What problems, consequences, and effects did they have?

5. Anticipate the Second and Third-Order Effects:

What are all the ways your project could affect others at different levels in your company (Chapter 11)? Work hard to find anyone who has done this or a similar project before. What problems, consequences, and effects did they have?

6. Conduct a Risk Assessment:

With your team's help, assess the risk of any safety, security, financial, and operational risks associated with the project and how they can be mitigated (Chapter 13).

7. Conduct a Backbriefing:

This is a briefing given by the Project Manager to his boss explaining how he intends to accomplish his boss's objective. This briefing enhances mutual understanding and trust by exchanging questions and answers to identify any unmet expectations or hidden surprises (Chapter 8). Brief your boss using the *Plan of Action Checklist* (Appendix A). Then, set the schedule for periodic *Project Updates* (Chapter 22).

8. Create a Memorandum of Record:

Finally, create a memo documenting the questions and answers from the *Backbriefing* and any questions you couldn't answer. Ensure your boss and all Key Players get a copy. A Key Player is anyone who must perform a task for a project to achieve its objective.

9. Provide Advanced Warning:

This is informing all Key Players of what's coming, so they can plan. Provide a copy of your Draft POA and the memo from the *Backbriefing* to each Key Player (Chapter 16).

10. Create Contingency Plans:

This plan is executed only if something bad happens that was anticipated, like bad weather (Chapter 15).

11. Staff the POA:

Circulate your POA through all Key Players for their concurrence or non-concurrence with comments (Chapter 20)

Conduct a Decision Briefing: Optional

Conduct a final briefing to the Decision Maker, with all Key Players present, to obtain final approval, if needed (Appendix C).

12. Conduct In-Progress Review (IPR 1):

Conduct at least two meetings before your project to synchronize all Key Players (Chapter 19). IPR 1 should be conducted at the mid-point of the time remaining between the Planning and Preparation Phases.

THE PREPARATION PHASE

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13. Conduct Project Update Briefings:

Conduct a briefing to your boss summarizing the status of your project (Chapter 22).

14. Prepare to take Immediate Action:

This is a disciplined drill used to react to bad situations that could cause a work stoppage, property or equipment damage, a security breach, or physical injury (Appendix B).

15. Conduct a Final Site Inspection:

Conduct a last inspection of the project site to see if anything has changed since the initial inspection.

16. Conduct In-Progress Review (IPR 2):

This is a second (or final) meeting conducted 5 to 7-days before the project to confirm that all assigned tasks have been completed as planned (Chapter 19) between the Preparation and Execution Phases. This is when the rehearsal schedule should be distributed.

THE EXECUTION PHASE

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17. Conduct Rehearsals:

This is your last chance to see, practice, or test everything before the project to identify and correct any *Pre-Problems* (Chapter 4).

18. Conduct Pre-Staging:

This is the storage of equipment and supplies at the site before a project to make setup easier.

19. Conduct Site Set up:

Set up your site as planned. Having a site diagram (with extra copies) is a good idea – showing where everything goes.

Project Starts:

Supervise all Key Players to ensure the project achieves the desired objective. If problems arise, either execute *Immediate Action* (Appendix B) or a *Contingency Plan* (Chapter 15) to keep the project moving.

Conduct Site Clearing:

This includes all the actions taken after a project. The site may need to be cleared quickly to allow the next user to come in and stage their equipment.

THE ASSESSING PHASE

The Assessing Phase is conducted continuously throughout the project. It's formalized using at least two *In-Progress Reviews* (or IPRs), several Project Updates (not shown), and an *After-Action Review* (or AAR).

20. Conduct an After-Action Review (AAR):

Conduct an informal meeting at the end of every project day and the day after the project with all Key Players present to focus on what happened vs. what was supposed to happen. Ask, *"What did we learn that can make us better next time?"* Add the *Lessons Learned* to the *After-Action Report* (Chapter 24).

Conduct Project Close-out:

This includes all close-out details, like administering surveys, paying bills, sending letters, filing the *After-Action Report*, and other details.

BY USING A

PROJECT TIMETABLE

Time and tide wait for no man."
- Geoffrey Chaucer

How do you keep track of the important tasks, preventive actions in their proper sequence, and who's responsible for each to help you keep track of what's important?

A Timetable is a simple table designed to show all the important tasks from your Plan of Action, their proper sequence, and who's responsible for each.

Your *Project's Timetable* should also contain all the *Preventive Actions* you'll need to manage your project.

Here's an example of a partial project timetable.

Partial Timetable for Company Picnic (June 21)							
Yr	M	D	Time	Preventive Action	Responsible	Where	Who
14	5	2	1 PM	Site visit conducted	Bob	B	1
14	5	4	2 PM	Backbriefing	Bob	A	2

Notice that this table shows the date, time, the *Preventive Action*, the person responsible, the location, who else is involved, and the correct sequence for each action.

The sequence is important because **Murphy's Law on Sequence** states:

"Whenever attempting to do anything, there are always things you should have done first."

What did you forget (Appendix E)?

Which *Preventive Actions* will you add to your *Project's Timetable* to catch all the *Pre-Problems* before your project starts?

What if you don't know the dates yet?

Here's an example:

Bob was having lunch with Joe (one of his Direct Reports) and asked about an important project for his boss. Joe said, "I'll start working on the

POA when the company decides on a start date." Bob asked him why he was waiting.

*Joe responded, "How can I write a POA when I don't know when the project starts?" Bob was stunned! He told Joe that the project starts every year in April, and today was January 1st, so he only had three months to plan. After lunch, Bob guided him through the creation of a Timetable using **S-Day as the Start Date**. Bob also asked Joe to add the most appropriate Preventive Actions to his Timetable.*

Here's an example of Joe's partial *Timetable*.

Partial Timetable for _____ Project (as of Date)							
Yr.	M	D	Time	Preventive Actions	Responsible	Where	Who
15	4	S-7	TBA	Final IPR	Joe	A	2
15	4	S-2	TBA	Rehearsals	Joe	A	2
15	4	S-1	TBA	Equipment pre-staged	Sam	B	2
15	4	S-Day	TBA	Project Starts	Joe	B	1
15	4	S+1	TBA	After Action Review	Joe	A	2

Notice that this timetable uses **S-Dates** instead of calendar dates because the project's start date has not yet been announced.

Joe then created a POA around this Timetable and began the Planning Phase. He labeled anything in the POA he didn't know for certain as TBA: To Be Announced. He then provided Advance Warning to all Key Players by giving them a copy of his draft POA. When the actual start day was announced, he plugged in the dates, notified all Key Players, and continued the Preparation Phase. If Joe had waited until the date was announced, several Key Players would have been in the last-minute crisis management mode.

Note: In the absence of instructions, make the assumptions needed to move the work forward (Appendix D).

If you fail to include *Preventive Actions* in your *Project's Timetable*, expect to experience the adverse effects of *Murphy's Law.*

BY USING AN

ASSESSMENT SYSTEM

"Don't tell your problems to people: eighty percent
don't care; and the other twenty percent
are glad you have them."
- Lou Holtz

How do you find problems, or do you wait for them to find you?

An Assessment System is a combination of targeted,
proactive procedures designed to identify problems before
they occur and resolve problems once identified.

This system is called CAPA (Corrective Actions, Preventive Actions) and should be part of your overall Quality Management System (QMS) and includes procedures to prevent problems (PA) and procedures to correct problems (CA) once identified.

Mistakes or defects are not a problem

if they're identified and resolved before your

boss or customer discovers them.

By using Preventive Actions

Preventive Actions are a series of specific procedures
designed to identify pre-problems before they get in front
of your boss or the customer?

Pre-problems include anything that could slow or stop the achievement of your goals (Chapter 4).

What procedures do you have to identify problems BEFORE they get in front of your boss or the customer?

Do you have processes, procedures, tests, rehearsals, inspections, visits, or assessments?

Do you need periodic inspections, rehearsals, visits, or assessments to catch defects and mistakes?

Who's checking, and what are they checking for?

How often and to whom do they report?

What do they do when a problem is identified?

Who's checking the checker?

By taking Corrective Action

Corrective Actions are a series of specific procedures designed to respond to problems AFTER they've been identified.

What procedures do you have to correct problems after they have been identified?

What's the Essence of a Finding?

Here's a system to capture, track, and resolve problems:

Problem #2214: for tracking.

Standard: What's the standard?

Condition: What problem was found or observed?

Cause: What's the root cause of this problem?

Risk: What's our Risk?

Impact: How <u>serious</u> will this problem affect the project?

Probability: How <u>likely</u> is this problem to happen?

Recommendation: What needs to be done to mitigate or eliminate the root cause?

Action:

Who is the *Point of Contact (POC)* to find a solution?

When and how is the report rendered?

What's being done to correct the problem?

What's the current situation – same or worse and why?

Remember, mistakes or defects are not a problem if they're identified and resolved before your boss or customer discovers them.

What do sports teams use?

The day after the game, they all watch the game video. They document and record what happened. Then, they review the entire game, play by play. Did each play accomplish its goal? Did every team member do their job? If not, what needs to be done to improve for the next game?

BY

TAKING-CHARGE

When in doubt, mumble; when in trouble,
delegate; when in charge, ponder.
- James H. Boren

This chapter assumes that your boss has assigned you a project, and you're in the process of *taking-charge* as the Project Manager (PM).

Important Terms and Concepts

Backbriefing:

A briefing given by the Project Manager (PM) to his boss BEFORE starting a project, explaining how the PM intends to accomplish the boss's objective.

Being in-charge:

This means that you're the boss of a project (an assignment that requires the effort of others) assigned by your boss. Sometimes, your boss will make you the coordinator for a project. It could also be called the lead, point person, or facilitator. These are all ways of saying that you're *in-charge* with limitations.

Only your boss can tell you the extent of those limitations. If in doubt, ask! Make no assumptions. Do you have the authority to make decisions, task others, assign work, hire, fire, spend money, and set priorities? This is why you should always conduct a *Backbriefing* with your boss.

Boss:

The person you report to for your work assignments and pays you for your products and services.

Briefback:

A Q&A meeting called by the PM to ensure all participants understand the Plan of Action, their duties and responsibilities, consequences and effects, unresolved issues, and what to do when things go wrong.

Flexibility to Respond:

As the PM, you represent your boss in everything you do to ensure the project's success. However, you must retain your *Flexibility to Respond* because plans and projects rarely unfold as expected.

**Flexibility to Respond is your Freedom of Action
to check on your project, resolve problems, and remain
responsive to your members and your boss.**

This means always staying in contact with all participants and your boss, being free to roam and reposition your members, equipment, or supplies to where they're most needed. That means that you must delegate any problems or obstacles to another team member or Key Play so that you don't get diverted with ancillary issues causing you to take your eye off the big picture. Once you get bogged down as a doer, you're no longer the PM.

Effective PMs are in-motion checking and encouraging!

Key Player:

Anyone who must perform a task for your project to be a success that doesn't report to you (like a vendor, supplier, or a member of a different department).

Project:

Any assignment that requires the effort of others to achieve the objective and includes achieving goals, resolving problems, and conducting activities or events.

Project Manager:

The person assigned by the boss to conduct a project: the *person-in-charge*.

Tasking Authority:

Your ability to assign work to another member. For example, you only have *tasking authority* over your direct reports, which are those members who report to you for their work assignments. If they don't work for you, you have no *tasking authority*. However, your boss and his boss have *tasking authority* over many more members that can be assigned to you temporally to complete your project.

Team Member:

This includes anyone who normally reports to you for their work assignments, your Direct Reports.

When In-Charge, Take-Charge!

What are the most important things a PM should do?

Always protect your *Flexibility to Respond*.

Step up and take responsibility and accountability for a project from start to finish (Appendix G).

Ask questions, listen to concerns, pay attention, and delegate authority, but never responsibility.

Build consensus with the team.

Facilitate problem-solving and collaboration.

Be willing to change the plan when needed, demonstrate flexibility, and adapt to changing conditions.

When things go wrong, you own the mistakes. When things go well, you share the success.

Be proactive and responsive by checking and making things happen!

Provide a Backbriefing to your boss to ensure you understand his expectations.

What should a PM NOT do?

As the PM, you should NOT:

Become engaged in physically helping a team member because it limits your *Flexibility to Respond* elsewhere.

Attempt to resolve problems or unresolved issues. Delegate it to a team member.

Here's a Great Story.

One day, John (the boss) visited a work site to check on a sub-project conducted by one of his Direct Reports (Bob). John asked Bob how things were going. Bob had two job sites as part of his sub-project.

John then visited Bob's second job site and saw that the members there were doing nothing. Bob's members tried to call Bob but got no answer. John tried to call Bob but got no response. Frustrated, John drove back to the first site and asked Bob why he wasn't answering his phone. Bob said his phone was in his truck.

John then pulled Bob aside for some on-the-job correcting and said, "Bob, I need you to have your phone with you at all times. Also, I just came from your second site and found that your team had no idea what they were supposed to do. I need you to get over there to straighten things out. Also, you need to check both your sites first thing every morning to ensure they get started the right way."

Bob lost his *Flexibility to Respond* because he left his phone in his truck, and no one could contact him.

Are you a Micro-Manager?

Well, let's see. The opposite of effective delegation is micromanagement.

**Micromanagement is a management style
whereby the boss closely observes and controls
the work of a Direct Report.**

Micromanagement also includes the suppression of constructive criticism that could otherwise lead to internal reform and job turnover. In micromanagement, the boss not only tells the Direct Report WHAT to do but dictates HOW to do it.

A frequent cause of micromanagement comes from the boss's doubt whether the Direct Report is competent enough to complete the project. Effective delegation requires a well-defined objective, a clear vision of the constraints and dependencies, and effective oversight.

So, are you a micro-manager? Do you trust your Direct Reports? Would they agree? Any room for improvement?

BY CONDUCTING A
BACKBRIEFING

"Progress always involves risks. You can't steal
second base and keep your foot on first."
- Frederick B. Wilcox

This chapter assumes that your boss has assigned you as the Project Manager (PM) for an upcoming project. One way to ensure no unmet expectations and misunderstandings between you and your boss before your next project is to conduct a Backbriefing.

A Backbriefing is a briefing given by the Project Manager
to his boss BEFORE starting a project, explaining how
the PM intends to accomplish the boss's objective.

As far as your boss is concerned, if he assigned you to be the *person-in-charge* of an assignment - the assignment belongs to you – and you're the Project Manager.

Backbriefings are a good way to achieve a "meeting of the minds" before work begins. They enhance mutual understanding and trust by exchanging questions and answers to ensure no unmet expectations or hidden surprises later. They benefit all parties by reducing misunderstandings and the need for rework. They also enhance your credibility, thus relieving the need for micromanagement.

When should a Backbriefing be conducted?

In business, there are two types of projects.

> **Expected Projects** are projects already part of your job description, like an annual trade show. For expected projects, provide a Backbriefing at least 90 days before the project.

> **Requested Projects** are newly assigned projects and should receive a Backbriefing a week after receiving the assignment.

Here are the most important steps to conduct a good Backbriefing:

Step 1. Conduct an Initial Site Inspection.

> Visit the site to see if it meets the requirements. If you're asked to select the best site, visit several sites and present the best to your boss. Gather sufficient information (like photos, dimensions, and sketch maps) to help you create your Draft Plan of Action (Appendix A) and prepare for your Backbriefing

(Chapter 8). The most important issues when picking the best site are location, availability, accessibility, and cost.

Step 2. Create your Draft Plan of Action.

Use the Plan of Action Checklist in (Appendix A) to create your draft.

Step 3. Identify and eliminate all Unresolved Issues.

An Unresolved Issue is any question, unknown, concern, shortfall, obstacle, or problem that could slow or stop your progress (Chapter 10).

Step 4. Anticipate the Consequences and Effects.

List any Unintended Consequences and Second and Third-Order Effects (Chapter 11). Work hard to find anyone who has done this or a similar work before. What problems, consequences, and effects did they have?

Step 5. Conduct a Risk Assessment.

Assess the risk of anything that could slow or stop your project or cause physical harm, security failures, and financial loss and how they can be mitigated (Chapter 13).

Step 6. Brief your boss using the Plan of Action Checklist (Appendix A).

You're not expected to have all the answers, but you're expected to have all the questions. As a minimum, obtain answers to these questions:

> What's the desired end-result or objective?
>
> How will success be measured?
>
> What are all the most important tasks that must be completed?
>
> Who's responsible for each major task?
>
> What's your authority to make decisions and spend money?

Then, set the schedule for periodic Project Updates (Chapter 22).

Capture any new Unresolved Issues or questions your boss asked that you couldn't answer. If the boss doesn't want a Backbriefing, send him your draft POA and get his approval.

Step 7. Create a Memorandum of Record.

Finally, create a memo documenting what happened during the Backbriefing and any questions you couldn't answer. Ensure your boss and all Key Players get a copy. If you fail to conduct a Backbriefing with your boss before your next project, do so at your peril.

You've been WARNED!

After your team members have received your plan, ask them if they have any questions.

**A Briefback is a synchronization meeting conducted
by the PM with all team members present to ensure they
all understand their duties, responsibilities, expectations,
and what to do if something goes wrong.**

Briefbacks are critical because the process of giving instructions always leaves room for misunderstandings. They also reduce waste by preventing rework and are an effective tool to manage ambiguity.

As the PM, Briefbacks help you enhance your ability to give better instructions. Ask them to tell you the role they play. You can also ask them specific questions about the plan to confirm their understanding. This also allows them to ask questions.

Address all the *"What ifs"* to help identify the risks, expectations, assumptions, unintended consequences, 2d and 3d-order effects, unresolved issues, and the contingency plans needed.

Assume nothing! Whenever you assume anything, you risk making an 'ass' out of 'u' and 'me.' So, be careful!

The simple fact is that if you don't do what your boss wanted, it doesn't matter if your instructions, either oral and written, were clear or not: you'll still be starting over.

Look, here's the *bottom-line* on good communications.

Good communication isn't about you – it's about them.

Do they understand what you want to be done? And how do you know for sure? You won't know unless you ask! And whose responsible and accountable if they don't understand and the project goes bad? Get a clue!

If you use this simple technique, you'll never have to say, *"I didn't know they didn't know."*

9

BY UNCOVERING

ALL EXPECTATIONS

---

*"Exceed your customer's expectations. If you do,
they'll come back over and over. Give them
what they want - and a little more."*
- Sam Walton.

The fact remains that you could be the most talented person on the planet, but if you don't understand and meet all the expectations of your boss, company, and industry, you're doomed to failure.

An expectation is a belief that's centered on the future.

A less than expected result gives rise to the emotion of disappointment. If something happens that's not expected, it causes the emotion of surprise. And trust me when I say bosses don't like surprises. Expectations focus on the desired performance for both results and behavior. To become more effective, you must understand all that's expected of you.

Here are the three most important expectations in the workforce:

By identifying All Stated Expectations

Stated expectations are verbal and written expectations from your boss, your job description, and the company's policies and procedures.

Here are the most important steps to identify all your stated or written expectations:

1. Know your duties.

Your duties are the tasks your boss needs you to perform and are normally found in your job description.

2. Know your responsibilities.

Responsibility is an obligation to satisfactorily perform a task assigned by your boss, which has a penalty for failure and is found in your job description. Accepting complete responsibility for what you say and do (and what you fail

to say and do) and the consequences are the first step on the path to peak performance and effectiveness.

What's the difference between Duty and Responsibility?
"Duties can be assigned; responsibilities can't!"

3. Know your Constraints.

Constraints include imperatives and restrictions.

Imperatives are things you must do (like achieving your goals).

Restrictions are things you must not do (like not accepting gifts from vendors) and include borders and limits.

Borders are official or unofficial lines dividing one area from another, showing who's responsible for what.

Limits are the point at which something ends or beyond which something starts.

4. Know your level of Authority.

Authority is your boss's permission to take certain agreed-upon actions on her behalf in support of your official duties and responsibilities.

Authority, unlike responsibility, can be given to another person to perform a specific assignment. When you ask someone to perform an assignment, you're giving that person your authority to act on your behalf. Authority can include making work assignments, hiring and firing, making decisions, or spending money.

So, when you ask someone to perform an assignment, be clear on what they can and cannot do. Also, do you have the authority you need to perform your duties and responsibilities? If not, speak up!

5. Know your Projects.

Do you know all the past projects completed before you arrived, your current ongoing projects, and your future projects coming up soon? A project is any assignment that requires the effort of others, like an activity or event.

6. Know the Standards.

Standards are the established norm or required minimum level of conformity to industry and company policy, criteria, methods, processes, and practices for your results and behavior.

To find the standards that apply to you, review all company guidelines, policies, standards of conduct and behavior, along with any Standard

Operating Procedures. Pay particular attention to safety, security, proprietary information, and intellectual property. This is especially important if you're changing jobs or getting a new boss.

By identifying All Inherent Expectations

If you're responsible for the performance of others, you have another type of duty or expectation.

Inherent duties or expectations are boss-only duties expected and performed by all bosses that cannot be reassigned.

Here are the most important boss-only inherent duties or expectations that will consume 90% of the boss's time:

Traveling and attending meetings he must attend.

Conducting internal meetings and following-through.

Briefings those he must brief.

Responding to emails, voicemails, and other correspondence.

Delegating actions and problems to team members to resolve.

Training members on how to complete projects.

Solving problems only he can resolve.

Conducting interviews, checking, and inspecting.

Planning, organizing, building teams, training, delegating, and setting goals and priorities.

