SUCCESS MADE SIMPLE
PRESENTS

10 YEARS ANNIVERSARY

THE TOP TEN BEST PRACTICES FOR YOUR SUCCESS

Revised and Updated

Discover the 10 Most Important Best Practices That Will Determine Your Ultimate Success or Failure in Business and in Life.

SUCCESS MADE SIMPLE

EDWARD J. MURPHY

Founder of The Effectiveness Institute

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BEST PRACTICES
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WHAT OTHERS SAY ABOUT THIS BOOK

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

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

"I recommend the books from The Effectiveness Institute because Ed Murphy doesn't theorize; he draws on his extensive experience from many years of service in the US Military and working as an Executive Coach in Corporate America. His keen insights and practical advice make these books required reading for anyone trying to negotiate the maze of organizational chaos."

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

"The books 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 books."

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

"I dedicate this book to all those I must leave behind who have the desire to be, do, and have more than they have today."

Never Stop Learning!

For Your SUCCESS

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INTRODUCTION

"The greatest thing a man can do in this world is to make the most possible out of the stuff that has been given him. This is success, and there is no other."
- Orison Swett Marden

This book contains the ten most important *best practices* that will determine your success or failure in business.

It was created for you, regardless of your occupation, position, or level of authority, to help you achieve the effectiveness and success you deserve.

However, before proceeding, it's essential to note that this book is an introduction to a forty-book series (see OTHER BOOKS) that constitutes a revolutionary new program called ***SUCCESS MADE SIMPLE.***

The first ten volumes address these ten core competencies of your success in business:

Followership, Delegating, Planning, Organizing, Communicating, Problem-Solving, Awareness, Training, Motivating, and Character-Building.

The second ten volumes provide a more detailed explanation of how to master these ten critical business skills.

Writing, Presenting, Team Building, Risk Management, Coaching, Project Management, Meeting Management, Achieving Goals, Making Decisions and Building Consensus with a Team.

I created this program to give you the essential *best practices* and *critical success skills* you'll need to rise above the crowd, be the best at what you do, and stand out rather than just fit in.

I'm **Ed Murphy**, the founder of ***The Effectiveness Institute*** and the creator of ***SUCCESS MADE SIMPLE***.

After graduating from West Point, I served 24 years as a US Army Officer, from Vietnam to Desert Storm, traveling all over the world.

For Your SUCCESS

After the military, I spent the next 20+ years as an Executive Coach in Corporate America, working with hundreds of business executives, small business owners, and teams in Seattle, San Diego, Kansas City, and Phoenix.

During my career, I was always searching for why some people were more effective and successful than others.

As a result, I discovered that some people were able to achieve extraordinary success because they routinely did these three things:

First, they consistently produced excellent results.

Second, they added greater value to all those who helped them produce their results, especially their boss.

Third, they treated everyone with courtesy and respect, regardless of how they were treated.

SUCCESS MADE SIMPLE was created to help you do these three things better than anyone else.

Here are three reasons this program is so powerful:

1. It provides the most actionable *best practices* necessary to consistently produce excellent results, which you won't find anywhere in academia or corporate America.

2. It teaches the *critical success skills* used by the most effective people in their field, which you were never taught in school.

3. It provides *step-by-step instructions* for each *best practice,* explaining what to do, how to do it, and the tools needed to make it happen.

Who else does that? Think about it!

These are all simple things you can easily learn today and use tomorrow.

Join us and discover why everyone comes away saying,

I wish I knew this stuff years ago.

This program is my legacy, my small contribution to making a difference in the lives of all those I must leave behind.

Enjoy the book!

Also, if you feel this information could help someone else, please let them know.

If it makes a difference in their life, they'll be forever grateful to you, as will I.

To your SUCCESS!

Ed

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

1

BY MAKING A

GREATER CONTRIBUTION

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

Before addressing the ten most important best practices for your success, it's important to set the stage by explaining how you can make a greater contribution and add greater value to your boss.

Have you ever tried to figure out what's most important in business and what's not? Especially when there are too many things to do, too few people, and too many hours to complete them. How can you make a greater contribution if you don't know what your company needs most to survive?

To answer this question, we'll examine citizen-controlled companies and government-controlled organizations, which comprise 90 % of the workforce. Let's start with the civilian-controlled companies.

What do Civilian-Controlled Companies need to survive?

These companies include the self-employed, small businesses, and corporations like Microsoft.

As an Executive Coach, I often ask senior executives, "*What matters most to the survival of your company?*" The first answer I normally got was people. People are an important resource, but not the most important. Just quit your job and see how quickly you'll be replaced.