Enforcing standards, correcting, counseling, reprimanding, retraining, and punishing.

Inspiring, motivating, praising, encouraging, consoling, challenging, coaching, and promoting.

As you consider these boss-only inherent duties, realize they're the most important things every boss must do.

By uncovering All Hidden Expectations

These expectations are the most dangerous because they lead to poor performance, mistakes, and failure (Chapter 37).

Hidden expectations are things that others expect you to do that are unclear, unspoken, or unwritten.

For any boss to have faith in you, the issue always involves your performance (your results and behavior).

> Your **results** involve your ability to consistently produce excellent results.

> Your **behavior** involves how well you add value to all those who helped you achieve your results, especially your boss.

If your boss's expectations are hidden or unclear, your performance will suffer along with your credibility, job security, and career. Meeting all your boss's expectations will put you way ahead of your peers.

Here are the most important steps to uncover hidden expectations.

Step 1. Assume nothin!

Be careful with your assumptions (Appendix D).

Step 2. Meet with your boss and ask these questions:

What's your mission, intent, purpose, and direction?

What're your goals, values, focus, and priorities?

What're your expectations of me at your meetings?

What reports or updates do you expect from me?

How will you assess my performance for both results and behavior?

Do I have permission to voice my honest opinion, behind closed doors, without the fear of negative consequences?

What're your expectations of me for tradition and culture?

Do I have access to information sharing and processing?

What're my goals, and how do they relate to yours?

What's my authority? Does it include making work assignments, hiring, firing, making decisions, or spending money?

What're my Imperatives (things I must do) and Restrictions (things I must not do)?

What're my ongoing projects, and which is most important and why?

What're my future projects, and which is most important and why?

What are all the recurring events or activities that occur weekly, monthly, quarterly, or annually?

Step 3. Ask your team members and peers.

Ask them for any hidden expectations. Ask about your boss's idiosyncrasies, strengths, and weaknesses.

Step 4. Ask your predecessor.

Ask about any hidden or unstated expectations.

Step 5. Ask Human Resources.

Ask about any hidden or unstated expectations for culture and tradition.

BY ELIMINATING

UNRESOLVED ISSUES

"There are two ways of spreading light:
to be the candle or the mirror that reflects it."
- Edith Wharton

Do you know how to identify and eliminate any uncertainty that could stop or slow your ability to consistently produce excellent results?

An Unresolved Issue is any question, unknown, concern, shortfall, obstacle, or problem that could slow or stop your progress.

Your mission is to hunt down and eliminate all the *Unresolved Issues* associated with your work. If you don't, *Murphy's Law* will surely ruin your day. Don't let this happen to you!

So, do yourself a favor. Identify and eliminate all your *Unresolved Issues* early on to avoid the frustration, mistakes, and potential failure that could result from not having *your-act-together.*

Here are the most important steps to eliminate all your *Unresolved Issues*.

Step 1. Identify all Issues.

To identify all your *Unresolved Issues*, seek good answers to these questions.

What do we need to know but don't?

What do we know for sure, but the answer is unsatisfactory or unacceptable?

What are all things we need but don't have?

What are all the questions, unknowns, concerns, shortfalls, obstacles, or problems that could slow or stop your progress?

Who has done this type of work before, and what were their problems, consequences, and effects?

What are we forgetting to do (Appendix E)?

Step 2. State each issue in one sentence.

Each *Unresolved Issue* should be stated in one sentence and answer these questions.

What do we need specifically?

How much (or how many) do we need, exactly?

Why do we need it - the purpose?

When's the latest we need it?

Where do we need it?

For example, let's assume that you're responsible for a *Team-Building Session* for your company, but you still need a guest speaker. So, your *Unresolved Issue* might read:

> ***"Need to identify and contract one guest speaker for the final dinner, on June 23, at our annual Team-Building Session at the Hilton Hotel no later than June 1."***

Step 3. Add it to the Unresolved Issues List.

Here's a simple table to keep track of all your *Unresolved Issues.*

Unresolved Issues List				
Date	**Action Item**	**Who**	**Deadline**	**Status/ Date**
May 4	Need to identify and contract one guest speaker for the final dinner, on June 23, at our annual Team-Building Session at the Hilton Hotel no later than June 1.	Tom	June 23	Ongoing /May 10

Notice that this table captures the date the issue was identified (May 4), the action item stated in one sentence, Tom is responsible for resolving the issue, the deadline (DL) is June 23, and the status with the date you last checked is "Ongoing/May 10."

The reason for this much detail is to enable your boss and his boss to help you resolve your issues without asking you any questions.

Step 4. Provide a copy to your boss.

Always ensure your boss has a current copy of all your *Unresolved Issues.* If he doesn't have these details, he can't help you.

Step 5. Continue to eliminate each issue.

All *Unresolved Issues* should go on your list until two things happen:

Until the answer is *known for certain*, the answer is a fact rather than an opinion or speculation.

Until the answer is *acceptable to you*, meaning that it's no longer an issue.

Keep the issue on your list until the issue is both ***"Known for Certain"*** and ***"Acceptable to You."***

Don't be surprised when one issue is resolved that several new issues appear. Just add them to your list and get as much help as you can to resolve each issue.

Step 6. Seek Assistance.

Also, discuss your *Unresolved Issues* during any future meetings or updates. Others at the meeting may be able to help you - but they need to know your issues.

Look, this technique is designed to help you get things done. No one can help you if they don't know your Unresolved Issues. So, don't let your pride or fear get in your way.

Always remember,

Asking for help is a sign of strength, not a sign of weakness.

Not knowing you need help is a sign of ignorance.

And needing help and not asking for it is a sign of stupidity.

So, don't get stuck on stupid!

When an issue is resolved, don't delete it from your list because you'll need it later for your *After-Action Review* (Chapter 24). Just record it as completed. When the issue is resolved, notify your boss. Remember, the worst thing you could ever do is to conceal your Unresolved Issues from your boss.

BY ANTICIPATING

CONSEQUENCES AND EFFECTS

"The world is moved not only by the mighty shoves
of heroes, but also by the aggregate of the tiny
pushes of each honest worker."
- Helen Keller

Do you know how to anticipate and mitigate anything that could produce
unexpected outcomes, causing delays or stoppage to your project?

By anticipating Unintended Consequences

Unintended Consequences are outcomes that aren't the outcomes expected from your project.

Unintended Consequences fall into three categories:

A positive, unexpected benefit, which is usually referred to as serendipity or
a windfall.

A negative, unexpected problem like irrigation provides water for agriculture
could also lead to cholera.

The consequence of **what others might say or do** is referred to as backlash,
fallout, or blowback.

Here's an example of a negative *Unintended Consequence*.

Can you tell what's wrong with this picture? Hint: Does Starbucks really
suck?
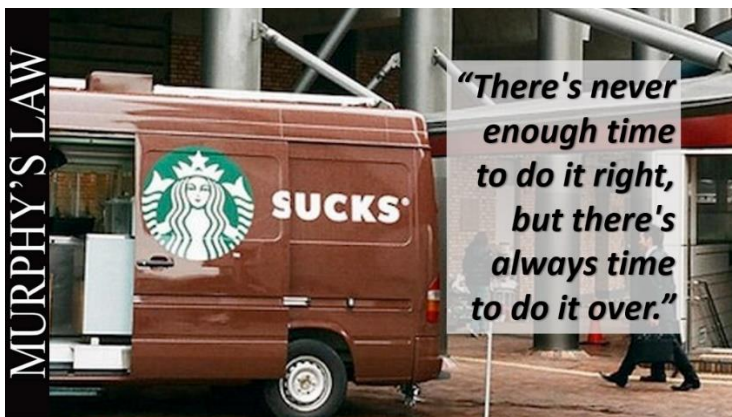
Answer: The painters applied the Starbucks advertising on a delivery van with the doors closed. Unfortunately, they failed to consider the unintended consequences of what the van would look like when the side door was open. This is *Murphy's Law* at its best!

By anticipating Second and Third-Order Effects

Be sensitive to how your work affects others.

Second and Third-Order Effects focus on how your work will affect others at different levels in your company.

Different levels mean how your work will affect others in your unit, department, company, and suppliers.

Second and Third-Order Effects may also identify new resource requirements and cause changes to structures and procedures. For example, if you decide to change a supplier, the effects could be extensive.

> *Second-Order Effects* could require new ordering procedures to be created, which could cause delays.

> *Third-Order Effects* could require others to be retrained on new ordering procedures and software.

To anticipate *Second and Third-Order Effects* keep asking.

> ***Now, what? What's next? What're we forgetting? And what could happen or what might we need to do in 30, 60, or 90 days?***

You're responsible for anticipating the consequences and effects of your work before starting.

But how can you do this when your crystal ball is no less clear than mine?

Method 1: Find others who have dealt with similar problems and ask:

What problems, consequences, or effects did you have?

Did everything go as planned? Any do-overs or surprises?

What outside help did you need, and where did you get it?

Anything or anyone you didn't have before starting?

What was the most important and the most difficult task?

How long did each task take, and what was the cost?

Anything you'd start, stop, or change next time?

Was everyone satisfied with the results?

Method 2: Vendors and Suppliers.

Contact vendors and suppliers who have worked with those who have dealt with the same or similar problems and ask the questions from Method 1. Also, which city, county, or state agency must inspect the problem to see if it meets the code?

Method 3: YouTube and social media.

Visit *YouTube* to search for related videos of others who have dealt with the same or similar problems. Then, get on social media and find people who have experienced projects or problems similar to yours. If you find someone, ask the questions from Method 1.

By making changes with CAUTION

Whenever a change is made, there are always consequences and effects. Just because everyone gets the change doesn't mean they understand it. The problem comes later when the consequences and effects start to appear, and everyone is shocked.

Here's a good example:

Bob was the Person-in-Charge of the company's Annual Team Building Session. Two days before the session, Bob's boss (the CFO) called and

told him that the venue had been changed to a remote cabin where there was no electricity. Bob called John, the Key Player in-charge of food and beverages, to inform John of the change in venue and the lack of electricity.

The day before the session, Bob followed up with John and was shocked to find that John had not thought through the refrigeration requirements for the food and beverages. Since this was a three-day session, the change of venue not only required ice to be transported to the venue daily but coolers to store it.

John didn't recognize the need for ice, and Bob assumed John had it covered. As a result, the night before the session, both John and Bob spent several hours in the dark, scrambling around looking for coolers and bags of ice to fill them.

All this could have been avoided had John and Bob thought through the consequences and effects created by this last-minute change in venue by testing their assumptions and creating a Plan or Action to deal with it. Not to mention the need for a site recon and a review of the Checklist at Appendix E.

Murphy's Law on Consequences:

"There's never enough time to do it right, but there's always time to do it over."

BY MANAGING

RISKS

There is only one big risk you should avoid at all costs,
and that is the risk of doing nothing.”
- Denis Waitley

Do you know how to manage the risks associated with your work?

Simply Stated, RISK is Uncertainty!

Managing anything requires the ability to anticipate and mitigate risk. You can't control everything that happens to you, but you can control your degree of preparation and how you respond.

Here are the most important things to consider when assessing risk.

1. Reduce the Risk of Failure.

By planning for risk to occur, you're decreasing your probability of failure, which increases your probability of success. Much of this is done every day in your company. It's called risk reduction, like having fire, theft, and liability insurance.

2. Understand that control is an illusion.

This simple prayer, which I learned during my recovery from alcoholism, helped me finally answer this life-altering question:

What are the only things in life I can control and therefore change?

THE SERENITY PRAYER

"God, grant me the <u>Serenity</u> to

<u>Accept</u> the things I cannot change,

<u>Courage</u> to change the things I can,

and the <u>Wisdom</u> to know the difference.

- Reinhold Niebuhr

And these answers changed my life forever.

In this life,
You cannot control or change other people, places,
things, situations, or circumstances.

The only things you can control and therefore change
are your thoughts, words, and deeds.

And all those years, I thought I could control and change other people. What a waste of time and energy. This may come as a shocking epiphany for many of you because you've probably made the same mistake.

Yes, you can influence them, but you can't control or change them. You can only control and therefore change yourself.

This concept is crucial because until you learn to truly control what you can control (your thoughts, words, and deeds), you'll never influence anyone to help you consistently produce excellent results.

3. Identify your Risk Goals.

When it comes to managing risk, you should always have two goals.

To make the **Risk LESS likely** to happen, like putting training wheels on your child's bicycle.

To make the **Impact LESS severe** when, and NOT if it happens, like requiring your child to wear a safety helmet.

4. Plan for both Anticipated and Unanticipated Risk.

In life, there are always two categories of risk:

Anticipated Risks are those risks that include all the things that could *reasonably-go-wrong*, including anything that could slow or stop your project or cause injury, illness, accident, death, security violations, property damage, or financial loss.

Unanticipated Risks are those Risks that you could not possibly have predicted (Chapter 15).

5. Conduct a Risk Assessment.

With the help of your team, conduct a *Risk Assessment*. What are all the things that could *reasonably-go-wrong* (Chapter 13)?

Anticipated Risk comes in two forms:

Bad Internal Situations are things that don't require a call to 911, like equipment breakdowns, people being late, cell phone batteries going dead, and other mistakes, defects, or errors.

Bad External Situations are things that will require a call to 911, like fire, injuries, accidents, property damage, violence, or theft.

6. Assess the Impact and Probability.

For each Bad Situation, assess these two critical things:

Impact means how this Bad Situation will affect your project and is rated as *Significant, Moderate, or Minor*. Based on your assessment, when, and not if, this Bad Situation happens, how serious will it affect your project?

Probability means how likely is this Bad Situation to happen and is rated as *High, Medium, or Low*. Based on your assessment, how likely is this Bad Situation to occur?

7. Assess your Risk Options.

Option 1. AVOID the Risk.

In some cases, you may want to avoid the risk altogether. This could mean not getting involved or just deleting a high-risk activity. This is a good option when taking the risk involves no advantage or when the cost of mitigating isn't worth the risk.

However, when you avoid a potential risk entirely, you may miss an opportunity. So, do your *What if Analysis* to explore your options before deciding. To learn more, search *YouTube* for *"What if analysis on Excel."*

Option 2. SHARE the Risk!

You could decide to share the risk and the potential gain with others. For example, you share risk when you ensure your project site or partner with another company.

Option 3. ACCEPT the Risk.

This option is usually best under these conditions:

When there's nothing you can do to prevent the risk.

When the potential loss is less than the cost of insuring against the risk.

When the potential gain is worth accepting the risk.

For example, you might accept the risk of a project launching late if the potential sales will still cover your costs.

8. Beware of Scope Creep.

Scope means the size of the project and its requirements, complexity, and goals. Scope creep occurs when others want to make changes to your project. So, negotiate these changes to gain either more time or more money, or both.

9. Create Contingency Plans.

The purpose of any *Contingency Plan* (Chapter 15) is to diminish the severity of a bad situation when it occurs. *Contingency Plans* need to be *Staffed* (Chapter 20) through all Key Players and approved by the boss.

10. Use Preventive Actions.

> *Mistakes are not a problem if they're caught before they get in front of your boss or the customer.*

What *Assessment System* (Chapter 6) do you have to catch mistakes? Effective people anticipate and mitigate their risk by adding *Preventive Actions* (Chapter 4) to their *Project's Timetable* (Chapter 5).

13

BY CONDUCTING A

RISK ASSESSMENT

"Take risks: if you win, you will be happy;
if you lose, you will be wise."
- Unknown

Effective people know that conducting a good *Risk Assessment* is critical to their probability of success. You can't control everything that happens to you, but you can control your degree of preparation and how you respond.

With the help of your team, conduct a good *Risk Assessment* by *Brainstorming* (Chapter 21) anything related to your work that could *reasonably-go-wrong*.

Here are the most important steps to conduct a good *Risk Assessment*.

Step 1. Anticipate the Physical Risks.

Have you inspected the site for anything that could cause an injury, accident, illness, or death? How about safety, sanitation, and access for those with disabilities - any risk there?

Step 2. Anticipate the Security Risks.

For *cybersecurity*, what could cause a data breach, personal info or intellectual property loss, or a disruption of services?

For *physical security*, what could permit unauthorized access leading to theft or property damage?

Step 3. Anticipate the Financial Risk.

What could cause financial loss through fraud, waste, or abuse?

What insurance is needed, and is it current?

Step 4. Anticipate the Operational Risks.

What's the *Impact* when these risks occur (Chapter 12)?

What's the *Probability* that these risks will happen (Chapter 12)?

How can these risks be mitigated (Chapter 14)?

What's your *Contingency Plan* for when they do (Chapter 15)?

Do your team members know how to take *Immediate Action* (Appendix B)?

What assumptions are needed to move the work forward (Appendix D)?

What *Preventive Actions* did you add to your *Plan of Action (POA) Timetable* (Chapter 5)?

Have you *Staffed* your POA (Chapter 20) with the team, and what was the result?

What are you forgetting to do (Appendices E)?

Step 5. Eliminate Unresolved Issues.

What are all the questions, unknowns, concerns, shortfalls, obstacles, or problems that could slow or stop our progress (Chapter 10)?

Step 6. Anticipate and Mitigate Unintended Consequences.

Unintended Consequences are the outcomes that aren't expected by your actions (Chapter 11).

Step 7. Anticipate Second and Third-Order Effects.

Second and Third-Order Effects focus on how your recommendations or decisions affect others at different levels in your organization (Chapter 11).

Step 8. Anticipate the Risk of Bad Situations.

Bad Internal Situations are situations that *don't require a call to 911*, like equipment breakdowns, people being late, cell phone batteries going dead, mistakes, defects, or errors.

Bad External Situations are situations that *require a call to 911,* like fire, injuries, accidents, property damage, violence, or theft (Chapter 14).

If you fail to conduct a good *Risk Assessment* before your next project, do so at your peril.

You've been WARNED!

BY MITIGATING THE RISK
TO BAD SITUATIONS

"If you are not living on the edge, you
are taking up too much room."
- Jayne Howard

To manage anything, you need to know how to mitigate your risk. In business, there are two different types of risk: Internal and External.

By mitigating the Risk to Bad Internal Situations

This includes equipment breakdowns, people being late, cell phone batteries going dead, and other mistakes, defects, or errors.

Bad Internal Situations are situations
that don't require a call to 911.

Once you've determined everything that could *reasonably-go-wrong*, you're ready to mitigate the risks. Here are the most important steps.

Step 1. Brainstorm.

Conduct a *Brainstorming Session* to determine what actions are needed to respond to each bad situation (Chapter 21).

Step 2. Create Contingency Plans.

Now that you've determined what actions are needed for each Bad Internal Situation, it's time to create a *CONPLAN* for each (Chapter 15).

Step 3. Rehearse each CONPLAN.

Rehearse each *CONPLAN* a few days before your project to identify any errors, omissions, or misunderstandings. Don't just ask people if they're ready. Ask them to show you that they're ready (Chapter 23).

Step 4. Eliminate All Unresolved Issues.

Continue to eliminate all *Unresolved Issues* by facilitating collaborative *problem-solving to build consensus (Chapter 10).

*To learn more about **Problem-Solving**, available at **Amazon.com,** see "OTHER PLAYBOOKS."

The truth is that even though local first responders have more resources and training than you, you can still make the risk less likely to happen and make the impact less severe when it occurs.

**Bad External Situations are those
that require a call to 911.**

Here are the most important steps to mitigate the risk of Bad External Situations.

Step 1. Assess the Risk of Fire.

Since most fires start as small fires, do you have more fire extinguishers on-site than you need? Do people know where they're located and how to use them? Have they been tested and inspected? Are there sufficient smoke detectors present and serviceable? Are there any local restrictions on burning, building fires, or fire warnings?

Step 2. Assess the Risk of Medical Issues.

Do you have first aid kits on-site, with staff trained on how to administer first aid? When were these kits last inspected and replenished? Can ambulances be located closer to your venue? Do you have staff trained to administer CPR? Do defibrillators be centrally located with staff trained in how to use them?

What about those who have food allergies and those allergic to bee stings? And how about mosquitos, the elderly, and the disabled? Are there any unsafe conditions that could lead to an injury or accident? Are there any unsanitary conditions that could lead to illness?

Step 3. Assess the Risk of Crime.

Whenever assessing the risk of crime, always consider:

Access control means entry denial, metal detectors, gates, locks, keys, fences, barriers, checkpoints, firewalls, passwords, and badges.

Deterrence means cameras, guards, dogs, signs, security lighting, punishment for violators, and barbed wire.

Early warning means alarms, security systems, loudspeakers, intercom, flashing lights, police alerts, lockdowns, and sirens.

15

BY CREATING

CONTINGENCY PLANS

"If you don't risk anything you risk even more."
- Erica Jong

Do you know how to create a plan to respond to anticipated bad situations?

By creating a Contingency Plan

Have you ever been involved with a project when things went wrong? What did you do? Was there a *Contingency Plan,* and was it rehearsed*?*

A Contingency Plan (or CONPLAN) is a Plan of Action that assumes that an anticipated bad situation has occurred.

A *CONPLAN* is only executed when something bad happens. Being prepared is the key! What's your plan? Remember,

Many bad situations never become a problem

because someone knew what to do and

had the resources to respond.

Here are the most important steps.

Step 1. Collaborate.

Once you've identified all the bad things that could *reasonably-go-wrong,* collaborate with your team to determine what actions should be taken in response.

Step 2. Assess the Impact.

Impact means how this Bad Situation will affect your project and is rated as *Significant, Moderate, or Minor.* Based on your assessment, when, and not if, this Bad Situation happens, how serious will it affect your project?