Some folks said technology. Technology is important, but again, not the most important. So, what really matters most to the survival of every civilian-controlled company?

The only folks 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 their company's survival is *Positive Cash Flow* or PCF.

Positive cash flow is when a business's money coming in exceeds its cash outflows.

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

So, how can you contribute to your company's PCF? Here are the three most important activities that generate PCF.

The first activity is to Increase Revenues.

This activity normally involves those in sales, marketing, sales support, and business development, but anyone can contribute. Can you recommend better ways to sell more products or services, discover new uses for existing products, or attract new customers? This is how revenues are increased.

The second activity is to Decrease Operating Costs.

This activity normally involves those in finance, accounting, and purchasing, but it is everyone's job. Can you recommend better ways to eliminate redundancies, consolidate, or reduce waste? How about improving processes by reducing the time required or better maintaining equipment and vehicles to extend their service life? How much could be saved annually? This is how Operating Costs are reduced.

And the final activity is the one most people forget.

This is anticipating problems today to save money tomorrow.

This activity normally involves those in legal, compliance, loss prevention, safety, human resources, and customer service.

Since insurance and lawsuits are so expensive, can you recommend better ways to ensure compliance with outside agencies or enhance physical and cybersecurity? How about eliminating unsafe conditions or safeguarding high-value items and proprietary methods? This is what saves money tomorrow by anticipating problems today.

Since the most important thing to the survival of these civilian-controlled companies is *positive cash flow*, how can you make a greater contribution?

Caution: If your business unit IS NOT involved with increasing revenues or getting products and services to the end user, you may be considered *non-essential*. Being non-essential means that you could be among the first to be laid off if your company's cash flow goes negative.

What about Government-Controlled Organizations?

Government-controlled organizations differ from civilian-controlled companies in that they're not focused on producing a profit. They focus on providing services that benefit the greater good, the public.

What matters most to the survival of government-controlled organizations is their quality of services.

If their services become ineffective or obsolete, they risk being downsized or eliminated. This includes schools and city, county, state, and federal government agencies.

And they have a different problem with cash flow; it's called *cutbacks*.

And don't tell me that government jobs are secure because they're not. In 1995, I witnessed **President Bill Clinton** release over 1,000 US Army Lieutenant Colonels with a stroke of his pen. Depending on which political party is in power, cutbacks, downsizing, and budget reductions happen all the time.

Since the most important thing to these government-controlled organizations is the quality of the services they provide, how can you make a greater contribution?

Important Notes:

During this program, to keep things simple and easier to understand, I'll be using the following terms:

First, I use the term "*boss*" instead of leader, manager, or employer.

I do this because we all work for a boss, whoever pays us for our work.

Even if you're self-employed or a small business owner, your *boss* is your *customer, client, guest, or patient*, whoever pays you for your services.

As a result, whenever you see the term "*boss*," it means the person who pays you for your work.

Second, I use the terms "*member*" or "*team member*" instead of worker, employee, or associate to reinforce the power of teamwork.

2

BY ADDING

GREATER VALUE

> *"A leader without followers is just someone out for a walk."*
> *- John C. Maxwell*

Before addressing the ten most important best practices for your success, it's important to set the stage by explaining how you can add greater value to your boss or client.

How can you add greater value to your boss if you don't know what your boss needs most to survive?

Let's face it; every boss experiences a variety of stresses every day, ranging from the mundane to the life-changing.

However, the greatest stress every boss feels is the stress of keeping their job or not getting fired, especially if they're new.

The fact remains that any boss who can't resolve problems, get things done, or achieve his goals won't be around very long.

This is the first law of business, and it goes like this:

Either produce a positive result or step aside.

And if you don't believe me, then tell me what happens to unproductive NFL football coaches near the end of every season.

That's right; they get fired! It's not personal; it's business!

This is why every boss needs followers who can resolve problems, get things done, and achieve their goals.

This means helping your boss put points on the board just to stay in the game. And this is where you come in.

The better you get at resolving problems, getting things done, and achieving your goals, the more value you bring.

Translated, this means the better you get at managing projects, the more value you bring to your boss.

The project could be a problem, a goal, an obstacle, or anything else your boss needs to be done.

And you don't need to be an engineer or a certified project manager to manage a project.

You need only a basic understanding of a few simple concepts and Best Practices, which you'll learn in this book.

Let's start with the basics.

What's a Project?

A project could be anything that needs to be started, stopped, or changed. For example, it could be a problem, goal, issue, concern, activity, or event.