Step 3. Assess the Probability.

Probability means how likely is this Bad Situation to happen and is rated as *High, Medium, or Low*. Based on your assessment, how likely is this Bad

Situation to occur? If you have a bad situation with a Significant Impact and a High Probability of occurring, you'll need lots of help.

Step 4. Create a CONPLAN.

Once you've identified the actions that should be taken, create a CONPLAN to deal with each Bad Situation. Each CONPLAN uses the same format as a *Plan of Action* but begins with an assumption.

This assumption is the Bad Situation that you and your team have already anticipated. Your CONPLAN tells the reader exactly what to do when the assumption becomes true. It also lists what's needed, where it's stored, and how to use it.

Let's assume that you were assigned as the Project Manager for your company's *Team Building Session* in Buffalo, NY, in January. You and your team have already anticipated three Bad Internal Situations that could *reasonably-go-wrong* with your project.

> **For guests arriving late,** you assessed the Impact to be *Significant* because the Team Building Session won't be effective without all guests. However, you assessed your probability to be *Medium* because of the weather in Buffalo this time of year. So, for guests arriving late, you intend to use CONPLAN A.

> **For transporting guests to the resort,** you assessed the Impact to be *Moderate* because of the weather, the fact that the resort is 27 miles away, and that delays will disrupt the success of the team building session. And you assessed the probability to be *Medium* because you know that the weather in Buffalo this time of year is always a challenge. So, for Transporting guests to the resort, you intend to use CONPLAN B.

> **For lost baggage,** you assessed the Impact to be *Minor* because your activity can still go on regardless. However, you assessed the Probability to be *High* because the airlines in the winter have a history of losing luggage. So, for lost baggage, you intend to use CONPLAN C.

Step 5. Create your Risk Matrix.

Here's an example of a *Risk Matrix*.

Risk Matrix for Team Building Session			
BAD SITUATION	**IMPACT**	**PROBABILITY**	**CONPLAN**
Guests Arriving Late	Significant (8-10)	Medium (4-7)	A
Transport to Resort	Moderate (4-7)	Medium (4-7)	B
Lost Baggage	Minor (1-3)	High (8-10)	C

Notice that this simple table shows all Bad Internal Situations, their Impact, Probability, and which CONPLAN to use.

Note: The risk numbers 1 through 10 above are used to help create your *Risk Threshold.*

Step 6. Assess your Risk Threshold.

Here's an example of a *Risk Threshold Table*.

Risk Threshold = Impact X Probability.		
Risk Rating	**Risk Range**	**Remarks**
CRITICAL	50 or higher	The acceptable risk threshold for safety and health should always be lower than your financial or operational risks.
MEDIUM	16 to 49	
LOW	15 or Lower	

Notice that this table shows that a *risk threshold*, rated from critical to medium to low, is the sum of the impact times the probability. Knowing your risk threshold is important because your acceptable threshold for safety and health risks should always be lower than your security, financial, and operational risks.

Ideally, you should be doing all you can to reduce your risk. And if you can't, you'll need a good CONPLAN ready to respond.

Step 7. Staff your CONPLANs.

Staff your CONPLANs through all Key Players for their concurrence or non-concurrence with comments (Chapter 20).

Step 8. Obtain Approval.

Present your CONPLANs to your boss for approval with all the comments from your Key Players attached.

Step 9. Distribute your CONPLANs.

Once approved, ensure that all Key Players have a copy of all CONPLANs well before the project starts.

Step 10. Rehearse your CONPLANs.

A few days before your project starts, rehearse your CONPLANs with all Key Players (Chapter 23).

By creating an Unanticipated Situation Plan

Do you know how to create a plan to respond to unanticipated bad situations?

An Unanticipated Situation Plan is a Contingency Plan that assumes that an unanticipated bad situation will occur.

When unanticipated bad situations occur, what do you do? Is that even possible?

Preparing for *Unanticipated Bad Situations* requires a different level of thinking and preparation. Regardless of how well you plan, you'll always encounter bad situations that you did not, nor could not have anticipated. So, what do you do?

As a Project Manager, what will you do when an *Unanticipated Bad Situation* occurs on your watch? Your boss is counting on you to do everything you can to save, salvage, or secure your project.

You can't control everything that happens to you. But you can control your degree of preparation and how you respond to them.

You already know that many Bad Situations never become problems because someone responded to them swiftly and decisively.

They had *Assessment Systems* (Chapter 6) and people in place to respond to these situations when they occurred. They saved the day! But how did they do it? They did it by creating an *Unanticipated Situation Plan,* a special *Contingency Plan* that focuses on *Unanticipated Risk*.

Here are three special techniques that will help you prepare for and respond to *Unanticipated Bad Situations*.

1. Create a Quick Response Team (or QRT).

A *QRT* is a team specifically trained and equipped (with vehicle, keys, access codes, cash, and credit cards) on *Stand-by* (they have no other duties and are ready to respond, 24/7). Provide a sketch map to all *QRT* members that shows all locations near or at the site as reference points.

2. Use a Priority Response System.

The system is a cellphone protocol that requires that all Key Players:

Respond to their cell phone before the <u>second</u> ring.

Have extra batteries and car chargers readily available.

Carry their cell phone on their person 24/7.

Never let incoming calls from you go to voicemail.

Have all contact numbers of all Key Players on their phones.

Limit their outgoing calls to ensure they're able to respond.

This system is only effective if everyone plays by these rules. This is why it should be rehearsed. When you call, you need the Key Player to answer before the <u>second</u> ring - no excuses.

3. Create a Pre-Stocking Site.

This site is stocked with any materials, equipment, and supplies that could cause a delay or stoppage of your project.

Do you have backup bulbs, projectors, and extension cords?

Do you have backup batteries and AC and DC chargers?

Where will these items be located?

Do your boss and all Key Players know this location?

Have one trusted Key Player responsible for this site, ready to deliver what, when, and where it's needed. Also, this site could be mobile, like a van or truck pre-positioned at or near the site, as required.

Always be prepared to take *Immediate Action* (Appendix B).

By creating a Mitigation Plan

No one likes being on a project when things are going badly. So, how can you get the project back *on track*?

A Mitigation Plan is a POA designed to get a project back on track by eliminating, consolidating, or rescheduling certain tasks to finish close to the originally planned date.

Here are the most important questions to ask if you ever have a project in trouble:

Are there any tasks that can be eliminated, combined, **or** compressed?

Is there *Slack Time* that can be used?

Can anything be done simultaneously (or done *off-line*)?

Do you need more people? Can overtime help?

Should you go to a second shift or run 24-hours?

Can working on the weekend and holidays help?

Can the scope (size, requirements, complexity, goals) be reduced?

Can the end time be moved to allow a successful completion?

Slack time: The amount of time in a schedule that a task can be delayed without causing a delay to other tasks or the project's completion date.

Getting behind schedule isn't fun. How does any project get thirty days behind? Answer: one day at a time, repeated thirty times. So, what's the message here? Don't get behind in the first place!

For those of you who think you'll never have to create a *Mitigation Plan* in your lifetime, think again. If you have a plan for getting your college education, MBA, or a Ph.D., what happens if you must take a year off? It's called a *Mitigation Plan* to help you pick up the pieces and move forward.

BY PROVIDING

ADVANCED WARNING

"History is a vast early warning system."
- Norman Cousins

Do you know how to provide important information to your team members and Key Players to ensure they know what you're planning and have sufficient time to prepare?

How would you feel if you were told by your boss that you're flying to Europe tomorrow when he's known about it for a month?

A Key Player is anyone you're counting on to perform a task for your project to be a success.

Advanced Warning is informing all Team Members and Key Players of what you're planning, so they can plan.

The most important thing you can do for your team members and Key Players is to give them as much time as possible to plan and prepare by telling them what you're planning to do. You do this by providing as much Advanced Warning as you can.

In the **US Military**, it's called a *"Warning Order."* It includes an Objective statement from the Draft *Plan of Action* (POA), telling as many specifics as possible. For example, it should include the who, what, when, where, and why you're planning.

Unless the task is time-sensitive, an email to each team member and Key Player should suffice. However, provide as much information as you can. If anything is unknown, list it as TBA (To Be Announced).

What's the "One-Third, Two-Thirds Rule?"

When planning a project, the rule states that if there are three weeks until a project starts, the first week is yours to create the *Plan of Action* and *Backbrief* your boss, and the two remaining weeks belong to your Key Players for their *planning and preparation.

*To learn more about *Planning*, available at **Amazon.com,** see "OTHER PLAYBOOKS."

BY FOLLOWING UP

AND FOLLOWING THROUGH

"Learning the secrets and skill of great No.2s remains
the surest path to becoming No. 1."
- David Heenan and Warren Bennis.

Do you know how to *Follow up* and *Follow-through* to increase your probability
of success and enhance your effectiveness and credibility at work?

By Following up

Many mistakes and failures in business can be traced back to someone who failed
to *Follow up*.

Follow-up is a subsequent action taken to check
on the validity of an initial action.

And there are three situations where *Follow up* is needed.

Situation 1.
When someone fails to respond to your solicitation.

Using a sales example, if a prospect fails to respond to your solicitation or
declines to do business with you, you still have an obligation to *Follow up*.
Follow-up means continuing to contact them until you receive a positive
response. The secret is to continue to add value to the person you're trying to
contact.

Situation 2.
When you're trying to contact someone to resolve a problem.

Here are the most important steps if you're trying to resolve a problem (like poor
customer service, a faulty product, or a delayed order).

Step 1. Call to resolve the problem.

Record the date you called, whom you spoke with, and the response you
received.

Step 2. Leave a detailed voicemail message.

If you get their voicemail, always leave a message giving the date, your name, company, phone number, a detailed description of the problem with its reference number, and a request for a return call.

Step 3. Document your actions.

Always document your *follow-up* actions. This way, when your boss asks, you can show him your *"Action Log."*

Step 4. Show up in person.

After you've called three times with no response, show up in person and get your problem resolved.

Step 5. Add it to your Unresolved Issues List.

Until resolved, keep this issue on your *Unresolved Issues List* and ensure your boss has a current copy (Chapter 10).

Situation 3.
After delegating an assignment or making a reservation or appointment.

**Follow-up also means contacting someone a few days
before the due date of your assignment, reservation,
or appointment to confirm it's still valid.**

Delegating an assignment isn't abdication because the asker is still responsible and accountable for the end-result.

*5% of delegating is asking someone to perform
a task. The other 95% is about following up
to ensure it gets done.*

A good 30% of the time, my reservations or appointments got lost. I assumed that all was good-to-go, and I was sadly mistaken.

Here's a great story of how it should be done

On June 1ˢᵗ, Joe was asked by his boss to set up a luncheon for 30 senior executives at the best steak house in town for June 15th.

This was two weeks before the luncheon when Joe made the initial reservation. He recorded the date, time, and the name of the person he spoke with on his Assignment Tracking Form (Appendix F).

On June 12th, a few days before the luncheon, as Joe was reviewing his Assignment Tracking Form, he decided to follow up, and here's how it went. Hi, this is Joe Sanchez from Trident Resources. I'm calling to follow up on the reservation for our company's luncheon for Thursday, June 15th, at 11:30 AM? Is everything still on track?

The scheduler said, "Joe, I don't have a reservation for your company. When did you make i, and whom did you speak with? After looking at his Assignment Tracking Form, Joe said, "I called two weeks ago, on June 1st, and I spoke to Carol Brown."

After a long pause, the scheduler continued, "Carol was let go two weeks ago. That may explain the problem. After another long pause, she said, "Joe, you're lucky. You called just in time. If you had waited another day, you'd be out of luck." After Joe's heart rate returned to normal, he was glad he documented all his phone calls and followed up when he did. If not, he would have had 30 senior executives standing around looking for a place to eat. Not good.

By Following-through

Do you know the difference between following up and follow-through? Many mistakes and failures in business can be traced back to someone who failed to *Follow-through*.

Follow-through is the process of returning to the asker, either face-to-face or on the phone, and reporting the status of their request.

This is what your boss means when he says, *"Get back to me, let me know, or keep me in the loop."*

There are two situations where *Follow-through* is needed.

Situation 1.
When your boss or customer asks you to do something.

When this happens, make sure you have a clear understanding of what the boss or customer wants to be done (the task) and when he needs it completed (the deadline).

If you have any questions, ask! If you can't deliver, speak up! After completing the task, *Return and Report*, either face-to-face or on the phone.

*Return and Report mean contacting the asker,
either face-to-face or on the phone, to
update the status of their request.*

If you can't complete the task, return either face-to-face or on the phone and report the problem. Also, recommend what should be done to resolve it.

*Returning and Reporting is the most important
part of Following-through.*

Situation 2.
When you ask a Direct Report to do something.

When you ask a Direct Report to do something, ensure you tell him WHAT you want to be done (the task) and WHEN you need it completed (the deadline).

Also, ask him to *Follow-through*. You may have to explain what you mean. Explain that you want him to *Return and Report*, either face-to-face or on the phone when the task is completed.

Also, if he can't complete the task, ask him to return, either face-to-face or on the phone, and report the problem and recommend what needs to be done to resolve it. The most effective people I know, those at the top of their game, do something special.

They over-communicate!

They Follow-through even if they have nothing new.

This way, I know I wasn't forgotten!

When you *Follow-through*, you'll stand out above the rest.

Note: When you tell someone that *"I'm-on-it,"* you've just said to them that you'd *Follow-through*.

BY CONTRIBUTING TO

THE BOSS'S MEETINGS

"It is the responsibility of leadership to provide opportunity,
and the responsibility of individuals to contribute.
- William Pollard

Do you know what you need to do and not do during your boss's meetings because this may be the only contact your boss has to observe your performance? These meetings will be attended by your boss's other Direct Reports - your Peers. So, get to know them. Help them in any way you can.

Why do bosses conduct meetings?

To learn what's going on concerning the status of assigned work.

To pass on what he knows about what's important to his boss.

To monitor the team's efforts to move the work forward.

What are the most important things to do during these meetings?

Arrive 15 minutes early to get to know your Peers.

Display respect and kindness.

Demonstrate support for your boss by your 100% attention, involvement, and participation.

Put your cell phone on vibrate or leave it outside.

Support for your peers. Teamwork is critical.

Come with the attitude to contribute, encourage, and help others.

Demonstrate an understanding of your boss's goals.

If you cannot attend, send someone to discuss your agenda items and *Unresolved Issues* (Chapter 10).

And if you have no one to send, call your boss the day before and provide your update.

To wait for others to finish before speaking.

To follow up with answers to questions you couldn't answer.

What are the most important things not to do during these meetings?

Hog the air-time! Be brief and let others speak.

Wander off the agenda. Help your boss keep others on track.

Surprise your boss. Bosses hate surprises - unless it's great news.

Interrupt or cut someone off. If you must, then apologize!

Embarrass or surprise a peer.

Find fault or complain. Only do so privately with your boss.

Continue arguing after the boss has made his decision?

Ask a question that could embarrass someone. Ask it privately.

Be late or absent without calling.

If you fail to understand and meet these expectations, you'll never be considered a *Team Player*.

What's the bottom-line on Communicating?

Good communication isn't about you - it's about them.

Do they understand what you want them to do? And how do you know for sure? You won't unless you ask! And whose responsible and accountable if they don't understand and the project goes bad?

To be considered effective or essential by any boss, you must be perceived as someone who can be counted on to excel at two things:

To consistently produce excellent results.

To add value to all those who helped produce those results, especially the boss.

Your ability to communicate will play a huge role in that assessment.

Get your act together, or your credibility will suffer!

BY CONDUCTING AN

IN-PROGRESS REVIEW

"If I had to live my life again,
I'd make the same mistakes, only sooner."
- Tallulah Bankhead.

Do you know how to determine if your project is progressing as planned and if it's ready to move to its next phase?

An In-Progress Review is a synchronization meeting conducted by the Project Manager with all Key Players present to collaborate and coordinate a project.

Normally, each major project will have at least two *IPRs* scheduled between phases of the project.

IPR 1 is normally scheduled at the halfway point of the time remaining (between the Planning and Preparation Phases).

IPR 2, the second or last IPR, is normally scheduled 5-7 days before the project starts (between the Preparation and the Execution Phases).

IPRs essentially become *Milestones* (A tool used to mark specific points along a project timeline and focus on major progress phases that must be reached before moving forward).

What should be discussed during each IPR?

If this is your project, this is your opportunity to check if everyone involved, especially the *Key Players,* are *on-schedule*, knows about all changes, and has no *Unresolved Issues* (Chapter 10).

Deliverables: During the IPR, the project's current progress is addressed, and *deliverables* designated in the *POA* are presented. A *deliverable* is something tangible that proves that a Key Player has taken action designated in the *POA* (like a sales receipt, a purchase order, or diagram). If all *deliverables* are present, the project moves to the next phase. If all *deliverables* are not presented, the project is stopped (or delayed) until the boss becomes directly involved for explanations and gives the go-ahead.

Unintended Consequences and Second and third-Order Effects (Chapter 11).

Unresolved Issues (Chapter 10)

BY BUILDING

CONSENSUS WITH A TEAM

*"Unity is strength... when there is teamwork and
collaboration, wonderful things can be achieved."
- Mattie Stepanek*

Do you know how to achieve agreement from all team members that they can support a proposal? Few people in the workforce today understand the meaning and value of collaborating to build consensus.

The process of building consensus starts with collaboration.

**Collaboration is the process of working with others
to resolve a problem or achieve a goal.**

Building consensus results from collaboration. Most people think that consensus means that everyone must like the proposal, the majority rules, or some other lame criteria - all of which are false.

Here's the truth!

**Consensus is the desired end-product of collaboration
intended to achieve agreement from all team
members to support a proposal.**

**Support means that you (as a member) agree that
the proposal will work and commit to doing
all you can do to ensure its success.**

If not, this is the member's chance to speak up and provide either a better option or a valid reason, which must be a fact and not an opinion, for their non-support. The process of building consensus gives every member the freedom to voice their agreements or disagreements before consensus is achieved. It's also intended to be inclusive, participatory, and cooperative, seeking opinions and input from all members.

Note: You don't need support from all team members before sending the proposal to your boss for approval. However, you'll need to include all reasons for non-support and let your boss decide. All members don't have to like the proposal! They just need to be able to support it.

Consensus uses common agreement to resolve mutually exclusive positions. It's not the majority rules, nor a popularity contest. Consensus doesn't care whose proposal is being considered or if any member likes or dislikes the proposal. It only asks each member if they can support the proposal.

Why is building consensus so important?

To answer this question, I always ask,

What's the Greatest Hunger of the Human Heart?

What does every human being need to be fulfilled at work?

The Greatest Hunger of the Human Heart is to be NEEDED.

To be needed means:

To be seen means to be included and validated.

To be heard means to be listened to, understood, and appreciated.

To be valued means to be recognized for their contributions.

To be treated with respect and kindness because they matter.

The greatest hunger of the human heart is to be seen, heard, valued, and treated with respect and kindness because they matter.

If team members aren't allowed to *"speak their piece,"* you're telling them that they're not important and they don't matter. Not good! Do you feel needed where you work? Do those who work with you feel needed? Do you treat everyone with respect and kindness-no matter what?

Everyone needs to be engaged, involved, and have a say concerning the things that affect their wellbeing.

This is why consensus building is so powerful.

When's consensus needed?

Consensus is needed whenever you're trying to resolve a problem, create a plan, or make any change that affects the team.

What are the benefits of building consensus?

Consensus building improves the proposal by using the wisdom and knowledge of the team.

It uncovers any Unintended Consequences and Second and Third-Order Effects that could slow or stop the proposal.

It builds trust and commitment from the team by engaging them and using their input.

Building consensus is far more important than achieving it because, in the end, everyone may not agree to support the proposal, but at least they've been included in the process.

Failure to build consensus will erode teamwork, commitment and cause the failure to consistently produce excellent results. Building consensus sounds easy, but it's not. However, it's worth it because, without their involvement, they'll never be committed! And without their commitment, you'll never be able to consistently produce excellent results!

By building Consensus

Here are two methods of building consensus:

Staffing a Proposal. This means circulating a proposal document through all team members to obtain their concurrence or non-concurrence with comments.

Conducting a Team Meeting. This method works best when the proposal is an important decision that's time-sensitive, involves major funding, and affects the entire team.

If this is the case, here are the most important steps to build consensus.

Step 1. Discuss the proposal.

Gather the team, either at one location or on a phone or video conference and discuss the proposal.

If the proposal is a problem, how was it discovered, how bad is it, and what're the risks if it continues unresolved? What's causing this problem? Is this the real problem or just a symptom? And how do we know for sure?

If the proposal is a goal, why is it important? What's the intended benefit?

Step 2. Discuss the Solution.

If the solution is obvious, then work with the team to create the *Plan of Action* to implement the solution. If there could be several solutions, conduct a *Brainstorming Session* and select the best solution (Chapter 21).

Step 3. Anticipate the Consequences and Effects.

Once the solution has been identified, discuss the possible *Unintended Consequences* and *Second and Third-Order Effects* (Chapter 11).

Step 4. Eliminate all Unresolved Issues.

Discuss and identify all *Unresolved Issues* (any question, unknown, concern, shortfall, obstacle, or problem) that could slow or stop your progress (Chapter 10).

Step 5. Ask for Consensus.

Now, ask all team members if they can support the proposal. If not, why? Remember,

> *Support means that each member agrees that the proposal will work and commits to doing all theycan do to ensure its success.*

If all members agree, ask them to create the *Plan of Action* to implement the proposed solution. If any member has a valid reason for non-support, continue to Step 6.