I define a project as any assignment that requires the effort of others.

Anything one person can do is a task, not a project. So, whenever you get stuck at work, realize there's a simple way to reframe anything into a project to get things moving again.

What's a Plan of Action?

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

1. Objective: A good objective statement answers these questions: Who is this project for, what, when, and where is the project, and why are we doing it?

2. Methods: This explains how your project will accomplish your boss's Objective.

3. Timetable: The timetable is created by planning backward from the day you receive the assignment until the project is over. It lists all the activities and *Preventive Actions* needed to find and fix problems before they get in front of your boss.

4. Resources Needed: This includes all the things you need and when and where you need them.

5. Unresolved Issues: These include all the issues, questions, unknowns, concerns, shortfalls, obstacles, or problems that could slow or stop you.

6. Risks: These include all the things that *could reasonably go wrong, meaning anything that has gone wrong in the past,* and how they'll be mitigated.

What's a Project's Life Cycle?

Here's a simple Project Chart showing the four phases of a seven-day project that begins in 30 days.

Project Chart for a 7-Day Project Starting in 30-Days					
Phase	**1**	**15**	**25**	**30**	**37**
1	Plan	IPR 1			
2		Prepare		IPR 2	
3				Execute	AAR
4		Assess			

Notice that this chart shows all four phases of a simple project: *Planning, Preparing, Executing, and Assessing*.

The *Assessing Phase* is conducted continuously throughout the project.

It's formalized using two *In-Process Reviews (or IPRs)* between project phases and one *After-Action Review (or AAR)* the day after the project ends.

Also, if your project involves creating a product, it will need a fifth Phase, the *Maintenance Phase*.

Even creating a document or a software update will need a review and possible revisions every so often.

And manufactured products, like cars, will need repair parts, manuals, and trained mechanics.

3

BY KEEPING YOUR

EYE ON THE BALL

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

The first *best practice* you'll need to master to achieve the success you deserve is your ability to *keep your eye on the ball*.

Do you know what "*keeping your eye on the ball*" means? Most people know what it means in sports, but not in business.

In baseball, it means staying continuously focused, alert, and attentive to the details of what's most important: the *BALL.*

However, in business, many people *take their eyes off* what's most important.

In business, it means FOLLOWING UP or not dropping the ball!

Effective people know that their effectiveness involves the ability 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 one of your prospects fails to respond to your solicitation or declines to do business with you, you should continue to follow up.

Follow-up here means continuing to contact someone until you receive a positive response.

The secret to good follow-up is to continue to add value to the person you're trying to contact. And the second secret is, "Don't get discouraged," and here's how. Just remember *SW, SW, SW, N.*

This means "Some Will. Some Won't. So What. NEXT!"

Never give up. Just find another way to get there. Remember, the best salespeople close the sale on their 5th attempt.

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

Here are the most important steps to resolve a problem.

Step 1. By calling to resolve the problem. Let's say you just called a company about a delayed order. You got their voicemail and left a detailed message with the date, your name, company, order number, the problem, and a request for a return call.

Step 2. By documenting your actions. You always document your follow-up actions on your "Call Log." You never trust your memory.

Step 3. By showing up in person. After calling for two days without a response, visit the location in person to resolve the issue.

Step 4. By Pulling Out All The Stops. If everything you've tried has failed, consider elevating your response through alternative means. This could include ordering what you need from another company.

Never give up. Just find another way to get there!

Finally, Step 5. By adding it to your Unresolved Issues List. Keep this issue on your Unresolved Issues List until it is resolved, and ensure your boss has a current copy.

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

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

And here's a great story about how one man saved the day by *following up.*

It was June 1st when 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.

On his Assignment Tracking Form, which you'll learn in Lesson 8, he documented the date, time, and name of the person he spoke with.

On June 12th, a few days before the luncheon, as Joe reviewed his Assignment Tracking Form, he decided to follow up, and here's how the phone call went.

"Hi, this is Joe Sanchez from Trident Resources. I'm calling to follow up on my reservation for 30 people on Thursday, June 15th, at 11:30 a.m. Is everything still on track?"

The scheduler said, "Joe, I don't have a reservation for your company. When did you make it 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."

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, "You're lucky. You called just in time. If you had waited any longer, you'd be out of luck."

After Joe's heart rate returned to normal, he was glad he recorded all his phone calls and followed up when he did. If not, he would have had 30 senior executives standing around, smelling steak, with no place to sit. Rookie mistake.

The bottom line is that when it comes to delegating, 5 % of your job is asking someone to perform a task within a certain time frame. The other 95% is to follow up to ensure it gets done.

4

BY CLOSING

THE LOOP

"Success is not final, failure is not fatal: it is
the courage to continue that counts.
- Sir Winston Churchill.

The second *best practice* you'll need to master to achieve the success you deserve is your ability to *follow through* or *close the loop.*

Do you know what "*closing the loop*" means? Most people think that it means keeping your boss or client informed. However, this is only partially true.

In business, it means FOLLOWING THROUGH or Closing the Loop.

Effective people know that many mistakes and failures in business can be traced back to someone who failed to follow through. Many people think *follow-up* and *follow-through* are the same, but they're not!

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.

Follow-through is different, and here's why. It requires that you perform these four simple steps.

Situation: Let's assume that your boss has just asked you to perform a new assignment.

Step 1. By understanding and accepting the assignment.

Before accepting the assignment, ensure you understand the requirements and when it's needed – the deadline. If you have questions, ask. Now, you need to determine if you can deliver the assignment as requested. If not, speak up. This is when the negotiations begin. Once you're certain you can deliver, accept the assignment, and begin work.

Step 2. By Returning and Reporting.

After completing the assignment, *Return* means contacting your boss face-to-face or on the phone. And *Report* means that you provide your boss with the status of her assignment.

Step 3. By knowing what to do if you can't complete the assignment.

If this happens, *Return and Report* to your boss, either face-to-face or on the phone. Explain the situation and recommend what needs to be done to complete her assignment.

Step 4. By being responsive.

When your boss asks you to do something, treat her assignment with the respect and priority it deserves. For example, if it's Monday and your boss wants something by Friday, deliver it on Thursday or before. If your boss asks how long a task will take, and you know it's a two-day task, tell her it will take three days, then deliver it in two.

"Always under promise and over-deliver."

This is what your boss means when she says, "*Get back to me. Keep me posted. Keep me in the loop*." And there are two situations where follow-through is needed.

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

Situation: Let's assume that your boss has just asked you to perform an assignment. When this happens, ensure you understand the assignment and its deadline.

If you have questions, speak up! If you can't deliver, say so! This is when the negotiating begins. Assuming that you can complete the assignment as required, begin work. After completing the assignment, *Return and Report* to your boss, either face-to-face or on the phone.

And if you can't complete the assignment, *Return and Report* the problem to your boss and recommend what needs to be done to complete the assignment. Just know that *Return and Report* is the most important part of Following-through.

Situation 2.
When asking a Direct Report to do something.

Whenever you ask a Direct Report to do something, ensure they understand the assignment, and when it needs to be completed, the deadline. Once they've accepted the assignment, ask them to *follow through* and explain how to *Return and Report*.

5

BY TRACKING ALL

THE MOVING PARTS

*"The single biggest problem in communication
is the illusion that it has taken place."
- George Bernard Shaw*

The third *best practice* you'll need to master to achieve the success you deserve is your ability to *keep track of all the moving parts* for which you're responsible.

Effective people know that their effectiveness involves the ability to keep track of all the moving parts for which they're responsible.

The fact is that there are many *moving parts* in business, and some lose their way - unless someone tracks them.

Tracking means keeping a paper or digital trail by documenting the most important moving parts.

Moving parts are all the things that keep changing.

Here are several ways to keep track of your most important *moving parts*.

How do you keep track of your Assignments?

Assignments come in two flavors: Assignments *Accepted* from others and Assignments *Made* to others.

Just because your boss or client gives you an assignment doesn't mean you have to blindly accept it. If you can't deliver, say so.

Then, explain what you'll need to make it happen. Now, the negotiations begin.

Here's an example of an Assignments Tracking Form.

Assignment Tracking Form								
Assignments Accepted				Assignments Made				
Date	From	Action Item	DL	To	Date	DL	Checked	Status
11 May	Boss	ABC Report	19 Mar	Sue	12 May	17 May	15 May	OT

Notice that this table has two sides.

The left side (below) tracks your Assignments *Accepted* from others, like your boss.

Assignment Tracking Form								
Assignments Accepted				Assignments *Made*				
Date	From	Action Item	DL	To	Date	DL	Checked	Status
11 May	Boss	ABC Report	19 Mar	Sue	12 May	17 May	15 May	OT

The right side (below) tracks your Assignments *Made* to others, like your Direct Reports, or vendors or suppliers.