By resolving Reasons for Non-Support

At this point, only valid reasons should be considered. However, real-life doesn't work that way. Members will always have concerns and opinions, and they need to be heard. Here are the most important steps.

Step 6. Deal with their concerns.

If a member has a concern or opinion that's not a fact, this is when things get interesting.

If their concern is that it's **too costly**, what does he mean? Too costly compared to what? How can the cost be reduced or offset? What's the contingency plan if it does cost more?

If their concern is that it **will take much longer**, what's he basing this on? What's the downside if it does take longer? What's our Contingency Plan if it does?

If their concern is that it's **too risky**, what does he mean? Can it be mitigated? Can a contingency plan be created just in case?

Step 7. Convert Reasons to Risks.

Before continuing, exchange the term *"Reason"* for "*Risk."* This will make this process much easier to understand. And for each risk, there are two critical things you must consider, probability and impact.

Step 8. What's the Probability?

How likely is this risk to happen (Chapter 12)? If the probability is *Low*, place the risk, *On-Hold*. This means that it's been noted and set aside temporarily. If the probability is *Medium* to *High*, or you're unsure, continue to the next step.

Step 9. What's the Impact?

What's the Impact or Effect on the proposal when this risk happens (Chapter 12)? If the Impact is *Minor,* place the risk *On-Hold*. If the Impact is *Moderate* to *Significant*, or you're unsure, continue to Step10.

Step 10. Can the Risk be Mitigated?

If the risk can be mitigated, create a *Contingency Plan* (Chapter 15).

If the risk can't be mitigated, you still have three options (Chapter 14).

Remember, you don't need a consensus before sending the proposal to your boss for approval. However, you'll need to include all reasons for non-support and let your boss decide. All members don't have to like the solution! They just need to be able to support it.

By Staffing a Proposal

Here's another method of building consensus without a meeting.

**Staffing is the process of circulating a proposal document
to all team members to obtain their concurrence or
non-concurrence with comments in writing.**

This method works best in situations where the proposal is routine and not time-sensitive. The proposal document could be a procedure, plan, question, or idea. Here are the four most important steps.

Step 1. Provide the proposal document to all members.

Ensure each team member receives a copy of the proposal document. Ask each member for their concurrence or non-concurrence with comments. And don't forget to provide a deadline.

Step 2. Resolve non-concur comments.

When member comments are returned to you, you may need to visit some members privately to better understand their comments and determine if adjusting your proposal could lead to their concurrence. Remember, concurrence means that each member agrees that:

*The proposal will work and commits to doing
all they can to ensure its success.*

If not, a valid reason must be provided, which means their non-concur comments must be a better proposal or a fact and not an opinion.

Step 3. Make changes.

If you need to make changes, you'll need to send the revised proposal to all members again for another review. And for the second review, ensure you highlight any changes made from the first review.

Step 4. Obtain approval.

Note: You don't need the concurrence of all team members before sending your proposal to your boss for approval, but you'll need their reasons for non-concurrence. Remember, build consensus should never be done in a vacuum. You need the feedback to help see beyond your blind spots.

BY CONDUCTING A

BRAINSTORMING SESSION

"To win without risk is to triumph without glory."
- Pierre Corneille

How many times have you just assumed that you knew the BEST solution to a problem, only to find out later that you were wrong? Effective people know the value of *Brainstorming* when resolving problems and achieving goals.

Brainstorming is a group process of producing the most potential options to resolve a problem or achieve a goal.

Here are the most important steps.

Step 1. Pick your team.

Keep your group small (seven or less). If more than seven members, break them into smaller groups and compare the results.

Step 2. Use Mindstorming (Optional!).

The day before, give each team member a sealed envelope with instructions not to open it until they get home that night. Inside the envelope are instructions to conduct a *Mindstorming Exercise* by writing down many potential options for a problem. Also, ask them not to share their options before the meeting the next day.

Step 3. Prepare needed materials.

You'll need a blackboard, whiteboard, or some large sheets of paper on a vertical easel, wide-tipped markers to record all options for all to see.

Step 4. Decide how you'll participate.

Some members may not feel comfortable if you conduct the session. If you ever feel that your presence could diminish the team's effectiveness, find something else to do.

Step 5. Assign other duties.

If needed, select someone else to facilitate the *Brainstorming Session* and assign another member to act as the *Scribe* to record each option.

Step 6. Conduct the meeting.

A good *Brainstorming Session* should consist of these three phases:

Phase I. Capture All Options:

Limit this phase to 10-15 minutes or just enough time for each member to present their options. In this phase, you're looking for volume only. Judgment or criticism is reserved for the next phase.

Phase II. Discuss all Options:

After capturing everyone's options, this phase is where discussion is encouraged, and options are consolidated.

Phase III. Validate each Option by using the *"Common-Sense Test:"*

This phase is designed to assess the validity of each option by using the **Common-Sense Test**. This test asks five questions about each option to qualify it as a valid option. If any option receives a "*No"* or *"we're not sure"* answer, it's eliminated.

> **1. Is it Suitable?** Does the option solve the problem, and is it legal and ethical?
>
> **2. Is it Feasible?** Does it fit within available or easily acquirable resources?
>
> **3. Is it Acceptable?** Is it worth the cost and the risk?
>
> **4. Is it Distinguishable?** Does it differ significantly from other options?
>
> **5. Is it Complete?** Does it solve the problem from start to finish?

Step 7. Select the Best.

In the end, you should have a list of valid options that require further research to help you select the best option. *Brainstorming* helps build commitment. Since you've included the team in the selection process, they'll be more committed when the time comes to implement the best option.

Involvement builds commitment, and commitment is critical to the consistent production of excellent results.

BY CONDUCTING A

PROJECT UPDATE

"It takes half your life before you discover
life is a do-it-yourself project."
- Napoleon Hill

Do you know how to provide important information to your boss concerning the status of your projects to ensure he understands your progress, changes, and *Unresolved Issues?*

A Project Update is a summary of a project provided to the boss as to its status.

Your boss may have some changes or modifications to the original *Plan of Action.* These last-minute changes are usually the things that complicate any project. So, prepare for these changes, document them carefully, and communicate them to all Key Players. There are two ways to provide a *Project Update*, either by a Briefing or a Dashboard.

By conducting a Project Update Briefing

Here are the most important steps.

Step 1: Overall assessment.

When reporting the summary, give the *bottom-line*, *up-front*. Then, justify your assessment. How's the assignment doing in relation to the scope, schedule, money, and people from the original POA?

Positive assessments: On-schedule, within budget, looking good, progressing nicely.

Negative assessments: Behind-schedule, in trouble, over-budget, or has major problems.

Step 2: Unresolved Issues.

Present any question, unknown, concern, shortfall, obstacle, or problem that could slow or stop your progress (Chapter 10). If new problems are introduced, the boss will expect you to present options to resolve these problems and recommend which option is best. Your boss will also expect

you to have already presented the problem to all Key Players for their concurrence or non-concurrence with comments (Chapter 20).

Step 3: Changes.

Present any new changes since your last briefing.

Step 4: Close.

Close by summarizing and restating any assignments made during the briefing or any Follow-through action. Confirm the date and time of the next update. Prepare a Memorandum for Record (MFR) to document what happened during the meeting.

By creating a Project Update Dashboard

The most popular type of business dashboard is the Google Analytics Dashboards, used on 55% of all websites, which shows the activity on a website, like visits, entry pages, bounce rate, and traffic sources.

A Dashboard is a graphic or picture providing at-a-glance views or "snap-shots" of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) relevant to a project's objective or a business process.

It's posted where all Key Players can access it (like a shared-drive so all can check progress, 24/7).

Here's an example of a Dashboard.

If done manually, ensure you update it every week or as changes occur. Email any changes to all concerned. Since a Dashboard is intended to provide the same material as a Project Update Briefing, design it to quickly give the same

important information. You can also add links to other documents, like Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ). Software providers include Tableau, Monday, Domo, and Qlik Sense. Providing Project Updates to your boss enhances your credibility.

BY CONDUCTING A

REHEARSAL

"Take calculated risks.
That is quite different from being rash."
- George S. Patton

Do you know how to uncover any *Pre-Problems* that could slow or stop your work?

By Rehearsing

A Rehearsal is the process of reviewing (looking at) the results of others before they get in front of your boss to ensure all Pre-Problems (mistakes, defects, shortfalls, omissions, or errors) have been resolved.

The type of rehearsal I'm referring to here is to examine everything concerning your project BEFORE your boss sees it. How hard is that?

Why do you think weddings have rehearsals?

Do you have the ring, know where to stand, know what to say, and know the sequence of what's going to happen next? And why does it matter? Who wants it to be perfect? Enough said. What do you need to see, test, or practice a few days before your project starts?

Get a Clue! Even criminals have rehearsals because they know the consequences if they don't.

Rehearsals include things like previews, layouts, practice, a sand-table, or white-board walk-throughs. They also include demonstrations, role-playing, document reviews, and testing. And when your rehearsal uncovers a flaw, have it fixed and have another rehearsal.

Caution! Never ask people, *"are you ready?"* Instead, say, *"Show me that you're ready. I want to see it!"* What's stopping you?

Look, I can't tell you how many times I've been burned by people who've said to me that they were ready when they weren't. So, do yourself a favor. If this is your project, your job is to check. That means looking at everything before it gets in front of your boss.

As a child, I was told that *"Practice makes perfect."* As an adult, I learned that this was false. It should be,

"Perfect practice makes perfect."

If you're practicing the wrong way, your results will suffer. That's why you always need a coach, someone who can show you how it should be done correctly to achieve the best result.

My favorite practice quote comes from **Coach Paul *"Bear"* Bryant**.

> **"It's not the will to win that matters – everyone has that. It's the will to prepare (or practice) to win that matters."**

It's no wonder Coach Bryant amassed six national championships and thirteen conference championships as the head coach of the University of Alabama's football team.

Growing up, I also learned that to be the best, I needed to "*Practice until I got it right."* However, much later in life, I found that to master anything, I needed to

"Practice until I couldn't get it wrong."

The best example of this comes from **Mary Lou Retton,** who won the gold medal in the 1984 Olympics in LA. She scored a perfect 10 in the vault competition.

After that vault, she asked the judges if she could do it again to show it wasn't just a lucky vault. Her score was another perfect 10. More impressive was that she was a sophomore in high school, had recently had leg surgery, and won two silver medals and two bronze medals.

Her performance was historic because she was the first-ever American woman to win the all-around gold medal at the Olympics, making her the most popular athlete in the US.

BY CONDUCTING AN

AFTER-ACTION REVIEW

"We don't have a crisis of leadership in Washington.
We have a crisis of followership."
- Jonathan Rauch

How can you enhance your performance and the performance of your team? One way is to use *After-Action Reviews.*

An After-Action Review (AAR) is a professional discussion conducted after an activity, with all members present, seeking ways to consistently improve the way things are done.

AARs should be conducted both during (at the end of each day) and the day after an activity (project, objective, or goal) by measuring the difference between what was supposed to happen (the Plan) vs. what did happen (Behavior and Results). AARs observe, measure, record, and assess an activity or process from start to finish to examine the results and the behavior of those involved.

The purpose of an AAR is to:

Capture and share intuition by asking HOW and WHY questions.

Attempt to discover WHY things happen and how to get better.

Help members understand HOW and WHY decisions are made.

Encourage members to become *self-correcting* and more *aware of how their behavior affects others (Appendix G).

Capture *Lessons Learned* to integrate into future operations.

Here are the four most important steps to conducting an AAR:

Step 1. The Objective.

Before the activity (project, objective, or goal): What are we trying to achieve? What performance standards and results are desired? Who and what will be observed, and how will it be measured?

Step 2. The Results and Behavior.

During the activity: What happened? What was observed and measured? What are the facts?

Step 3. The Assessment.

Did things go as expected? Were there any surprises?

If the result wasn't what we expected, what should be started, stopped, or changed to achieve a better result?

WHY and HOW did we do what we did?

Step 4. The Lessons Learned.

What did we learn that can help us do better next time?

*To learn more about *Awareness*, available at **Amazon.com,** see "OTHER PLAYBOOKS."

By using Informal After-Action Reviews

Let's assume that you're the Project Manager for a four-day Trade Show and you have three team members.

The week before the show, you and your boss sat down to discuss the plan and its objective. Why are we attending this show? What's the ideal outcome you'd like to see? How will this outcome be measured? After finishing with your boss, you met with your team and briefed them on the plan. Fast forward to the end of the first day of the show. You assembled your team and asked, what did we learn today that can make us better tomorrow?

One team member said it would have been nice to have some bottled water in our booth. A second member said, we also need a lunch schedule, so everyone has a chance to eat. Also, we're running low on our advertising brochures. You then asked one team member to provide bottled water in the booth every day. Then you asked another member to set up a lunch schedule for each day. And finally, you called your boss and asked him to overnight a bunch of advertising brochures. You also conducted an informal review at the end of each day with the goal of continuous improvement.

The day after the trade show, you gathered your team together and asked if we accomplished our goal? Did everything go as planned? Were there any surprises? What did we learn that could make the next Trade Show better? You then added all comments to your After-Action Report so next year's Trade Show can be even better.

BY CONDUCTING

INTERNAL MEETINGS

Murphy's Law on Meetings:
A meeting is an event at which the minutes
are kept, and the hours are lost.

Do you know how to conduct productive and meaningful meetings to enhance the quality and effectiveness of your team?

Have you ever been to a meeting that was a waste of time, and you just wanted to leave? Was it your meeting? Today, many face-to-face, sit-down meetings are often unproductive, especially when considering all the advanced communication technology available. However, meetings can be productive and meaningful, and here are a few suggestions.

1. Simplify your Agenda.

Most meetings I've attended failed to get to the heart of the problems needing attention.

Here are the most important components:

Present: What are you currently working on, and when do you expect to finish?

Future: What are you planning to accomplish before our next meeting?

Unresolved Issues: Do you have any questions, unknowns, concerns, shortfalls, obstacles, or problems that could slow or stop your progress (Chapter 10)?

After starting the meeting, go around the room and ask everyone to comment on their three agenda items. You may even request that everyone submit their three agenda items via email to you or the meeting facilitator the day before. This way, a copy of each person's response can be provided to all participants at the meeting.

2. Preside instead of conduct.

Ask someone else to conduct your meeting so that you can preside. Conducting a meeting is good training for your #2 person. It allows you to observe the body language, note who's not participating, and inject, clarify, question, reinforce, or redirect, as needed.

3. Hold members accountable (Appendix G).

In a non-threatening way, *accountability* means asking:

How are you progressing on your assignments?

How do you intend to resolve your problems?

Do you need more time or other resources?

If someone needs more time to complete an assignment, consider renegotiating a new deadline (Appendix F).

4. Don't get distracted.

The reason for not dealing with new, non-emergency, *Unresolved Issues* is to avoid being distracted and losing focus during your meeting.

If a new *Unresolved Issue* is brought up, that's a non-emergency and can't be resolved quickly; you have several options:

Assign someone to lead another meeting to resolve the issue. Assign all others that you feel need to be at that meeting.

Assign the person who brought up the issue to write a *Decision Paper* (Appendix C).

Assign the person who brought up the issue to come to see you with a recommended solution before the next meeting.

Most importantly, don't leave this issue without an assignment. Near the end of the meeting, review all assignments made during the meeting.

5. Consider setting these expectations.

Meetings start and end on time and last no more than one hour.

If you can't attend, send someone to discuss your agenda items.

Bad language isn't permitted, and only one person speaks at a time.

No throwing anyone *under-the-bus*, especially if not present.

Do everything you can to support each other (Teamwork is critical).

No distractions, no texting or communicating on any devices.

I expect your 100% attention, involvement, and participation.

I expect you to treat everyone with respect and kindness

Come to participate, contribute, encourage, and help others.

BY DEFINING

ACCEPTABLE PERFORMANCE

"A coach is someone who can give correction
without causing resentment."
- John Wooden

When unacceptable performance (either results or behavior) is identified, you have two kinds of negative motivators you can use: correcting and punishing.

Correcting is used for minor deviations from the desired performance (behavior or results). Correcting isn't punishment; it's part of the normal course of doing business and includes verbal corrections and rework Chapter 28).

Punishing is used for more serious deviations from the desired performance or when corrective measures have proven unsuccessful, including reprimands, retraining, probation, termination, and even legal action (Chapter 29).

There are consequences to your actions (or inactions), sometimes good, sometimes not so good. Just know that the day will come when you need to use punishment to get someone's attention or correct unacceptable performance (Chapter 29).

What's Bad Performance?

Before we continue, let's define a few key terms:

Performance: Performance includes both behavior and results.

Unacceptable: Instead of using the term "bad" performance, let's change it to "unacceptable" performance. When trying to correct someone's "bad" performance, they often translate this to mean that they're a "bad" person that could cause them to become defensive. Doing so defuses any potential conflict and helps the member make the correction.

Offense: This is the specific result or behavior that was unacceptable.

What's Unacceptable Behavior

Unacceptable Behavior comes from the overall impact on the team and its effectiveness and depends on the context. However, you need a more reliable standard to assess if a member's behavior is acceptable or not, which you can then apply to any situation.

**Any behavior that violates the established Code of Conduct
or disrupts the team's stability, harmony, or productivity
is by definition "unacceptable."**

This means that any behavior that violates this standard is "unacceptable."

Unacceptable behavior has a tangible impact on profitability. For example, any behavior that causes missed objectives, declining productivity, increased sick days, higher turnover, and the time and money lost in hiring and training new members will diminish your profitability.

Here are the most common unacceptable behaviors:

Disrespectful behavior: Disrespectful behaviors range from overt acts of abuse and "unacceptable" behavior to insidious actions so embedded in the culture that they seem normal, like gossip. Examples include public humiliation, criticizing, interrupting, ridiculing, dismissing achievements, shouting, blaming, degrading a team member in front of others, inappropriate sarcasm, and speaking in a condescending or belittling way.

Disruptive Behavior: Egregious conduct evident in the behavior or speech, like angry or rude outbursts, verbal or written threats and swearing, throwing objects, bullying, and threats or infliction of physical force.

Demeaning Behavior: Patterns of debasing behavior that exploit the weakness of another, like:

Shaming, humiliation, demeaning comments, spiteful behavior, backstabbing behavior.

Nitpicking or faultfinding.

Censuring members in front of others.

Insults and insensitive jokes or remarks.

Sexual harassment and sexual innuendos.

Intimidating Behavior: Behaviors or threats used by one member to control another, like:

Abuse of power through threats, coercion, and force of personality.

Overbearing, arrogant, patronizing behavior.

Sarcasm or taunting, and hostile notes or emails.

Invading another person's personal space intentionally.

Unjust verbal statements by someone in authority that result in distressful consequences for the recipient and others.

Dismissive Behavior: Behavior that makes a member feel unimportant or uninformed, like:

Condescending or patronizing comments.

Gossip.

Aloof, disinterested, or ignoring behavior.

Slights due to gender or race.

Impatience.

Resistance to work collaboratively.

Refusal to value, recognize, acknowledge, or praise others.

Exclusionary and over-ruling behavior.

Passive-Aggressive Behavior: On the surface, *Passive-Aggressive (or PA) Behavior* may appear as stubbornness or a polite unwillingness to agree. However, the PA person is trying to manipulate you to turn to their way of thinking (or hope you'll give the work to someone else).

Passive-Aggressive (PA) Behavior describes someone who exhibits manipulative behavior within their personality.

The PA person, who could also be your boss, may use these techniques as a form of intimidation. They'll sulk when you ask for their help or may simply take an undue amount of time to decide. This is their way of showing displeasure by using passive-aggressive behavior.

The PA person hopes that you won't ask them to do anything anymore by exhibiting this behavior. They hope that their behavior will be too off-putting and that next time, you'll ignore them or offer some special concession to get them to do their job. Don't fall for it!

PA behavior includes, but is not limited to:

Selective disobedience, contentious behavior, delaying, failing to return and report, resisting, and blowing it off.

Dissension, murmuring, arguing after the decision is made, undermining, and rebelling.

Sarcasm, mockery, pushing back, belaboring, and not participating.

Any outward display of displeasure or nonsupport.

Chronic lateness to meetings and sluggish response to requests.

Negative body language: Subtle, unspoken behavior that may seem innocent enough but is nonetheless disrespectful, including:

Staring or glaring, sighing, making gestures, and pointing.

Making faces, raising eyebrows, and rolling eyes.

Positioning their body to exclude others.

Rude behaviors: Rude behavior includes:

Checking your phone constantly, being late, and interrupting.

Grooming in public (flossing, scratching, picking your nose, combing hair, applying makeup, or cutting nails).

Burping and coughing without covering your mouth.

Keeping others waiting, littering, and talking over someone.

What're Unacceptable Results?

All companies produce a product, service, or both.

Unacceptable results mean that a product or service failed to meet the established standard or the customer's expectations.

This means that any result that violates this standard is "unacceptable."

For an Unacceptable Service:

An unacceptable service is normally identified by a customer and results in either a new service for free, their money back, or both. The most common cause of an unacceptable service includes a failure to produce the advertised result, problems with the service providers, failure to arrive on time, and a price increase.

For an Unacceptable Product:

An unacceptable product is normally identified by a Quality Control process that inspects products before leaving your unit. If not, the customer should receive a new product for free, their money back, or both. The most common causes of an unacceptable product include a failure to perform as advertised, damage during shipping, missing items, price increases, broke during use.