Assignment Tracking Form								
Assignments *Accepted*				Assignments *Made*				
Date	From	Action Item	DL	To	Date	DL	Checked	Status
11 May	Boss	ABC Report	19 Mar	Sue	12 May	17 May	15 May	OT

Under Assignments *Accepted,* you'll see the date you received it, whom it came from, the name of the assignment, and the deadline, or DL. Under Assignments *Made*, you'll see whom you assigned it to, the date, the deadline, the date you last checked, and the status.

Situation: Using this table, let's assume that this is 11 May, and you just received an assignment from your boss to complete the ABC Report, with a deadline of 19 May.

The next day, you reassigned the ABC report to Sue, one of your direct reports, with a deadline of 17 May. This way, you have two days before your boss's deadline, in case changes are needed, or something goes wrong.

Also, if you ever need to ask for an extension to a deadline, never ask for one more day. At least ask for two days, because you never want to have to ask for a second extension.

Document all your *Assignments Made* to use for your internal meetings. You can also create an *Assignment Tracking Form* for each Direct Report.

If you fail to document all your moving parts, you'll quickly lose track of who's doing what.

How do you keep track of all the Changes?

Changes can be dangerous for these three reasons:

- The ten percent who never received the change.

- All those who received the change but didn't fully understand its effects on them.

- All those who make assumptions about the change which is always dangerous.

The problems come later when things start to go sideways, and everyone is shocked.

To avoid this, ensure all members understand how each change affects them by reviewing it during future meetings.

Here's a good example of a Change Control Log.

Change Control Log					
Date	Change	Originator	Recipients	Method	Response
May 4	Added 12 to headcount.	Tom	Brian, John, Sam	F2F	None
May 5	Next meeting at 10 AM, not 9 AM.	Tom	Brian, John, Sam	Phone	N/A

Notice that this table tracks the date, the change, the Originator - the source of the change, the Recipient - who was told about the change, and the Method - how the message was communicated, like on the phone, face to face, or email.

Your *change control log* will be handy later, especially when others complain that they never received the change.

You can refer to your change control log and tell them the date, who received the change, and how it was transmitted.

In the end, just know that these three "dangers" will always be present whenever a change is made.

What's the best way to communicate changes to others?

The best way is face-to-face. The second-best option is to have a phone conversation, not text. Then, follow up with a detailed email.

Don't use email as your primary means of communicating changes. Many people don't read their email for days, and others misunderstand the effects of the email on them.

Most importantly, ask yourself who else needs to know this information. Then, act on that answer.

And here's a great story about the dangers of making assumptions.

Tyrone was in charge of his company's Annual Team-Building Session. Three days before the session, his boss called and told him that the venue had been changed to a remote cabin with no electricity. Tyrone immediately met with John, the team member assigned to provide the food and beverages for the session and informed him of the change in venue and the lack of electricity.

The day before the session, Tyrone followed up with John and was shocked to find that John had not considered the new refrigeration requirements for the food and beverages.

Since this was a three-day session for 15 people, this change required that the food and beverages be stored and refrigerated in ice coolers and that fresh ice be delivered twice daily to keep everything cool.

John didn't realize the impact of the change on his assignment. He didn't recognize the need for ice or coolers and assumed Tyrone would take care of it. And Tyrone assumed that John had it covered, which turned out to be false.

As a result, the night before the session, they spent all night scrambling around in the dark with their flashlights, delivering ice-filled coolers to the cabin.

All this could have been avoided if they had understood the potential impact of the change on their assignments, identified and tested their assumptions, and created a Plan of Action to deal with it.

And you'd be surprised to know how often this happens in business.

What else should be tracked?

Absenteeism. Who has not shown up for work and why? Who's in the hospital and why?

Budget. Is your money being spent wisely? Are you within budget?

Focus. What's your Focus? What are your top three priorities? Do your members know?

Goals. What are your goals and your boss's goals?

Sensitive items. What's proprietary or of high dollar value? Where are they located, and how are they being secured?

Earned Time Off. Are members taking vacations or time off?

Loyal Service. Celebrate each year of loyal service and make every five years a big deal.

Birthdays. Celebrate by saying, "I'm so glad you were born."

FAQ Site. This is a good place to display your Purpose, Direction, and Serving Philosophy.

Dashboards. This tells others how your unit or projects are doing.

Outstanding Requisitions. What do we have on order, and when are they due to arrive?

Recognition program. Who has been recognized, when, and for what?

Upcoming Reports and Deadlines. To avoid surprises and crisis management, keep a current list of what's coming up.

Recurring events: What happens every week, month, quarter, and year?

This is why it's nice to have a #2 Person to help keep track of all Long-Term and Short-Term Extra Duty Assignments (like those listed above).