How can you enhance the quality of your results?

Quality is a result of effectiveness, efficiency, and consistency.

What's Effectiveness?

This refers to the output produced from your business systems.

**Effectiveness means successfully producing
a desired or intended result.**

Effectiveness is future-oriented and involves achieving goals, anticipating change, and striving for innovation.

Effectiveness First, then Efficiency!

What's Efficiency?

Once you're effective, look for ways to become more efficient. This is done by finding ways to make your products and services better (faster, easier, lighter, smaller, more innovative, safer, and more secure)?

**Efficiency means taking something that's
working well and making it better.**

Your job is to make things better than you found them. Establish a reputation as the one who gets things done and is effective, efficient, and consistently produces excellent results. Efficiency focuses on the present and involves process improvement.

What's Consistency?

Consistency is critical to achieving success over time. For example, would you buy a car from a company that only produced a quality product, only one out of one hundred cars?

**Consistency means maintaining a standard or
repeating a task with minimal variation.**

What happens to inconsistent NFL Football Coaches near the end of the season? They get fired! It's not personal; it's business! Consistency is fundamental to excellence, even if the output is consistently bad. You can improve any system if it's consistent in its output.

Quality Results =

Effectiveness + Efficiency + Consistency.

BY DOING THE

RIGHT THING

"Stay focused on your mission, remain steadfast
in your pursuit of excellence, and always
do the right thing."
- Mark Esper

What's the *Right Thing?* Do you always do what's right or what's easiest? Here are several useful definitions to help you demonstrate the *Right Thing:*

By remembering what you learned in Kindergarten

From the book, *All I really need to know, I learned in Kindergarten,* by **Robert Fulghum,** you'll find a great list of desired behavior to help you do the right thing.

"These are the (eleven of the sixteen) things I learned:

Share everything.

Play fair.

Don't hit people.

Put things back where you found them.

Clean up your own mess.

Don't take things that aren't yours.

Say you're sorry when you hurt somebody.

Wash your hands before you eat.

Flush.

Live a balanced life - learn some, think some, draw, paint, sing, dance, play, and work every day some.

When you go out in the world, watch out for traffic, hold-hands, and stick together.

Everything you need to know about life is in these twelve things somewhere.

Character includes *The Golden Rule*, love, basic sanitation, ecology, politics, equality, and sane living. All these are signs of maturity. Stop and think – what would happen if all nations had a law to always put things back where they found them and to clean up their own mess? What a better world we could create. That's the power of character.

This is an excellent beginning of how to treat others with respect and kindness. Character doesn't happen automatically and is too important to be left to chance. Your effectiveness depends on it. And there is such a thing as *Right* and *Wrong* behavior. We all have a duty to teach others, especially the young, that honesty is superior to lying, fairness to cheating and stealing, and caring to indifference.

What do some Religions say about Right and Wrong Behavior?

The ultimate guide for *Right* behavior is the *Golden Rule*, and here's what some religions consider their *Golden Rule*.

Christianity: *"As ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise."*

Islam: *"No one of you is a believer until he desires for his brother that which he desires for himself."*

Hinduism: *"One should never do that to another which one regards as injurious to one's own self."*

All religions teach their members the same thing; to treat others as they wish to be treated – with respect and kindness.

From an early age, I learned these simple lessons about accountability or doing the *Right Thing*:

If you lose, damage, or break something that doesn't belong to you, you need to fix it or buy it.

If you borrow something, you need to return it in the same or better condition than you found it.

If you back into and damage someone's car, and they're not around, you need to leave your name and number.

If you were mean or disrespectful to someone, you need to apologize (Chapter 30).

BY CORRECTING

UNACCEPTABLE PERFORMANCE

"Correction does much, but encouragement does more."
- Goethe

What do you do when a team member's performance is unacceptable? When this happens, you have two kinds of negative motivators you can use: correcting and punishing.

By taking these steps BEFORE an offense.

Step 1. Know the Standards of Excellence.

Before making any correction, you need to know all the company's written, implied, and expected standards, especially if a union is involved. In addition, behavioral standards are normally provided to all team members as part of In-Processing and available in writing as part of the company's *Code of Ethics* and other compliance documents.

Step 2. Find what needs to be corrected.

When you notice something that needs to be corrected, immediately and discreetly speak with the member to ensure the correction is made. Never walk by something that needs to be corrected, or you'll be sending the message that it's not important. When correcting, you're training members on what's acceptable and what's not.

Step 4. Make it Private!

This is the most important step before you can successfully correct anyone. Either do so quietly or move to somewhere where you won't be interrupted. This is the best way to show respect.

Step 3. Choose your words carefully.

When a member fails to meet a standard, this is called an "offense." If you're trying to correct someone's "bad" behavior, they often hear this to mean that they're a "bad" person that could cause them to become defensive. To avoid this, instead of using the term "bad," use the term "unacceptable." The assumption here is that their behavior or results are something the member can correct.

Step 5. Separate the member from the offense.

When you separate the offense from the member, you're now ready to discuss the offense. By doing so and focusing on their "behavior or results," will defuse any potential conflict and help the member make the correction.

Never attempt to correct someone's "attitude."

Focus on their behavior instead.

If your focus is on the member rather than the offense, you'll create an adversarial relationship.

Step 6. Set clear boundaries.

Appropriate boundaries are an important part of any healthy relationship. Let the member know what's acceptable and what's not. Establish clear consequences if they fail to respect your boundaries (Chapter 26). A good example is unacceptable or offensive language and jokes.

Step 7. Know how to deal with excuses.

What's the difference between a *Reason* and an *Excuse* (Appendix G)?

Here's a simple rule:

Reasons are believable, understandable, and forgivable.

Excuses aren't.

By taking these steps AFTER an offense.

How do you make corrections? Here are the most important steps to take:

Step 1. Give the member a chance to respond.

Give the member a chance to speak without interrupting. Let them know that you hear and respect what he has to say. Try rephrasing what he said to ensure you understand him correctly. Show that you're listening actively by nodding, making eye contact, and using phrases like "*Okay,*" "*Right,*" or "*I hear you.*"

Step 2. Hold the member accountable for his performance.

No discussion of correcting someone's performance can occur without a firm understanding of *accountability,* which isn't something you're born with. It comes as you mature and become a *Fully Functioning Adult*.

Unfortunately, very few people in the workplace will have a fully developed sense of *accountability or maturity*. If they did, your job would be easy (Appendix G).

Accountability means no excuses, complaining, blaming, or deception!

The day you fully accept that you're entirely *accountable* for your success or failure and realize that no one is coming to your rescue will be the first day of your peak performance.

And there's very little you can't be, do, or have after you accept this motto:

"If it is to be, it is up to me!" – Anonymous.

Step 3. Use these eight steps from the Correcting Process:

The Correcting Process	
1. Private	Find somewhere private to discuss the potential offense.
2. Observation	"I noticed, saw, heard, or have been told."
3. Verify	"Is this true and why did it happen?"
Continue only if the offense is true and the member's reason was invalid.	
4. Effect	Explain how this offense makes you feel. "I feel, think, believe, or I'm concerned that..."
5. Request	State what you want the member to do to correct the offense. "I need you to.... (Start, stop, or change)."
6. Consequences	"Bob, if this behavior happens again, it will be dealt with more seriously."
7. Expectation	"You're one of my best team members. But I need you to fix this today."
8. Commitment	"How can you ensure me this won't happen again?"

Notice that each step of the process has a suggested sentence to get you started. If the correcting process doesn't work, you may have to consider punishment (Chapters 28 and 29).

Here's one example of how *The Correcting Process* can be used.

> *You overhear one of your Direct Reports, Bob, screaming at one of his team members. Bob was very upset over something. You interrupt and ask Bob to walk with you to a vacant room. You close the door and say, "Bob, I noticed you were screaming at Sally about something. I'm concerned because this isn't acceptable behavior, but more importantly, this isn't you. I need you to calm down, apologize to Sally, and refrain from screaming at anyone. Okay?" Pause: "Bob, I'm surprised at this behavior. I expect much better from you. You're one of my people. But I need you to fix this today."*

In this example, you used *The Correcting Process* to guide your actions. And you can ask for an explanation. But what does it matter? His behavior was unacceptable. Your actions were immediate, appropriate, private, and direct. You might also recommend that he take some time off.

BY PUNISHING

UNACCEPTABLE PERFORMANCE

"We need to understand the difference between
discipline and punishment. Punishment is what you do
to someone; discipline is what you do for someone."
- Zig Ziglar

The second type of negative motivator is to administer punishment. Punishment is considered for serious offenses or when previous attempts to correct a member's performance have been unsuccessful. No discussion of punishment will make any sense unless you understand the concept of Justice and Mercy.

To Apply Justice (assuming the person works for you), ask:

Did the member do something wrong?

Why did they do it or fail to do it?

What damage occurred?

To Apply Mercy (assuming this person did something wrong or unacceptable), ask:

Did he know he was doing something unacceptable?

Did he accept accountability for his actions or inactions?

Is this a repeat offense? If so, the punishment is increased.

You can also suspend the punishment for a specific time. Don't forget to discuss the situation with your boss and Human Resources before taking action.

Before administering punishment, ask:

Is the punishment Fair and Reasonable?

Is it Progressive (verbal reprimand, written reprimand)?

Is it Equitable (the same offense receives the same punishment)?

Do you have the authority, or do you need your boss?

Are your boss and HR in agreement?

What are your options for punishment?

Examples include a written reprimand, retraining, probation, transfer to another unit, loss of income, demotion, privilege or access, poor performance

review, termination, and legal action. There are consequences to your actions (or inactions), sometimes good, sometimes not so good. Just know that the day will come when you'll need to use punishment to get someone's attention.

What if you need to let someone go?

During your time in the workforce, you'll be faced with the situation of having to let someone go. It's inevitable. All 50 US States (except Montana) have an **"at-will" clause** in their employment contracts. This means that your boss can let you go at any time, without reason.

The Peter Principle is a concept in management theory formulated by **Laurence J. Peter**. The selection of a candidate for a position is based on the member's performance in their current role rather than their abilities relevant to the intended role. Thus, members stop being promoted once they can no longer perform effectively.

However, before you do so, answer these questions:

> Do you have the authority to let someone go?
>
> Have you done all you can do to save the person?
>
> Are your efforts to save the person documented?
>
> Have you kept your boss and HR appraised?

Remember, the day will come for everyone when your best won't be good enough. This doesn't mean that they're a bad person. It just means that the position wasn't a good fit. And wouldn't it be nice if you had a boss who helped you move on to where you would be more productive? Remember that when it's your turn to let someone go.

If you want to keep your team motivated, ensure you take decisive action with those who are a distraction to the team. If you don't, they'll become a de-motivator.

BY KEEPING

THE PEACE

"Success isn't measured by money or power or social rank.
Success is measured by your discipline and inner peace."
- Mike Ditka

Have you ever worked somewhere where there was at least one person who stood out as a troublemaker? You know - that one person who was always late to meetings, a chronic complainer, negative attitude, and caused drama, disharmony, and distractions? There seems to be one in every office. This behavior is unacceptable and can't be tolerated.

Keeping the Peace is your ability to help others cope
with the ebb and flow of their emotions.

If someone failed to learn how to play nice with the other kids in Kindergarten, do you really want him on your team? Think about what it's like to work in a Fire House. Firefighters work together as a team for two reasons: to get the job done and not endanger their fellow Firefighters' lives.

This doesn't mean that everyone likes each other. However, it does mean that they separate their working relationships from their personal relationships. And, if they can't keep them separate and the unacceptable behavior spills over into their working environment, causing disharmony within the team, one or both should be released for the good of the team.

I believe **Dorothy Thompson** had it right when she said,

> *"Peace is not the absence of conflict, but the ability to cope with it."*

Conflict is inevitable and expected. Not all conflict is bad unless it becomes personal, abusive, or violent. Effective people respond quickly, privately, and treat everyone with respect and kindness. In the workplace, you're responsible for and accountable to your boss for everything that happens or fails to happen within your unit. You're also accountable to your boss for your team members' performance (Appendix G).

Unacceptable behavior is never someone else's fault!

Here are a few suggestions on how to *Keep the Peace*.

Do you know the standards?

Know your organization's standards of behavior and consult with your boss and HR before taking any serious action. Unacceptable behavior or results is the enemy of teamwork and cannot be tolerated for any reason (Chapter 26).

Is it your job to judge others?

If you're the boss, absolutely, but with limitations. It's not your place to judge or treat anyone as being a bad person. Focus instead on their behavior and results, not the person! That means no name-calling, labeling, or stereotyping. It's also unwise to judge someone's attitude; assess their behavior instead.

Behavior includes what they say and do, what they fail to say and do, and the consequences. For example, suppose someone smells bad (poor hygiene due to not bathing). This behavior is something someone failed to do, which is unacceptable behavior-especially if it causes disharmony within the team.

While it's your duty to judge the performance of those in your charge, it's not your duty to judge whether anyone is a good or bad person. Judging behavior is everyone's responsibility, although it's done infrequently. For example, if you see unacceptable behavior outside of work and don't want to confront the person, report it to someone in authority or dial 911 and let the Police sort it out.

What's conflict?

Workplace conflict is a state of discord caused by the actual or perceived opposition of needs, values, and interests between people working together.

The conflict between members means a serious disagreement or argument. Conflict can also be a disagreement or argument among teams or members characterized by antagonism and hostility. This type of conflict is usually fueled by a team member against another attempting to reach a different objective.

Conflict and contention are normal, natural, and expected, especially in the workplace. This happens because everyone is at a different level of maturity, a different level of accountability (Appendix G).

Conflict is inevitable because you can't please all the people all the time, no matter what you do. So, get used to it and prepare for it. Taking offense is a choice.

No one can hurt your feelings or offend you without your permission.

So, don't avoid difficult conversations. Preparation is the key to handling difficult conversations. Learn to use the *Correcting Process* (Chapter 28). The sooner you have the private conversation, the better. If it's serious or a repeat offense, document it using the process recommended by Human Resources and Company Policy.

Is conflict always destructive?

Conflict happens naturally. The clash of thoughts and ideas is a part of the human experience. It can be destructive if left unchecked. However, it's not always negative. It can also be a great way of generating more meaningful solutions to problems. Conflict can be an opportunity for learning and understanding the differences. These positive outcomes can be reached through effective conflict resolution. You can work in harmony despite conflict if you know how to manage these struggles.

How do you Apologize with Remorse?

Why is it so hard to say you're sorry or admit a mistake? The answer is simple; you're letting your fear and pride get in your way of doing the right thing.

When you hurt someone's feelings or your behavior was unacceptable, have the moral courage to apologize, say you're sorry, what behavior you're sorry for, offer no excuses, and don't do it again.

For example: *"I'm sorry I raised my voice at you. You deserve better."*

Why no excuses? Making excuses diminishes your sincerity and makes you sound like you're trying to hide behind your excuse. You're human, and humans make mistakes. Express your sincere remorse, not guilt. Guilt is acknowledging your unacceptable behavior, while remorse is regretting your actions and taking steps to undo the damage.

When your finish, look down, say nothing, and wait for a response. The other person doesn't have to forgive you, but you need to forgive yourself and move forward.

Guilt leads to destructive tendencies, while remorse leads to constructive actions. To be remorseful, you must accept the guilt first.

When you make a mistake, have the moral courage to admit it, fix it, and learn from it.

Being in-charge is about making decisions, and sometimes your decisions will make you unpopular. This is why doing the right thing can be difficult. Stay calm, stay focused, and listen to input from your team. Then, communicate honestly as to the reasoning behind your decision.

Your character can be developed and refined by any combination of motivations or by default. It's how you treat others, especially when under stress. Being a person of character is a conscious choice you make every day. Learn from your mistakes.

BY RESOLVING

CONFLICT

"People like to say that the conflict is between good and evil.
The real conflict is between truth and lies."
- Don Miguel Ruiz

No one likes face-to-face confrontations. But you can't avoid them! But you don't have to be a jerk.

Conflict resolution is your ability to alleviate or eliminate the source of human conflict by using mediation, arbitration, coaching, dispute resolution, forgiveness, teamwork, and active listening.

No one likes face-to-face confrontations. But you can't avoid them! But you don't have to be a jerk. However, it doesn't have to be adversarial if you know what you're doing.

Unacceptable behavior or results should never be overlooked.

Other team members and your boss are watching and expecting you to consistently enforce the standards and hold members accountable for their unacceptable behavior and results. Generally, there are two different situations where conflict will occur: between two team members and between you and a team member.

Resolving conflict between Two Team Members

As the boss, you're expected to be the *Peace Maker*. Arguments and disagreements can be good unless members talk over each other without listening, raise their voices, use unacceptable language, blame, make excuses, or disrespect. Here are the most important things to do when in this situation:

Step 1. Don't choose sides or get involved in the confrontation.

Remain objective and focus on their unacceptable behavior, not the person or their attitude. Don't get sucked into the dispute because you don't want your behavior to be called into question.

Step 2. Intervene and issue the First Warning.

If the behavior of any member becomes unacceptable, warn them that their behavior is unacceptable, and if it continues, you will stop the meeting. Ask what the argument or conflict is about?

Step 3. If it continues, issue the Second Warning.

Take a 15-minute break.

Step 4. If it continues, end the meeting.

Separate both members and make the assignment to write a decision paper explaining their point of view. If necessary, physically separate both members to return the environment to civility so work can resume. No one likes a hostile workplace.

These distractions can only diminish your ability to consistently produce excellent results and can't be tolerated.

Step 5. If both parties cannot reconcile their differences.

As adults, if both members cannot reconcile their differences, one or both may need to be removed from the team. You are doing this to protect the *Health and Welfare* of your team.

Resolving conflict between you and a Team Member

Here are the most important things to consider when a team member treats you with disrespect. If someone treats you with disrespect, don't overreact! That's what the other member wants you to do.

Conflict will arise in either a group or a private setting.

If in a Group Setting: Let's assume that you were in your team meeting when one of your team members said that one of your decisions was stupid. Disrespectful YES, but don't overreact. When appropriate, take a break (or wait until the meeting is over) and move to a more private, one-on-one setting by asking the member to walk with you.

If in a Private Setting: Let's assume that you're in a private setting:

Follow the steps from the *Correcting Process* (Chapter 28).

Master the Art of Apologizing (Chapter 30).

32

BY BUILDING

TRUST

*"Better to trust the man who is frequently in error
than the one who is never in doubt."*
- Eric Sevareid

Trust is the glue that holds everything together for any company. Trust is important in business because it forms the basis of all relationships and interactions.

Trust is the firm belief in the reliability, honesty, integrity, ability, or strength of someone.

Creating a sense of trust is the most important factor when considering team member performance. Successful businesses are built on relationships, and the foundation of all relationships is trust. Unfortunately, there may be times when some people may not see eye to eye.

However, if members treat each other with respect and kindness and can get their ideas across without feeling belittled or discriminated against, then trust can be built. Without trust, your ability to come to an agreement or build consensus will always be compromised.

What are the benefits of trust?

Increases productivity and improves morale.

Enables members to work more effectively as a team.

Reduces the time needed to discuss key issues and make decisions.

Facilitates cooperation and collaborative problem-solving.

Improves effectiveness and diminishes costs.

Expands teamwork and sustainability.

Trust is the emotional component of companionship, friendship, love, agreement, relaxation, and comfort.

Why are some bosses reluctant to *delegate?

The main phobia bosses have about delegating is losing control. I get it. However, the truth is that you never had control in the first place.

Control over other people is an illusion!

But, influence, through persuasion, is achievable.

The sooner you realize this fact, the quicker you'll achieve order from chaos and let others do their job. The key to delegating is to do so gradually until you know who can move the work forward and who can't.

Are there different degrees of trust?

Here's a list showing the different degrees of trust, starting with showing *very little trust* and ending with showing *complete trust*:

Bring the facts to me for action (little trust).

Develop alternatives, and I'll take action based on the facts.

Be prepared to take action, but don't do anything until I say so.

Tell me what you propose to do and when.

Analyze the situation, take action, and tell me the results.

Just go! Here's the situation; deal with it! (complete trust).

How do you build trust?

Do you know the most important components of building relationships? You shouldn't be surprised that it's trust. How much does your boss trust you? How much trust do you have in your team members?

Here are the important components of building trust:

If others sense that you're AUTHENTIC, you're much more likely to be trusted.

If others sense that your LOGIC is solid, you're far more likely to be trusted.

If others sense your EMPATHY is sincere and directed at them, you're far more likely to be trusted.

When all three are present, you have their trust. But if any one of these three is missing or needs work, trust is in question.

*To learn more about **Delegating,** available at **Amazon.com,** see "OTHER PLAYBOOKS."

How can you become more Authentic?

In human relations, your lack of authenticity is considered bad faith in dealing with other people. As a result, you'll tend to hold back who you really are for fear that someone might dislike you.

Authenticity is the degree to which your actions are congruent with your beliefs and desires, despite external pressures to conform.

You may even go so far as to be more like those with whom you work, hoping to fit in. Unfortunately, all this only makes you less likely to be trusted.

Pay less attention to what other people think about you and more attention to what you think about yourself. We all have an obligation to set and maintain the conditions that not only make it safe to be authentic but make it welcome. It's the key to achieving greater effectiveness.

How do you do it? You do it by being yourself and treating everyone with respect and kindness.

How can you use Logic?

Logic is the study of correct reasoning, especially as it involves the drawing of inferences.

Logic has two gates that you must pass through to be acceptable.