Your #2 Person can delegate specific tasks to different team members to report at future meetings.

The most important thing to remember is,

When was this document last updated?

The final technique is to always add an "*as of date*" to everything you create in writing.

For example, let's say you have just created or updated a document.

Before you're finished, add an *"as of date"* to the document.

This will come in handy when you need to make changes to a document, as it will let people know which document is the most current copy.

It also answers the question, *"How current is this document?"*

6

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

The fourth *best practice* you'll need to master to achieve the success you deserve is your ability to *contribute to your boss's meetings*.

Your boss's meetings are more important than you could ever imagine.

Bosses hold periodic meetings to discuss the status of assigned work and pass on what's important to them and their boss.

Followers attend meetings to exchange insights, suggest solutions, share feedback, and build relationships.

They're also used for voicing opinions, brainstorming ideas, facilitating creative thinking, and promoting cooperation.

Effective people know how to make a greater contribution to their boss's meetings.

They know that these meetings may be their boss's only observation of their performance. So, they make them count!

They also know that these meetings will be attended by their boss's other direct reports and peers.

Remember, someday, your peers may be in a position to sink or save your career. So, help them in any way you can.

Instructions:

Before we review these meeting do's and don'ts, I need you to record what you'd like to add, delete, or change from these lists before your next meeting with your boss.

The Top Ten Best Practices

Here's what TO DO during the meeting.

- Arrive 15 minutes early to get to know your Peers.

- Treat everyone with courtesy and respect, regardless.

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

- Eliminate distractions. Put your cell phone on vibrate, out of sight.

- Support your peers. Teamwork is critical.

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

- Demonstrate an understanding of your boss's goals.

- Wait for others to finish before speaking.

- Follow up with answers to questions you couldn't answer.

- Be sensitive to the boss's time by stating the bottom line, upfront.

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

- And if you have no one to send, call your boss with an update.

Here's what NOT TO DO during the meeting.

- Hog the airtime. 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. Do so privately.

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

- Continue arguing after your boss has made his decision.

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

- Be late or absent without calling.

- Use bad or offensive language or jokes.

Let's Review

What did you learn? What do you need to add, delete, or change from these two lists to make a greater contribution to your boss's meetings? These meetings may be your boss's only observation of your performance.

If you fail to meet these expectations, you'll never be considered a team player, which won't help your career.

7

BY ASSESSING YOUR

ACCOUNTABILITY

"It is not what happens to you that determines how far you go in life;
it is what you do with what happens to you.
- Zig Ziglar

The fifth *best practice* you'll need to master to achieve the success you deserve is your ability to *demonstrate accountability*.

You already know that your job is to help your boss anticipate and eliminate all the obstacles that could slow or stop the achievement of his goals. But do you know what to do when your boss finds something wrong with your work?

This is when you'll get the chance to demonstrate your accountability.

Accountability is your ability to accept responsibility for your actions and in-actions and the obligation to report, explain, and be answerable for any adverse consequences.

Your *inactions* are the things you failed to do that you were expected to do.

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 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.

Don't take it personally; take it professionally and fix it.

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 you run into it, until something goes wrong.

What does every boss expect when bad things happen?

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, or hide the truth.

And yes, one of your direct reports may have made the mistake, 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! *I'm on it!*

Step 2. Investigate - what happened and what caused it to happen?

Step 3. Report the facts and recommend how it should be fixed to your boss.

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 by using the appropriate checks and safeguards.

Remember, mistakes, errors, and defects are not a problem if caught and fixed before getting in front of your boss.

Why don't people understand accountability?

Never assume that everyone you work with understands what accountability means, because you'll be disappointed. It's hard to find in the workforce.

And can you blame them? Whenever they view the media, all they see is bad news, where celebrities and politicians constantly blame others, make excuses, and try to hide the truth to shield themselves from blame, from their accountability. Unfortunately, the only time anyone in business gets to demonstrate their accountability is when things go wrong.

You're accountable to your boss for everything that happens or fails to happen within your area of responsibility.

The flip side of this is you're also accountable for the actions and inactions of those within your charge, your direct reports.

However, *accountability* can only exist if you know everything you're responsible for. For example, you can't be held *accountable* for your company's finances if your duties and responsibilities are to service rental cars.

How accountable are you?

Well, let's see. I'm going to ask you four special questions. I need you to document your answers, either Yes or No. In the end, you'll know how accountable you are and where you need to improve.

First question: Are you self-correcting?

A self-correcting person is someone capable of correcting themselves without external help.

Being accountable includes being *self-correcting*, especially when starting a new position, even within the same company.

Starting anything new is about learning what you need to know as soon as possible. And I'm always amazed by those who never take notes. Why don't more people take notes with their cell phones?

I learned something profound many years ago that has helped me throughout my entire lifetime.

"A short pencil is a long memory."

They didn't have cell phones back then, so I took notes on three-by-five cards, which I always carried with me.

When you have a question, capture it on your phone. The person with the correct answer often won't be immediately available. If you find a term you don't understand, document it on your phone. Later, find out what the term means.

Keep a running list of all your questions and terms you don't understand. This list will help later when you get to sponsor a new member into your team. This also applies to the names of the new members you meet.

Self-correcting people don't trust their memory.
And they aren't afraid to ask questions and proactively seek answers.

So, are you self-correcting? Yes or No?

Second question: Do you live your life with no excuses?

Why do people make excuses? They do so because it has worked for them in the past, and they avoid 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 most commonly overused excuses:

Denying. Refusing to admit or acknowledge that their bad behavior is a problem. For Example: *"I can stop swearing any time I want. My language isn't that bad."*

Isolating. Removing themselves from the team area to maintain their bad behavior. *"If I had my own office, this wouldn't be a problem."*

Rationalizing. A narcissist's reason to explain their bad behavior. *"Nobody's Perfect."* The truth is, there's no excuse for bad behavior!

Blaming or transferring. Transferring accountability for their bad behavior to others. *"I wouldn't be late all the time if my teammates treated me right."*

Recriminating. Turning an accusation around and blaming the accuser. *"You do the same thing." or "Bob did the same thing, but you didn't come down on him."*

Projecting. Rejecting their feelings by ascribing them to another. *"Why is that stupid idiot so hostile?"*

Minimizing or Trivializing. Refusing to admit the effects of their bad behavior. *"I only told one bad joke. It's not a big deal."*

In the end, they either ignore the destructive consequences of their bad behavior or try to explain their actions in a way that prevents them from having to feel.

<p style="text-align:center;color:blue;">*There's no excuse or reason for bad behavior!*
It's wrong and must be dealt with immediately.</p>

So, do you live your life with no excuses? Yes or No?

Third question: 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.*

On 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.

On the second day, the subordinate returned with the report, and Kissinger asked the same question.

The subordinate 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 effectiveness will always be linked to "doing your best work."

And doing your best work isn't the same as being a hard worker.

The difference is that doing your best work is about consistently producing excellent results.

And being a hard worker only emphasizes effort over time, regardless of the outcome.

Always remember, you're accountable to your boss for everything that happens or fails to happen within your area of responsibility.

So, do you do your best work every day, and would your boss agree? Yes or No?

Final question: *Do you make written 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 problems that need to be resolved?

What do you do when you find things that could be improved?

Do you create a *Decision Paper or a Business Case* and send it to your boss? Why not? What are you afraid of?

Even if your boss doesn't approve your paper, she'll still be impressed enough to see you as a good problem solver, which will increase the value you add. Good Job!

So, do you make written recommendations to your boss to make things better? Yes or No?

How did you do?

If you can't answer these four questions with a convincing YES, you need to reassess your level of personal accountability.

You're also accountable for the actions, and inactions, of those within your charge, your direct reports.

Effective people take this *self-assessment* annually and fix what needs to be fixed.

8

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 sixth *best practice* you'll need to master to achieve the success you deserve is your ability to *uncover all your expectations*.

What are expectations, and why are they important to your job performance?

An expectation is someone else's belief about you that's centered on the future.

But here's the problem with expectations.

Regardless of how talented you are, if you don't meet the expectations of your team members, boss or client, and company, you'll be headed for trouble.

Think about it!

Without a clear understanding of what others expect from you, you'll be operating in the dark, which will hurt your job performance.

So, what do others expect from you? One way to avoid this is by uncovering all these expectations within your first 30 days on the job, even if it's within the same company.

The worst thing you could ever do is to assume that you already know.

Let's face it: a less-than-expected result gives rise to the emotion of disappointment.

And if something happens that's not expected, it causes the emotion of surprise.

And it's safe to say that bosses don't like to be disappointed or surprised.

When it comes to expectations, there are three types in business: stated, inherent, and hidden.

By uncovering all Stated Expectations

Stated expectations are verbal or written instructions from your boss and the company.

These are normally found in your job description, company policies, and procedures.

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

Step 1. By knowing your duties and responsibilities.

Your duties are the tasks your boss needs you to perform.

Your responsibilities are the obligation to perform a task assigned by your boss, which has a penalty for failure, called accountability.