It must be rational, reasonable, and doable.

It must be communicated in a manner that's easily understood, straightforward, and supported with evidence.

How can you show Empathy?

Empathy is the capacity to understand or feel what another person is experiencing and the capacity to place oneself in another's position.

There are two levels of empathy: Cognitive and Affective.

Cognitive empathy means that you're capable of understanding other people's thoughts and feelings.

Affective empathy, in addition to understanding, means that you're capable of feeling other people's emotions and sharing their grief, suffering, and joy.

In addition to creating trust, these three skills can help you build an emotional connection with others and truly relate to their feelings. Empathy can be learned to help bring you closer to having greater success in your relationships.

Are you a Micro-Manager?

Well, let's see. The opposite of effective delegation is micromanagement, where a manager gives too much input, direction, and review.

Micromanagement is a management style whereby the boss closely observes and controls the work of a Direct Report.

Micromanagement also includes the suppression of constructive criticism leads to job turnover. In micromanagement, the boss not only tells the Direct Report WHAT to do but dictates HOW to do it. A frequent cause of micromanagement comes from the boss's doubt whether the Direct Report is competent enough to complete the project. Effective delegation requires a well-defined objective, a clear vision of the constraints and dependencies, and effective oversight.

So, are you a micro-manager? Do you trust your Direct Reports? Would they agree? Any room for improvement?

BY BUILDING

PROFESSIONAL RELATIONSHIPS

"If you want to be a good conversationalist,
be a good listener. To be interesting, be interested."
- Dale Carnegie.

Do you know how to build and maintain professional relationships at work?

A professional relationship is one where members
work together in harmony to consistently produce excellent
results and support each other.

To be clear, I'm not saying that you need to like every member of your team. Nor am I implying that you should be friends with them outside of work. Again, I'm talking about professional relationships, not personal relationships.

One of the greatest baseball players of all time, number 42, **Jackie Robinson,** once said,

"I'm not concerned with your liking or disliking me...
All I ask is that you respect me as a human being."

A good example of teamwork is a fire company where all firefighters are committed to accomplishing the mission and supporting each other, regardless of their personal feelings.

But doing this is much harder today because of the proliferation of electronic devices. This is why many people today are losing the art of conversation because of email, texting, and social networking.

If you intend to create and maintain professional relationships at work, take the time to get to know those you work with through open and honest face-to-face conversation.

How can you create professional relationships?

> Have the courage to let go of your fear and pride.

> Treat everyone with Respect and Kindness.

> Not react, be defensive, or judge others for what they say.

> Treat everyone as an equal, no matter what.

> Let go of your desire to win or dominate the conversation.

Listen actively to understand the real message.

Care enough to understand why they feel the way they do.

Remain open to learning new things.

Check your ego and agenda at the door.

Be authentic by opening up, sharing, and staying humble.

Put away all your devices and focus on the other person.

Self-Test
How well do you build Professional Relationships?

When speaking with someone at work, do you:

Give them your 100% attention?

Silence or put away your devices?

Listen more than you speak?

Ask about family, likes, dislikes, or hobbies?

Remember what they said?

Linger longer - not being in such a big rush?

Maintain strong eye contact?

Ask open-ended How and Why questions?

Not make judgments, admonish, or belittle?

Keep personal information private?

Avoid using sarcasm, poking fun, or *"I was just kidding."*

Offer to help where you can?

If you answered NO to two or more of these questions, you need to reassess your ability to create professional relationships and change what needs to be changed. Effective people take this assessment annually to demonstrate that they're *self-correcting* (Appendix G).

BY ASSESSING
PERFORMANCE

"Followership, like leadership,
is a role and not a destination."
- Michael McKinney

Do you know how to measure the performance of members, teams, and systems to enhance their ability to consistently produce excellent results? Your performance includes your results, behavior, and potential.

Effective people don't just set the bar;
they are the bar.

Are they getting better or worse? How do you know for sure?

What's the best way to measure performance?

The best way to measure performance is by using solid, objective measurements. Actual performance measurement is a more effective way to evaluate results because the measurement is relevant to the situation or process. Some of the best ways to assess performance are by using *Metrics, Objectives and Key Results (OKRs), Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), and Bands of Excellence (BOEs).*

By using Metrics

Metrics are quantifiable and allow you to set the <u>desired</u> result compared to the <u>actual</u> result, but there's a downside.

A metric is something used to measure and track
the results of members, teams, or systems
to assess its performance.

Here's a Great Story

Bob was assigned to improve the number of "problem fixes per day" called into the Helpdesk in his company. He spent a few hours in the Helpdesk Call Center to observe. To his amazement, he found that each Helpdesk Operator was assessed daily using 17 different metrics. For example, one metric was how much "time the operator spent on the phone."

The operators were told to keep each call to less than two minutes, which was counterproductive in solving the caller's problems. After a few hours, Bob determined that working under these conditions (metrics) was not where he wanted to work. His intuition told him that the metrics were too restrictive. So, he directed that all metrics be stopped except for one; the number of "problems fixed per day."

Result? The number of *"problems fixed per day"* shot up off the charts. Problem solved! So, be careful with all your metrics. Sometimes less is more. Focus on the most important metrics – the ones that make sense.

Here are some typical metrics.

Cash Flow: Cash flow is the money coming in and out of your business on any given day, which is what you use to cover your business expenses, such as payroll, rent, and inventory.

Customer: Customer Acquisition Cost (CAC). Divide your total acquisition costs by the number of new customers over the same time frame you're examining.

Employee: Employee Turnover Rate (ETR). To determine your ETR, take the number of employees who have departed the company and divide it by the average number of employees. If you have a high ETR, spend some time examining your workplace culture, employment packages, and work environment.

By using Objectives and Key Results (OKRs)

An OKR (or Objectives and Key Results) is a framework for defining and tracking objectives and their outcomes.

OKR is generally attributed to **Andy Grove**, CEO of Intel, who introduced the approach to Intel during his tenure there and documented this in his 1983 book *High Output Management*. OKRs comprise an **O**bjective, a clearly defined goal, and one or more **K**ey **R**esults (specific measures used to track the achievement of that objective).

OKRs:

May be shared across the company to provide teams with visibility of goals to align and focus effort.

Are typically set at the company, team, and personal levels, although there is criticism on this causing too much of a waterfall approach, which OKRs try to be the opposite in many ways.

Overlap with other performance management frameworks - complexity sitting somewhere between KPI and the balanced scorecard.

The idea took hold, and OKRs quickly became central to Google's culture as a "management methodology" that helps ensure that the company focuses effort on the same important issues.

Since becoming popular at Google, OKR has favored several similar tech start-ups, including LinkedIn, Twitter, and Uber. For more on OKRs, review the book or audiobook, *Measure What Matters* by **John Doerr**.

By using Key Performance Indicators (KPI)

KPIs provide a company with a focus for strategic and operational improvement and compare achievements to similar companies.

> **A Key Performance Indicator (KPI) is a performance measure that demonstrates how effectively a company achieves its key objectives.**

To be effective, a *KPI* must be well-defined and quantifiable, communicated throughout your company, crucial to achieving the goal, and applicable to the business.

Here's the difference between a Metric and a KPI?

> **KPIs** support business goals and objectives.

> **Metrics** support *KPIs* and focus on the overall tactical business goals and objectives.

Meaningful performance measures start with measurable goals. This means that your goal needs to be clear enough that you can imagine how you'll recognize it when it becomes real. So, you might first want to check if your current goals are measurable. Members won't *buy-in* to something they don't understand, weren't involved with, and see no relevance. The key to deriving *KPIs* from objectives is to work backward and reverse engineer the *metrics* you want to create. This process is called a goal, question, or metric. Your objectives are your goals for your business or project.

By using Bands of Excellence (BOE)

Since *Public-Sector Organizations,* like teachers or government workers, don't focus on profit generation, what matters most to their survival is providing a service that serves the greater good (like schools and government agencies). But how do they do that? They use a metric called a *Band of Excellence (or BOE)* to measure and assess their level of services.

Those who work in the Public-Sector must maintain their *Band of Excellence (BOE)* set by their organization.

Think of *BOEs* as the desired Standard of Performance for members, units, and systems.

A Band of Excellence is a set of performance limits ranging
from the Minimum (or Standard) performance limit
to the Maximum performance limit.

The difference between the minimum and the maximum is called the *Band of Excellence*. If your performance stays within the *Band of Excellence*, you remain employable.

Here's a simple example.

The biggest government agency on the planet is the US Department of Defense. In 1992, as a former US Army Officer, here's the BOE used to measure physical fitness by taking the Annual Physical Fitness Test.

The BOE Minimum (or Standard) was 200 points overall. The BOE Maximum was 300 points overall. Therefore, the BOE was 200 - 300 for the test overall to remain promotable. If a Soldier failed to achieve 200 points overall, he was retrained and retested. If he failed a second time, he was considered un-promotable and administratively processed for release from the military.

By Tracking Trends

Have you ever tried to measure how you and your unit were doing? If not, you will. In every viable business, key metrics help determine the answer to one simple question: Are we getting better *Over-Time*?

Over-time means as compared to a past time (last month or year).

And ask the same question about yourself, *are you getting better over-time?* And your business unit, *is my business unit getting better over-time?* But how can you tell?

Here's a good example:

Think of *KPIs* as your Doctor does when you go for a physical.

Step 1: What gets measured? They measure the most important aspects of optimum health, like weight, height, blood pressure, pulse, temperature, and cholesterol.

Step 2: If this is your first physical, how do your numbers compare to a healthy person your age (what's the norm, standard, or benchmark)? Any corrective action needed?

Step 3: If this isn't your first physical, how do your numbers compare to your last physical? Are you (your physical system) getting better *over-time*? Any corrective action needed?

Use this same process with all your *Key Performance Indicators*. What are the things you can measure that tell you about the health of your unit?

Are you getting better over-time?

If not, why? What can be done (corrective action) to reverse the numbers? What number is acceptable to you? What are your standards? If this number rises above or falls below a certain level, what corrective-action must be taken? Trends. One way to visually track your *KPIs* is to measure and compare your numbers *over-time*, the trend. What does the trend look like? Is it trending in the right direction? By doing so, you'll be able to see if the trend is getting better or worse.

Here's an example of Tracking Trends.

Accounts Receivable, 90-Days Past Due (As of June 21, 20XX)			
This month	**Last month**	**2-Months ago**	**1-Year Ago**
$15,335	$12,457	$10,237	$25,936

Notice that this table is tracking a *Key Performance Indicator* that measures *Accounts Receivable over 90 days*. Therefore, the status ("This Month") is greater than last month and the month before. In other words, your *90-Day Past Due* numbers are increasing or getting worse.

Tip: Check your unit's usage rate or consumption rate metrics over-time and see what you learn.

BY DEMONSTRATING
GOOD JUDGMENT

"Experience is simply the name we give our mistakes."
- Oscar Wilde

In your attempt to save time, do you rush and make snap decisions without considering the consequences?

**Good judgment is your ability to bring together reason
and wisdom to analyze a situation, explore your options,
select a course of action, and take action.**

Good judgment isn't about being smart or about making good decisions.

The essence of good judgment is about

learning from past mistakes.

It's about using your *Assessment Systems* (Chapter 6) to ensure you don't repeat the same mistakes and increase the probability of success of your next attempt.

Judgment is less about getting it right and more

about what it takes to learn what went wrong.

Some of your decisions will result in *Unintended Consequences*. To add to this uncertainty, you'll soon discover that your decisions aren't always about what's good or bad. Often, they're about choosing between good, better, and best. All decisions have consequences, which you won't see in advance. But experience teaches that they'll come due someday.

Where do good decisions come from?

Good decisions don't happen by accident.

Good decisions come from good judgment.

Good judgment comes from failure.

Failure comes from mistakes.

Mistakes come from bad decisions.

Bad decisions come from bad judgment.

Bad judgment comes from a lack of experience.

Lack of experience comes from:

> Having little time invested in the job.
>
> Not learning from your mistakes.
>
> Not learning from the mistakes of others.
>
> Making quick decisions when you have more time.
>
> A failure to venture outside your comfort zone.

Mistakes, as long as you learn from them,
are the building blocks of greatness.

How can you learn from the mistakes of others?

Learning from the mistakes of others only happens if you're paying attention. The truth is that anyone can cut their learning curve and gain years of valuable experience by using this simple principle:

There are only two ways to learn anything
in life, either by trial and error or by
modeling the best practices.

While it's important to learn from your mistakes, it's a lot easier to learn from the mistakes of others.

How can Modeling help you?

Experience is the toughest teacher because it gives
the test first and the knowledge second.

Modeling a better teacher because it gives you the knowledge, so you're better prepared for the test.

Modeling is the process of learning from those
who've already achieved success.

It also means learning by copying the behavior of those who've already experienced the mistakes and failures on their journey to success (Chapter

37). You can avoid the same mistakes and failures by learning, applying, and sharing what you'll learn here. Each new skill learned builds on the previous, and the compound effect is career changing.

BY KNOWING WHEN TO
ACT, WAIT OR WALK AWAY

"You got to know when to hold 'em. Know when to fold 'em.
Know when to walk away and know when to run."
- Kenny Rogers, The Gambler.

When faced with a problem, how do you know what to do? For every problem you'll face, you'll normally have three choices of how to respond:

You can act, wait, or walk away.

When faced with a problem, can't you just do nothing? Sure. Think about it. You have this option every time you're faced with a problem. Do some problems sometimes correct themselves by doing nothing? Yes. Do some problems get worse by taking action rather than doing nothing? You bet!

Remember, doing nothing is deciding by default.

Are there some problems that are better left alone? Sure. Just ask any Fire-fighter. Most of the time, all they can do is contain the fire and just let it burn itself out; let it *burn-to-the-ground*. If you feel this is your best choice, among all the choices you have at the time, then do nothing – let it burn-to-the-ground

However, doing nothing and waiting
are two different options.

When faced with any problem, use these steps to guide your response.

Step 1: Should I Act NOW?

Before deciding, answer these questions?

Can this problem be resolved by calling 911? If Yes, call!

Will acting now save lives or avoid further damage?

If Yes, take *Immediate Action* (Appendix B).

If No to both questions, continue to Step 2.

Step 2: Is this my problem?

Is this my problem or someone else's?

> Who has the most to gain or lose from its resolution?

> Who's affected by this problem?

If this problem isn't your problem, why are you trying to solve it? Just report it to your boss and walk away. If this is your problem, continue to the next step.

Step 3: Should I act now or wait?

How urgent is this problem?

> How important or urgent is this problem and why?

> What must happen before I'm forced to act?

> What are the consequences if this problem remains unresolved?

> What's the downside of waiting?

How much time do I have?

> How long do I have before this problem becomes a crisis?

> How long do I have before I'm forced to act?

> When's it too late to act?

> Do I have what I need to act?

Based on your answers to the above questions, use the *Decision Support Template* below to guide your decision.

Here's an example of a *Decision Support Template*: Time vs. Urgency.

Decision Support Matrix		Time to Decide?	
		Little Time	**Enough Time**
Urgency?	**Urgent**	1	2
	Not Urgent	3	4

Here's what the numbers mean:

1. If this problem is urgent and you have little time to decide, take *Immediate Action* (Appendix B) and develop a mental *Plan of Action* before acting (Appendix A). See CONPLAN 1.

2. If this problem is urgent and you have enough time, take Step 4. Prepare to act after completing your *Plan of Action*. Keep your boss informed. See CONPLAN 2.

3. If this problem isn't urgent and you have little time to decide, wait, continue to monitor the situation, create your *Plan of Action*, and keep your boss informed. See CONPLAN 3.

4. If this problem isn't urgent and you have enough time to act, continue to monitor the situation, create your *Plan of Action*, and update your boss. See CONPLAN 4.

Also, keep a log of what happened, when, and who took what action to resolve the problem for investigative purposes later.

If you **decide to wait**, continue to monitor the situation and keep your boss informed.

If you **decide to act**, create a POA, ensure you have what you need, anticipate the consequences and effects (Chapter 11), eliminate all the Unresolved Issues (Chapter 10), and keep your boss informed.

Other Things to Consider

When's the best time to decide?

> ***"The key is not to make quick decisions,***
> ***but to make timely decisions."***
> ***- Colin Powell***

Do you have to make the decision right now? This classic answer is usually, No! This is rarely necessary. Resist the impulse of making a snap decision when there's no need to do so. Normally, you'll have sufficient time to decide.

A good rule of thumb is to decide after acquiring **40-70%** of the information you need. Mistakes, as long as you learn from them, are the building blocks of greatness. If it turns out bad, adjust, and remember what you've learned for next time.

Who's the Best Person to decide?

Followers recommend, and bosses decide!

Or, at least, the boss should take responsibility and ownership of his team's decisions, especially if it turns out bad. Ask members for their input before you decide. Also, if the decision affects everyone in your team, why can't all members be given a chance to concur or non-concur with reasons (Chapter 20)?

Does the Best Decision always produce the Best Outcome?

There's a big difference between your decision and the result or outcome of your decision. You could be the most experienced decision-maker on the planet, and you could make the best decision, but there's no guarantee that your problem will be resolved, or the best outcome will be achieved. You can make a good decision, and the results could still be bad. The situation and facts available when you first decided could (and probably will) change over time. What was good today could turn out to be bad tomorrow.

Do you need your Boss's Approval?

Have you ever been in a situation where you were waiting for your boss's approval? Why are you asking for approval if the problem is internal, doesn't require additional resources you don't have, and isn't in conflict with any internal standards? Of course, that's what your boss is paying you to do. But do let him know.

Sometimes it's easier to ask forgiveness than permission.

Or, if you're in doubt, tell your boss when you'll be making your decision (like the end of the week), and if you don't hear from him before that time, you'll be moving forward. Don't forget to assess the consequences and effects of your actions.

What if a Direct Reports recommends a change?

One of the best bosses I ever worked with once said,

> **"If I can't give you a good reason not to make
> the change; I'll approve it."**

Yes, they still had to create a *Decision Paper* (Appendix C), build consensus with the team (Chapter 20), and present it to the team for a final discussion before approval. However, this gave the team the freedom they needed to make things better.

BY LEARNING FROM

MISTAKES AND FAILURE

"If you're not making mistakes, then you're not doing
anything. I'm positive that a doer makes mistakes."
- John Wooden

Will you make mistakes and have failures in your lifetime? You bet lots of them. But that's how we all learn. So, how can you learn from mistakes and failure? Effective people know that the only thing that matters is what you learn for the next time regarding mistakes and failure.

What's Failure?

The dictionary defines failure as:

"The state or condition of not meeting a desirable or intended
goal and may be viewed as the opposite of success."

Failure is a relative term. It's viewed differently depending on your situation and who's doing the viewing. For example, failure to a baseball player may be striking out, but failure to his coach might be losing the game.

In the Business World, your goals will come from your boss. Did you accomplish the goals you were assigned? Did you achieve the result you wanted? If not, why?

The only important question is, what did you learn that can make you better next time? I used to think that there was no such thing as failure (it didn't exist) as long as you never gave up. But this is only partially true and sends the wrong message.

You'll experience mistakes and failures in your life. The trick is not to let them define you.

Instead, let them Refine you and make you stronger!

The past doesn't equal the future. So, learn what you need to learn and move on!

What's the difference between a failure and an unsuccessful attempt?

> **Failure** needs a substantial loss (like money, time, or reputation).

An **Unsuccessful Attempt** means that your last attempt did not achieve the desired result.

However, if you can make another attempt, did you learn why the last attempt was unsuccessful? Do you know what changes need to be made for your next attempt to be successful?

The example most often used comes from the story of **Thomas Edison** and his 10,000 attempts to create the incandescent light bulb. Just remember, *Edison* could make as many attempts as he needed until he was successful because he wasn't paying for each attempt. His investors were paying the bills. Most people don't have that luxury.

True Failure only exists if there's a loss.

The bigger the loss, the bigger the failure.

What's Failure in the Real World?

There are two types of failure which are commonly misunderstood:

Personal failure: This is an unsuccessful attempt at accomplishing your personal goal and includes a:

Failure to try. This is never set goals or never attempting to accomplish anything.

Failure to keep trying. This means that after an unsuccessful initial attempt, you failed to learn from your mistakes, make the changes needed, find a different way to get there, or make another attempt.

Substantial Loss. This is a loss of your wealth, relationships, health, *character, or reputation.

Company failure: This is a failure to accomplish an assigned goal, resulting in losing anything your boss couldn't afford to lose.

*To learn more about *Character,* available at **Amazon.com,** see "OTHER PLAYBOOKS."

Let's examine what should happen BEFORE you attempt to accomplish any goal.

Before the Attempt

Step 1. What's the Risk?

Conduct a *Risk Assessment* to look for all the things that could reasonably go wrong during your attempt. Then, collaborate to assess all your safety, security, financial, and operational risks and how they can be mitigated.

Step 2. How many attempts?

If you know you'll only get one attempt. Now your risk goes up. So, make it count! If you know you'll get more than one attempt, but not an unlimited number, then you have some risk, but how can this be mitigated? If you know you'll get as many attempts as you need, then the only risk is the cost of each additional attempt. Remember **Edison**?

Step 3. What's the cost?

Cost: What will it cost to make this attempt (how much time, money, or effort will it take)?

Opportunity Costs: What are you losing by not using other alternatives?

Step 4. What if you're wrong?

Can everyone live with an unsuccessful attempt?

Step 5. What are the benefits?

What benefits will you receive if your attempt is successful?

Step 6. Is the benefit worth the cost?

If Yes: Continue to create your *Plan of Action*.

If No or Unsure: Work hard to mitigate your Risk. Then, conduct another Cost/Benefit Analysis.

Step 7. What's your Assessment System?

An *Assessment System* (Chapter 6) is a series of procedures designed to measure the most critical parameters of your attempt to determine what went wrong, right, and why? How will the attempt be measured? How do you know when it's time to *pull-the-plug?*

After the Attempt

Let's examine what should happen AFTER your attempt.

Step 8. Was the attempt a complete success?

> **If Yes:** Congrats! What's next?

> **If No:** If your attempt was unsuccessful, was there a loss?

>> If there was NO loss, what did you learn, and what changes need to be made? Never give up! Just find another way to get there.

>> If there was a loss, now you have a real failure. The greater the loss, the greater the failure.

Step 9. What did you learn from your Assessment System?

> What went wrong, right, and why?

> What needs to change to make your next attempt a success?

> How will you know when it's time to *pull-the-plug*?

The lesson may have been painful, but don't throw the learning away. Mistakes and failures can be your best teacher, but only if you remember the lesson. Now what? Well, that depends on you!

Is Failure Fatal?

> ***"Failure is not fatal, but failure to change might be."***
> ***- John Wooden***

Assuming your attempt resulted in a loss, it's not the end of your life or your career. And, sometimes, getting close is good enough. So, assess what happened, what you learned, and get *back-in-the-game!*

Never give up!
Just find another way to get there.

Never Stop Learning!

Can you achieve Success without Failure?

> ***"If things are not failing, you are not innovating enough."***
> ***- Elon Musk***

For all of ***Elon Musk's*** success, he has experienced an equal amount of failure. Whatever future success he achieves will most likely be accompanied by more failure.

Here are three times **_Elon Musk_** failed:

1. Once, he couldn't get a CEO job to save his life.

When **_Zip2_** began attracting investors, they stripped him of his role as Chairman. Musk's idea of leadership in the 1990s was to stay late and rewrite code, believing his employees were incompetent. He failed to see how publicly berating his employees might make them less productive.

2. He has crashed more than his share of rockets.

His career serves as ample proof that the first step to success is a whole bunch of failures. Until April 8, 2016, **_SpaceX_** managed the first of three consecutive successful landings. Then, unfortunately, the results in June resulted in four rocket launches in a row ending in flames.

3. He has never delivered a car on time.

Tesla revealed that it built only 260 Model 3 vehicles, instead of the promised 1,500, with no chance of making the originally claimed 5,000 by the end of the year. Shipments were initially expected to begin in 2013, yet the first cars didn't ship until late 2015.

By comparison, it took **_Amazon_** more than 14 years to make as much profit as it produced the previous quarter. **_Amazon_** consistently lost money for its first several years as a public company.

Lessons Learned: Constantly seek criticism and feedback; it's as good as gold! Never give up. Just find another way to get there.

> *"Being an entrepreneur starting up is like eating*
> *glass and staring into the abyss of death."*
> *- Unknown*

BY GIVING AND

RECEIVING FEEDBACK

"Feedback is the Breakfast of Champions"
- Ken Blanchard

Have you ever worked for someone who seldom told you how you were doing? How did that make you feel?

Feedback is information about a member's performance, which is used as a basis for improvement.

The goal of feedback is to identify the gap between <u>desired</u> and <u>actual</u> performance (for results and behavior) of members, teams, units, and systems) and to close the gap ASAP.

If you don't receive feedback, ask for it, not only from your boss but others.

Feedback can occur anytime but normally comes during audits, performance-oriented training, performance appraisals and reviews, shareholders' meetings, marketing research, 360-degree feedback, peak performance coaching, visits and observations, on-site inspections, surveys, meetings, and *After-Action Reviews*.

What's the Feedback Loop for Human Performance?

Here are the most important steps of the *Feedback Loop*.

Step 1: Evidence: The performance must be measured, recorded, and assessed.

Step 2: Relevance: Feedback must be relayed to the member in a context that makes sense.

Step 3: Consequence: Feedback must illuminate a path to improvement.

Step 4: Action: Members must change their <u>actual</u> performance to come closer to the <u>desired</u> performance.

Then, that new performance can be re-measured, and the feedback loop can run once more, every action stimulating new performance that moves the member closer to the <u>desired</u> performance.

How do you give Feedback?

If you fail to provide periodic and specific feedback to your members, your silence will speak louder than words. It's your job to let them know how they're doing.

If your feedback is positive, share it with everyone publicly.

If your feedback is negative or a correction (like someone failed to meet a), do so privately. Take a moment to ensure the member knew the correct standard and didn't have a good reason for doing (or failing to do) what he did.

However, giving someone your opinion doesn't constitute feedback unless they act on your suggestion and thus cause you to revise your opinion.

How do you receive Feedback?

When you receive feedback, you get to decide how you'll respond and if you'll use it to become more effective.

Feedback is often perceived as a euphemism for criticism. If you just "blow it off," you'll never get any better. You don't have to agree. Initially, you won't. However, arguing or being defensive sends the wrong message.

Humble yourself! Remember, no matter how painful, you need the feedback because you'll never become more effective or successful without it. Also, the person giving the feedback might someday be in a position to shape your future.

So, be *self-correcting*! Prove that you're listening and getting better every day (Appendix G).

Effective people thrive on feedback because their goal is to become more effective and successful.

BY PROVIDING

FEEDBACK TO THE BOSS

*"If I had to reduce the responsibilities of a good follower
to a single rule, it would be to speak truth to power."
- Warren Bennis.*

Do you know how to provide meaningful feedback to your boss? Is it your job to provide feedback to your boss? Absolutely! You owe it to your boss. But how do you do it?

**Providing feedback to your boss takes moral courage and is
the most challenging part of being loyal to your boss; telling him
what he doesn't want to hear - like the TRUTH.**

Feedback is normally defined as information that you privately provide to someone intended to improve their performance. However, when it comes to your boss, it's a little more complicated.

When providing feedback to your boss, your intent must be perceived as being done to help him stay out of trouble, avoid or correct a mistake, resolve problems, achieve his goals, and look good in the eyes of his boss.

As such, here are the most important steps:

Step 1. Set the stage.

This means that whatever you have to say must be done privately. You might even suggest that you and your boss take a walk to somewhere private where you won't be interrupted.

Step 2. Gain permission.

If you've not already done so, ask and receive confirmation that you have permission to be honest.

Step 3. Preface your remarks.

Preface your remarks by saying, *"I need to give you some feedback on…"* or *"I just wanted to tell you how I feel about…."* or *"I just thought you needed to know..."*

Step 4. Deliver your message.

Speak your peace and remind your boss of why you're saying what you did.

What happens if your boss gets angry? This could happen - no big deal. You're not there to blow smoke up his butt. You're there to make him and his unit better tomorrow than they are today. Period!

What if I get fired? My response is, Great! You're the lucky one! You no longer have to work for a jerk who fails to appreciate your loyalty for telling the truth.

Privately providing honest feedback to your boss is the stronger half of courage and loyalty.

When was the last time you took your boss for a walk and discussed what was going on?

Caution: There is a fine line between tattling and reporting the facts. Tattling is done to get someone in trouble. Feedback is done to either keep him out of trouble, help him achieve his goals, or to make him look good in the eyes of his boss. When you tell your boss about a mistake he made or is about to make, you're doing so to keep him out of trouble. Do you have good communication with your boss? If not, why? If in doubt, ask!

Remember, the only stupid question is the one you're too afraid to ask. Because, later, when you don't know the answer, you will look stupid or worse!

Note: As a new member, during your first 90-days, you can ask any question or make a mistake, and no one will care. After 90-days, your questions and errors may cause others to wonder why they hired you!

APPENDIX A

CREATE

A PLAN OF ACTION

Here's a great checklist to use when creating your next *Plan of Action.*

OBJECTIVE (Who, What, When, Where, and Why?)

What's my access to sources of info, and who's this project for?

Where and why is this project being conducted?

How important is this project, and to whom is it important?

How will success be measured, and who will measure it?

What's the requirement, scope, and complexity of work?

What's the limit of my authority (to decide, delegate, spend $, hire, and fire)?

Does someone with authority approve this?

When does this project start and end?

What's the most important task for this project to be a success?

Who has done this task before, and what were their problems, consequences, and effects?

What must be ordered or started now?

METHODS (How)

How should we do it? What are all our options, which is best?

What needs to happen during the four phases of this project?

What're all the tasks involved, and who are responsible for performing each task (called Key Players)?

What must be done before, during, and after the project?

What specific instructions do we have for those delegated a task?

How many are expected to attend or are affected by this?

What're our restrictions (can't do) and imperatives (must do)?

Who has done this or a similar type of project before?

How will this project be advertised or promoted?

What are my responsibilities, expectations, duties, constraints, authority, and standards?

Who're the most important people to talk to right now?

What're the consequences if this turns out unsuccessful?

TIMETABLE (Chapter 5)

Planning backward from today, when are the Planning, Preparing, Executing, and Assessment Phases?

When's the *Backbriefing* (Chapter 8)?

What's the *Project Update Briefing* schedule (Chapter 22)?

Which *Preventive Actions* must be done during each phase (Chapter 4)?

How long will each task take, and what's the best sequence of these tasks and *Preventive Actions*?

Which tasks can't start or finish without another task starting or ending? (Dependent tasks)

Which task needs to be started right now?

What's the detailed schedule, program, and calendar?

When's the rehearsal, and what will be rehearsed (Chapter 23)?

What else is going on in the company or *community at the same time? What happened last year at this time?

*Do you want your project to go on at the same time as Spring Break, the Superbowl, or a Presidential Election Voting Day?

RESOURCES

What resources are most important for the success of this project?

How much of each resource is needed, when, and where?

Who's responsible (Key Player) for providing these resources?

When's the latest time we need these resources delivered?

Who's paying for this, and what must be ordered now?

What skills, attitudes, or knowledge are needed, and who has the skills we need?

Any special needs for safety, security, sanitation, disabilities?

What're our *Shortfalls* (anything you need to complete a project that you don't have)?

How much money can we spend? What's our Budget?

UNRESOLVED ISSUES (Chapter 10)

What do we need to know but don't?

What do we know for sure, but the answer is unsatisfactory or unacceptable?

What are our shortfalls, which are things we need but don't have?

What are all the questions, unknowns, concerns, shortfalls, obstacles, or problems that could slow or stop your progress?

Who has done this type of work before, and what were their problems, consequences, and effects?

What are we forgetting to do?

RISK (Chapters 12-15)

Physical: (Injury, Illness, or Death)

Have we inspected the site for anything that could cause injury, illness, accident, or death?

Have we inspected for sanitation and access for those with disabilities?

Security: (Cyber and Physical)

For Cybersecurity: What could cause a data breach, loss of personal info or intellectual property, or a disruption of services?

For Physical Security: What could cause unauthorized access leading to theft, fraud, waste, abuse, or property damage?

Financial:

What could cause financial loss or property damage?

What insurance do we need, and is it *in-force*?

Operational:

See Chapter 13: Risk Assessment

B

TAKE

IMMEDIATE ACTION

When bad things happen, what do you usually do? Don't just sit there, do something! But what?

Immediate Action is a proactive eight-step process used to react to any bad situation that could cause a work stoppage, property damage, a security breach, or physical injury.

Let's drill down on the eight steps of the *Immediate Action* process.

Step 1. Assess the Situation.

Either be *on-the-scene* or in communication with someone on the ground. Assess the situation based on the facts.

Step 2. Notify Emergency Services and your boss.

If needed, call 911, and call your boss to tell him what you know.

Step 3. Consider your Options.

Look around. What's available for you to use? What should be done to stabilize the situation? What are your options? If time permits collaborate with others.

Step 4. Select the Best Option.

Select the best option, and if time permits, achieve consensus with those around you.

Step 5. Create a Plan of Action.

Create a quick mental *Plan of Action*. What's the first step? What's the second, and so forth?

Step 6. Take Decisive Action.

Using what's available, *take-charge*, and give new instructions to others. Supervise their actions.

Step 7. Reassess the Situation.

What, if anything, has changed? Did the situation stabilize, or was the problem resolved? If Yes, move to Step 8. If NO, repeat this process.

Step 8. Call your boss.

Keep your boss informed. Explain what happened, what caused it, and what you recommend be done to ensure this never happens again. Sounds pretty easy, right? Well, let's see how it's done in the real world.

True Story

At 9 AM, two days before his company's annual Team Building Session, Bob, the Project Manager, conducted his final site inspection of the resort and was astonished by what he saw. He tried to pull into the resort, blocked by construction vehicles tearing up the parking lot. This was a disaster for Bob because he had 50 Senior Executives flying in from all over the country for this session. Fortunately, Bob knew how to take Immediate Action.

Step 1. Assess the Situation.

Bob didn't panic. He assessed the situation, took photos with his cell phone, spoke with the resort manager, and learned that a major water main had broken, which meant that the resort had no water. Bob also talked to the on-site construction manager and discovered that the water main could not be repaired for another week.

Step 2. Call Emergency Services and your boss.

At 9:30 AM: Since there was no need to call 911, Bob called his boss and appraised him of the situation.

Step 3. Consider your options.

At 10 AM, Bob called a meeting of all Key Players at company headquarters to collaborate to find the best solution. Bob asked one Key Player to find another venue that could accommodate 50 people. By 11 AM, a new venue had been located, but it was 27 miles from the airport. One problem was solved, but it created another. How will all attendees get from the airport to the resort? Someone asked, can't they just catch a cab or just rent a car at the airport? For 50 people to catch a cab or rent a car would be way too expensive.

Step 4. Select the best option.

Then someone suggested that they rent a fleet of shuttle vehicles with drivers to transport all attendees from the airport to the resort and back. They all agreed that this was the best solution.

Step 5. Create a Plan of Action.

Together they created a Plan of Action to use shuttle vehicles to accomplish the objective.

Step 6. Take Decisive Action.

Bob issued new instructions to all Key Players and supervised their actions. He assigned one Key Player to contact all attendees to let them know what happened and look for company signs at the airport directing them to shuttle vehicles rather than taking a cab or renting a vehicle. Bob also asked a second Key Player to identify and contract a shuttle company to transport all attendees. Finally, he asked everyone to meet again at 5 PM to share the status of their new assignments.

Step 7. Reassess the Situation.

At 5 PM that afternoon, Bob met with all Key Players to ensure everything was ready to move forward with a fleet of shuttle vehicles.

Step 8. Report to your boss.

At 6 PM, Bob called his boss and informed him that the problem was resolved by selecting a new site and renting a fleet of shuttle vans to drive all attendees from the airport to the hotel and back. There was no reason to recommend what needed to be done to ensure this didn't happen again. The Team Building Session went on without any further problems and turned out to be a great success.

Bob looked defeat in the eye and refused to give up,

"Snatching Victory from the Jaws of Defeat."

And you can do the same!

C

CREATE A

DECISION PAPER

Do you know how to create a convincing document to persuade someone to spend the money needed to enhance your probability of success? Have you ever been asked to write a *Decision Paper or a Business Case*? If not, you will. This is one way your boss is preparing you for the next level.

Sometimes you'll need resources that you don't have, like people, equipment, or facilities, to solve a problem – which means spending money. When this happens, you'll need the DM's approval before moving forward. To persuade anyone to accept your recommendation, you'll need a well-written *Decision Paper,* and here's a great format.

What's the best format to create a Decision Paper?

    1. Subject. Briefly state the subject.

    2. Problem. State the problem in one sentence.

    3. Recommendation. State the recommended solution in one sentence.

    4. Benefits: State the expected benefits of this recommendation.

    5. Key Player Comments.

    A Key Player is anyone whose opinion would matter to the Decision-Maker or anyone who'll be required to support the recommendation if approved. You'll need to *Staff* your paper through all Key Players for their concurrence or non-concurrence with comments (Chapter 20). Once comments are returned, create a table showing which Key Players concurred and non-concurred with their reasons.

    6. Discussion. Explain why you're recommending this solution by answering these questions.

        What were all the solutions you considered? Then, attach all the solutions you considered with all the Advantages and Disadvantages.

        Why did you select this solution?

        What's the cost and who should pay?

        What's the Risk? How probable is this risk, how severe will it be, and how can it be mitigated (Chapters 12-15). If a *Contingency Plan* is needed, add it as an enclosure (Chapter 15).

        How long will it take, and when should it be started?

How long do we have before this problem becomes a crisis?

What are the consequences and effects of this recommendation?
Unintended Consequences are outcomes that are not expected from your project (Chapter 11). *2nd and 3rd Order Effects* deal with how your project affects others, like those in your company or your suppliers (Chapter 11).

What are the *Unresolved Issues*? Attach a list of all the questions, unknowns, concerns, shortfalls, obstacles, and problems that could slow or stop your progress (Chapter 10).

What are all the Facts and Assumptions? Attach a list of all the facts and assumptions you used (Appendix D).

When your paper is finished, give a Decision Briefing or provide a hard copy to the DM to gain approval. If you choose this option, ensure your paper is no more than two pages in length, with all the supporting documents attached as enclosures.

What's a Business Case?

A *Decision Paper* is also known as a *Business Case*, which is the justification to convince a Decision-Maker to accept a proposal.

**A Business Case is a document that captures
the reasons for initiating action.**

The logic is that whenever resources are consumed, they should support a specific business need. For example, it could be a software upgrade needed to improve system performance. The *Business Case* is that a software upgrade would improve customer satisfaction, require less processing time, or reduce maintenance costs. Thus, a compelling *Business Case* captures both the quantifiable and non-quantifiable characteristics of the proposed action.

D

GATHER

ASSUMPTIONS AND FACTS

Do you know how to gather all the assumptions, facts, and the truth needed to persuade others to support you to enhance your probability of success?

By identifying the Assumptions

An ASSUMPTION is information accepted as true in the absence of facts.

However, acceptable assumptions must pass two tests.

They must be **VALID**, which means that they're likely to be true.

They must be **NECESSARY**, which means that they're essential to moving the work forward.

If the process can continue without the assumption, discard it. If the assumption is both valid and necessary, then treat it as a fact. Effective people continually seek to confirm their assumptions by testing. For example, if you assume that the weather won't be a problem for your company's outdoor picnic, you better have a *Contingency Plan* - just in case. Better yet, if it rains and you've reserved an outdoor picnic site with overhead cover, now you're the hero of the day.

You know the old saying about assumptions, right?

Whenever you assume anything, you risk making an 'ass' out of 'u' and 'me.'

So, be careful! People aren't mind-readers. Never assume that all understand your expectations. It doesn't matter how much experience you have or how long you've been in your position. If you feel there's a chance of a misunderstanding, clarify all your expectations.

Here's an example:

"As an executive coach, one of my C-level clients shared with me his disappointment with a new VP he recently hired. He explained that he told his new VP that he expected him to really "step up" and get us to "the next level" in sales. However, after six months, he and his sales team had not met his expectations.

I asked him, "Have you defined what 'stepping up' and 'getting to the next level' mean?" My client responded, "No, why would I? With his experience, he should know what I mean." Ops!

What's an Unconscious Assumption?

Sometimes assumptions are made unconsciously. So, be careful!

Here's an example:

Bob walked into a Problem-Solving Session where one of his Direct Reports, with his entire team, tried to select the BEST vendor from two similar companies. As the process was almost over, Bob asked, "What assumptions are you making here?" Then, after a long silence, he asked the question again.

One person said, "None, we don't need any." To which Bob said, "Are you sure? Since I only see two vendors you're considering, aren't you assuming that there are only two companies that we could potentially hire to solve this problem? Are you all certain this assumption is correct?

And, what's the effect if later this assumption proves to be incorrect? What happens later when we find out that there was a third company that could have solved our problem faster and at half the cost?" Again, there was a long silence. The group had assumed there were only two potential companies, and they were wrong.

What assumptions are you making unconsciously, and what are the effects on the project if these assumptions turn out to be wrong? What's your *Contingency Plan*?

To help identify your assumptions, answer these questions:

What do I hope is true or necessary for my document to be valid?

What assumptions are needed to move the work forward?

What assumptions am I making unconsciously?

If my assumption becomes false, what's my *Contingency Plan* (Chapter 15)?

By identifying the Facts

A FACT is verifiable or vetted information.

Always separate facts from opinion or speculation. According to **Colin Powell**, in his book, *It Worked for Me*, you need good information to make good decisions. Verifiable information can change over time and may not tell the

whole story. So, be careful! Also, verifiable or vetted facts that come with these qualifiers should make you nervous:

> *"In my best judgment," or "As far as I know."*
> *or "As best as I can tell."*

Here are the most important questions you need to answer:

> **What do you know? How do you know for sure?**
> **What do you need to know?**
>
> **What do you think? What's your best hunch?**
> **What's your intuition telling you?**

Always distinguish the difference. You're looking for *ground-truth*, first-hand info from people closest to the issue. The best facts are current, from a reliable source, and first-hand information rather than hearsay.

By uncovering the Truth

In solving any problem, you must uncover the root cause - the truth. The dictionary defines truth as *"that which is true or in accordance with fact or reality."* Because of this, most people believe that all facts are true, but they're not. They're related but different. Facts can lead you to the truth, but they can also mislead you. This is because facts are what happened, while the truth is HOW and WHY it happened.

And here are a few examples.

   Fact: Mary was my best student. But the truth is that Mary was my only student.

   Fact: Sam sold nothing in May. However, the truth is that Sam was on vacation in May.

Facts without context can be misleading, and like statistics, they can be manipulated to prove or disprove just about anything. Facts can't speak for themselves. Someone else must speak for them.

Remember, nothing has meaning other than the meaning you give it. So, be careful!

What's Objective Truth?

> *"One of the greatest challenges in this world is to know enough*
> *about a subject to think your right, but not enough about*
> *the subject to know your wrong."*

I learned from **Neal deGrasse Tyson**'s *Master Class* the three categories of truth: personal, political, and objective. Objective truth is truth no matter what happens and is the truth that shapes our understanding of the universe.

> *"We all have susceptibility to bias. The internet is evidence of bias. And you're going to use it as evidence that you're correct? No!"*

Note: In the absence of instructions, make the assumptions needed to move the work forward.

Always vet your facts and test your assumptions!

E

"DON'T FORGIT NOTHIN"

Do you know how to prepare for your next project to ensure you haven't forgotten anything? Have you ever created a plan but later found that you left things out?

Here are the most important things to consider:

Communications: Do you have direct communication with your Key Players via cell phone or two-way radios with backup batteries and chargers? Does everyone have a list of each other's phone numbers? What if they're not near their cell phone when you call (or are on another call)?

Fun: Laughter, humor, music, breaks, snacks, games, awards, recognition, surprises, and prizes.

Getting attendees involved: How can you put attendees to work? Have them physically do simulations, problem-solving, breakout sessions, circuit training, seminars, workshops, round-robin stations, role-playing, practical exercises, competition, or small group discussions.

Headquarters: Is there a known location at the event or activity, with a dedicated phone number that's open 24/7 that tracks attendance, safety, and first aid. Do they have a vehicle, driver, and map to the nearest hospital?

Life Support: How will the participants be physically sustained (includes food, drink, snacks, ice, communications, lodging (if overnight), transportation, hygiene, toilets, electricity, cooking, refrigeration, liability insurance, sanitation (hand sanitizer, toilet paper), overhead shelter (if it rains), trash containers, and trash collection and removal). The longer the time and distance from home base, the more complicated the life support becomes.

Other: Parking, access for delivery vehicles, traffic flow, who tracks who's there and who's not? Do you have a backup location in case of bad weather? Did you delegate all these tasks? Do you have consensus from all Key Players?

Pre-work: Do you want the participants to do something before the event and bring it with them? Do they need to review a read-ahead packet? If so, provide it in advance.

Program Support: Audio and visual aids, handouts, loud-speaker, music, surveys, or backup generators?

Promotion: How can you best advertise the event or activity that creates interest and anticipation? What's in it for them? What would make members want to attend? How will you communicate this to all invitees?

Quality Control (Assessment): IPRs, AARs, meetings, deliverables, accountability, surveys, Contingency, Mitigation Plans, Project Updates, metrics, milestones, Timetables, and achieving consensus?

Rehearsals: What do you need to see before you start? Do you need to practice, preview, or rehearse anything before the event or activity? Who's reviewing documents to see if they make sense and are correct?

Safety and Medical: What if someone gets hurt? Do you need first aid kits, defibrillators, life jackets (if around water), and fire extinguishers? Are there any other hazards (like holes, cliffs, water, or any way anyone could get hurt)? How can you mitigate this risk? Do you need members trained in CPR and first aid? How about Bee stings (EpiPen® need a prescription), bug spray, location of the nearest hospital, vehicle designated to transport, maps to hospital, cell phones with 911 capabilities, and an ambulance needed on the site?

Schedule or Program: Is there ample time built into the program for all to have fun and do something meaningful instead of just sitting there? How about a mixer (with name tags) so members can get to meet and know each other?

Search Plan: What happens when someone is reported "missing," especially if away from the company's property?

Security: Are chaperones, guards, police, crowd and traffic control, or checkers needed? Cell phones (with chargers/extra batteries), cameras, and phone# available? Are metal detectors required to check for weapons?

Site Transition: Site problems also include the poor scheduling of other units before and after your scheduled time. The concern here is that the previous unit may not be cleared of the site before you try to set-up. And this includes your departure at the end of your project before the next unit attempts to move in. Additionally, many units try to pre-stage and move supplies and equipment the night before the project. Ensure you know who'll be there before you and who is coming in after you to ensure a smooth handoff.

Small Children: Children are a special challenge because they're so mobile and seem to find their way, unsupervised, into places where they could potentially get hurt. If there's water, you'll need life vests, lifeguards, and the like. If there's a fire or anything hot, or vehicle traffic, wells, or cliffs - get the idea?

Time: What are the start and end times? What else is going on around the selected site during this time? What else is going on in the lives of those assigned to perform certain activities like graduations, summer vacations, or the Super Bowl? Hint? What happened last year at the same time and place? What's your *Contingency Plan*?

Note: You may not need all these reminders for your next project, but it's a nice checklist to add to your toolbox.

What are you forgetting to do?

F

TRACK

ALL THE MOVING PARTS

Do you know how to keep track of all your moving parts to ensure that nothing *falls-through-the-cracks* to enhance your probability of success?

"Tracking" means keeping a paper or digital trail (documenting) of the most important things that keep changing.

How do you keep track of all the things that are critical to your work? Effective people know that there are many " moving parts " in business, and many lose their way - unless someone tracks them. Here are several ways to keep track of your most important "moving parts."

By Tracking Assignments

Assignments come in two types; Assignments *Accepted* from others and Assignments *Made* to others.

Here's an example of an *Assignments Tracking Form*.

Assignments Accepted					Assignments Made			
Date	From	Action Item	DL	To	Date	DL	Checked	Status
11 May	Boss	ABC Report	19 Jun	Sue	12 May	17 Jun	2 Jun	OS

Notice that this table tracks the assignments *accepted* from others (boss) and the assignments *made* to others. It's also a good idea to assign the *Action Item* to a Direct Report (Sue), with her deadline (DL) being a few days before your boss's deadline. This way, you have some *slack time* built in just in case something goes wrong.

For example, using this table, if your boss wants his assignment completed on May 19th, assign your Direct Report (Sue) a deadline of May 17th. This is your record of all assignments *made* for future meetings. The last time this action was checked was on 2 Jun, and the Status was On-Schedule (OS).

You can also create an *Assignment Tracking Form* for each Direct Report to use during your internal meetings. The most important thing to remember is to never trust your memory. Always document everything you've asked a Direct Report to do and add a deadline.

By Tracking Changes

Have you ever been frustrated with last-minute changes to a project? Have you ever tried to communicate a change to all Key Players, but 10% didn't get the word? Plans change, so be flexible! Make sure all Key Players know about all changes. Keep a record of who was told what, when, and how. It will come in handy later. Keep track of everyone who received the changes. Record and review these changes during your meetings.

Here's an example of a *Change Notification List*.

Change List for: _____Project (As of Aug 21, 20XX)				
Date	What Changed?	Originator?	Recipient?	How sent?
May 4	Add 12 to headcount	Bill	John	Phone
May 5	Next meeting 10 AM, not 9 AM.	Joe	Sam	Face-to-face

Notice that this table tracks the *Originator* or the source of the change, the *Recipient* or who was told about the change, and the *How Sent* or how the message was communicated.

If it's important or time-sensitive, don't use email. Many people fail to read their email for days, if at all. Many others misunderstand their email. The best means of communicating is *face-to-face* (the second is on the phone). Then, *follow-through* with a detailed email. Don't use email as your primary means of *communication.

Who else needs to know about this change?

Act on that answer!

By Tracking Unresolved Issues

Track all *Unresolved Issues,* including any question, unknown, concern, shortfall, obstacle, or problem that could slow or stop your progress (Chapter 10). Each issue can only be eliminated when it's both "*known for certain"* and "*acceptable to you."* If you fail to keep track of all the moving parts, expect that you'll be known as someone who doesn't have their **act together.

*To learn more about **Communicating**, available at **Amazon.com,** see "OTHER PLAYBOOKS."

To learn more about **Organizing, available at **Amazon.com,** see "OTHER PLAYBOOKS."

G

ASSESS YOUR

ACCOUNTABILITY

Do you know what to do when your boss finds something wrong with your work?

Accountability is accepting responsibility for your actions and in-actions and the obligation to report, explain and be answerable for any adverse consequences.

Accountability is often confused with responsibility. They're related but different. *Accountability* is normally not a problem - until something goes wrong.

For example, if something goes wrong within your area of responsibility, you'll get the chance to explain what happened to your boss, and maybe his boss. Sometimes, depending on the severity of the problem, your boss won't be happy with you and may treat you badly.

Most people don't understand that, yes, responsibility and *accountability* go together; they're part of the same iceberg.
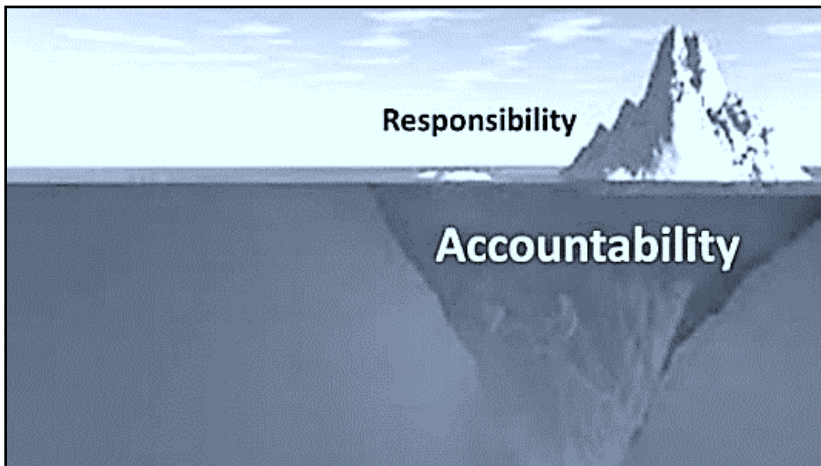
However, you can't see the *accountability* part of the iceberg because it lies hidden beneath the surface until something goes wrong.

What should you do when things go wrong?

When things go wrong for which you're responsible, your boss's job is to ask you for an explanation.

What your boss doesn't need is for you to blame others, make excuses, complain, or hide the truth.

And yes, the mistake may have been made by one of your team members - not you. But your boss doesn't care. He just wants it fixed.

Here's what your boss expects you to do:

    Step 1. Step up and accept the blame!

    Step 2. Investigate - what happened and what caused it to happen?

    Step 3. Report the facts and recommend how it should be fixed.

    Step 4. Fix it and fix it for good!

    Step 5. When fixed, report the fix to your boss.

    Step 6. Make sure it never happens again.

Accountability is something every boss expects from you but won't tell you until it's too late. Unfortunately, this quality isn't something you were born with. And the only time you get to demonstrate your accountability is when things go wrong.

This also includes the actions, in-actions, and adverse consequences of those members within your charge. You're accountable to your boss for everything that happens or fails to happen within your area of responsibility.

However, *accountability* can't exist unless you know all the things for which you're responsible. For example, you can't be held *accountable* for your company's finances if your duties and responsibilities are to service rental cars.

Establish the reputation of being a good problem solver as well as a good problem finder. Your job is to help your boss find and eliminate all the obstacles that could slow or stop the achievement of his goals.

Remember, mistakes, errors, and defects are not a problem if they're caught and fixed before getting in front of your boss or the customer.

Here are the most important questions to answer to assess your *accountability*.

1. Do you do the right thing?

At an early age, I learned these simple lessons about accountability:

> If you lose, damage, or break something that doesn't belong to you, you need to fix it or buy it.

> If you borrow something, you need to return it in the same or better condition than you found it.

> If you back into and damage someone's car, and they're not around, you need to leave a note on their windshield with your name and phone number to help repair the damage.

> If you were mean or disrespectful to someone, you need to apologize.

2. Are you self-correcting?

**A self-correcting person is someone capable of
correcting himself without external help.**

Part of being *accountable* is being *self-correcting*, especially when starting a new position, even if it's within the same company. Starting anything new is all about learning what you need to know as soon as possible. I'm always amazed by those who never take notes. Why do so few people take notes anymore (with your cell phone or Rocket Book)?

"A short pencil is a long memory." – Unknown.

When you have a question, write it down. Many times, the person with the correct answer won't be immediately available. If you find a term you don't understand, write it down. Later, find out what the term means. Keep a list of all your questions and terms you don't understand. This list will help later when you sponsor a new member into your team. *Self-correcting* people take notes (they don't trust their memory), write down their questions and the answers, and are not afraid to ask questions and proactively seek answers.

3. Do you live your life with no excuses?

People make excuses because it has worked for them in the past. It avoids accepting *accountability*. They're testing your limits to see how much they can get away with, and they fear the consequences of their actions or inactions.

What's the difference between a reason and an excuse?

Here's a simple rule:

Reasons are believable, understandable, and forgivable. Excuses aren't.

Here are the commonly used excuses:

Denial: Refusing to admit or acknowledge that their behavior is a problem. (Example: "I can stop swearing any time I want. My language isn't that bad.")

Isolation: Removing themselves from the team area to maintain their behavior. (Example: "If I had my own office, this wouldn't be a problem.")

Rationalization: Giving reasons to explain their behavior. (Example: "I screamed at him because he doesn't like me.")

Blaming (or Transferal): Transferring *accountability* for their behavior to others. (Example: "I wouldn't be late all the time if my teammates treated me right.")

Projection: Rejecting their feelings by ascribing them to another (Example: "Why is that stupid idiot so hostile?")

Minimizing or Trivialize: Refusing to admit the effect of their behavior. (Example: "I only told one bad joke. It's not a big deal.")

They close their eyes to the destructive consequences of their unacceptable behavior, or they explain their actions in a way that saves them from having to feel. Either way, it's wrong and must be dealt with immediately.

4. Do you do your best work every day?

Here's a great story about doing your best work.

*It's rumored that when Dr. **Henry Kissinger** was Secretary of State in the administrations of **Presidents Nixon and Ford**, he asked for a security assessment to be made of a foreign country. The first day, when a subordinate delivered the report, Secretary Kissinger asked, "Is this your best work?"*

The subordinate thought for a second and walked out of the office. The second day, the subordinate returned with the report, and Kissinger asked the same question. The subordinate again thought for a moment and walked back out of the office.

On the third day, the subordinate returned, and Kissinger asked for the third time, "Is this your best work?" This time the subordinate said, "Yes." Kissinger then responded, "Good, now I'll read it."

I share this story to highlight that there are no shortcuts to success. Your success will always be linked to *"doing your best work."* Do you do your best work every day? Would your boss agree?

5. Are you proactive?

Another thing that contributes to your effectiveness and success at work is your ability to be proactive.

A proactive person identifies and prevents potential problems by causing things to happen rather than reacting to them after they happen.

Proactive people:

Identify potential pre-problems (Chapter 4) before they become a problem and problems before they become a crisis.

Anticipate their boss's and customer's needs and expectations (Chapter 9).

Use Preventive Actions (Chapter 4) to identify and resolve all Pre-Problems.

Take-charge (Chapter 7) and produce order in the midst of chaos.

Use collaborative problem solving to build consensus (Chapter 20) and resolve Unresolved Issues (Chapter 10)

Take Immediate Action (Appendix B) and don't wait to be told what to do.

Anticipate Unintended Consequences and 2d and 3d Order Effects (Chapter 11)

Manage risk (Chapters 12-14) and make things happen the right way the first time.

6. Do you make recommendations to your boss to make things better?

Your job is to help your boss achieve his goals. But what do you do when you find a problem or an improvement that could make things better? Do you create a *Decision Paper* or a *Business Case* (Appendix E) to make it happen?

I've often written Decision Papers through my boss to his boss because my boss didn't have the funding to make it happen. As shown below, the Decision Paper was addressed "To," my boss's boss, "Thru," my boss.

To: My boss's boss.

Thru: My boss.

From: Me

My boss would then initial and write "Approved" next to the "Thru" line above and send it to his boss for final approval. This process helped my boss move the work forward.

If you cannot answer these questions with a strong YES, you need to reassess your *accountability*. Effective people take this assessment annually and fix what needs to be fixed.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

"Many people will walk in and out of your life,
but only true friends will leave footprints in your heart."
- Eleanor Roosevelt

I'd like to recognize those with whom I've had the pleasure of serving, whose effectiveness and character I vividly recall, many of whom are not here today to tell their story.

For my military career, I thank Betty McIntee, Edward J. Murphy (my Dad), Dale R. Nelson, Geoffrey "Jeff" Prosch, Craig "Randy" Rutler, Dave Wagner, John Andrews, John "The Bear" Warren, John "Jack" Costello, Dan Labin, and Ron Nicholl for their example of effectiveness.

For my coaching career, I thank Tony Robbins, Bernard Haldane, Jack Bissell, Len Drew, Wayne McCullum, Bob Schrier, John Hurtig, and Bob Gerberg for their mentoring and coaching.

Special thanks to my long-time mentor and friend, Joyce Kuntz, who encouraged me to write this Playbook. After leaving the US Military, Joyce was my first and best boss when I joined her consulting firm in Seattle years ago. Unfortunately, Joyce is gone now, but her legacy lives on in this Playbook.

"I must be able to say with sincerity that to see things differently
is a strength, not a weakness, in my relationship with others."
- Joyce Kuntz

I thank Joyce's husband, Ed Kuntz, who turned out to be the man who brought me to Seattle from Kansas City to start my incredible second career as an Executive Coach.

And finally, I thank my soulmate and wife, ***Diana***, for her love, encouragement, and understanding throughout this process.

When I count my blessings, I always count her twice.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

"I expect to pass through this world but once; any good thing therefore that I can do, or any kindness that I can show to any fellow creature, let me do it now; let me not defer or neglect it, for I shall not pass this way again."
- Stephan Grelle

Ed Murphy considers himself lucky. From age 7, he knew what he wanted to be when he grew up. He wanted to be a Soldier. So, four days after graduating from High School, he joined the US Army and found himself in Basic Training and Advanced Infantry Training at Fort Dix, New Jersey.

A year later, Ed became a Cadet at the United States Military Academy at West Point. In 1970, he graduated as a 2d Lieutenant headed to Airborne and Ranger School, then off to Viet Nam for a year.

In 1978, Ed returned to West Point to teach Military Science and earned an MS from LIU in night school. During his tenure as a Battalion Commander in West Germany, his greatest achievement was helping 1400 soldiers begin a college education. He wanted to give his soldiers something of real value - something that no one could ever take away. After 23 years as a US Army Officer, he retired in 1993.

For his second career, with a little help from *Tony Robbins*, he became an Executive Coach. Then, for the next 21 years, he worked for four career development and outplacement companies in America, from Seattle, San Diego, Kansas City, and Phoenix.

In 2012, Ed retired a second time and decided to document everything he learned from those he most admired during his 50+ years in the US Military as an Army Officer and Corporate America as an Executive Coach.

In 2014, he began writing books for Amazon and Kindle dedicated to providing the best-in-class wisdom, knowledge, and advice on how to maximize your true career potential. He also founded *TheEffectivenessInstitute.com* to make a difference in the lives of others.

Today, Ed considers himself blessed to get to live in Phoenix, AZ. He enjoys writing, eating sushi, genealogy, and watching movies with family, friends, and his best friend and wife, *Diana*.

I DEDICATE THIS PLAYBOOK

TO

My first Grandson,

MICHAEL VINCENT PAUL
"My MVP"

"Mike, I won't be around during your lifetime. But if I were, I'd tell you exactly what's in this Playbook. That's why I wrote it. May it bless you and your posterity to find true joy and enhance the quality of your life. Make a difference in the lives of others by adding value to them in some meaningful way, and you'll be richly rewarded in this life and the next. Know that I'm always with you! Much love always."

OTHER PLAYBOOKS

These Playbooks are exclusively available at
Amazon.com/books *by using this LINK.*

The above Playbooks are exclusively available from Amazon.com**.**

Never STOP Learning!

CONCLUSION

Congratulations!

And thank you for joining us on this *Journey of Discovery*.

As promised, you now have a *Followership Playbook* to add to your professional library - the one I never had.

Every effective boss needs effective followers who can consistently produce excellent results and add value to those who helped produce those results.

You now have the most actionable *Followership Skills* you were never taught in school or college to support you throughout your career.

Now it's your turn to apply and share this new knowledge to add greater value to your boss and all those with whom you serve.

These are the essential *Best Practices* I've learned over the past 50 years to help you become far more effective and successful than you were yesterday.

As always, I wish you great success.

Never STOP Learning!

Ed

Founder of *TheEffectivenessInstitute.com*

email: ed.murphy77@gmail.com

PS: Also, if you feel this information could help someone else, please let them know. If it turns out to make a difference in their life, they'll be forever grateful to you, as will I.

Stop wishing you were better and do something about it today.

What new skills or abilities have you acquired in the last twelve months? What contributions have you made to your current position in the past year? No matter how good you are, you can always be better.

Ed grew up in Western New York and served 24 years as an Army Officer, from Viet Nam to Desert Storm. He then spent the next 25 years as an Executive Coach, working with thousands of business leaders, small business owners, and teams in San Diego, Seattle, Kansas City, and Phoenix.

His entire adult life has been dedicated to documenting why some people are more effective and successful than others. His research has led to the creation of The Effectiveness Guide, a series of playbooks, one for each of these eleven Core Competencies of Effectiveness: *Followership, Delegating, Planning, Organizing, Communicating, Problem-Solving, Decision-Making, Awareness, Training, Motivating, and Character.*

He holds a BS from the United States Military Academy at West Point and an MS from LIU. He's currently retired and creates instructional videos on how to become more effective and successful at work.