Both are normally found in your job description.

What's the difference between Duty and Responsibility?

Duties can be assigned and reassigned. Responsibilities can't!

This means that if you fail to perform your assigned duties, your boss fails because she assigned them to you.

Step 2. By knowing the Standards.

Standards are the established norm or required minimum level of conformity to industry and company policy.

To find the standards that apply to you, review all company policies, standards of conduct, and any Standard Operating Procedures. Pay close attention to safety, security, intellectual property, and proprietary documents and procedures.

Step 3. By knowing your Constraints.

Constraints include imperatives and restrictions.

- **Imperatives** are the things you must do, like achieving your goals.

- **Restrictions** are the things you can't do, like accepting gifts from vendors, and include borders and limits.

    - ✓ **Borders** are the 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.

Step 4. By knowing how much authority you have.

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

Authority can include making work assignments to others, hiring, firing, making decisions, and spending money.

Also, do you have the authority and resources to perform your duties and responsibilities?

If not, let your boss know!

Step 5. By knowing your Projects.

Do you know all the past projects completed before you arrived, your current ongoing projects, and your upcoming projects?

By uncovering all Inherent Expectations

Inherent expectations are all the boss-only duties that must be performed to enable the team to achieve its goals.

Situation: Let's assume that your boss is the owner of a small advertising firm.

Here are just a few of the most important *boss-only* inherent expectations or duties that will consume **80% of her time**.

- Traveling to and attending meetings she must attend, conducting internal meetings, and following through.

- Conducting interviews, checking, and inspecting.

The Top Ten Best Practices

- Planning, organizing, team building, and training.

- Enforcing standards, correcting, and retraining.

- Inspiring, motivating, and promoting.

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

And this is why you should make every effort to be respectful of your boss's time.

By uncovering all the Hidden Expectations

These are the most dangerous because they lead to poor performance, mistakes, and failure.

Hidden expectations are what others expect you to do that's unclear, unspoken, or unwritten.

For any boss to keep you around, the issue always involves your performance, which includes your results and behavior.

- Your *results* involve how well you achieve your goals.

- Your *behavior* includes how well you add value to all those who help you achieve your results, especially your boss.

- And do you treat everyone with *courtesy and respect*, regardless of how they treat you?

Situation: Let's assume that this is your first meeting with your boss after being hired.

These are questions only your boss can answer.

- What are your expectations of me at your meetings, like reports or updates?

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

- What authority do I have? Can I make work assignments, hire, fire, make decisions, and spend money?

- What are my current ongoing projects and my upcoming projects?

- What are my imperatives, things I must do?

- What are my restrictions, things I can't do?

- What are your goals, my goals, and how are they related?

- What are your expectations of me for tradition and culture?

- Do I have your permission to voice my honest opinion behind closed doors without fearing negative consequences?

Then, ask your predecessor, peers, team members, and HR for any hidden expectations for performance, culture, and tradition.

9

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

The seventh *best practice* you'll need to master to achieve the success you deserve is your ability to *anticipate and manage your risks.*

How much risk is too much?

Simply Stated, RISK is Uncertainty!

Managing anything requires your ability to anticipate and mitigate risk.

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

1. By decreasing your probability of Failure.

By anticipating and mitigating your risks, you're decreasing your probability of failure, which increases your probability of success.

2. By understanding that CONTROL over other people 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 **Serenity** to

Accept the things I cannot change,

Courage to change the things I can,

and the **Wisdom** to know the difference."

By Reinhold Niebuhr

And these answers changed my life forever.

In this life, you can't control or change other people, places, things, situations, or circumstances.

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

And all those years, I thought I could control and change other people. This may be 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 be able to influence anyone to help you consistently produce excellent results.

3. By identifying your Risk Goals.

When managing risk, you should always have these two goals.

- To make the *probability 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. By anticipating the Internal and External Risks.

With the help of your team, conduct a good *Risk Assessment* to identify all the things that *could reasonably go wrong,* including anything that has gone wrong in the past during similar projects. Anticipated risks come in two forms: Internal and External.

Bad INTERNAL Situations are risks 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 risks that WILL REQUIRE a call to 911, like fire, injuries, accidents, property damage, violence, or theft.

For each *Bad Situation*, assess these two critical things:

First, Impact. How will this Bad Situation (or Risk) affect your project? Impact is rated as *Significant, Moderate, or Minor.* Based on your assessment, when this Bad Situation happens, how will it impact your project?

Second, Probability. How likely is this Bad Situation (or Risk) to happen? Probability is rated as *High, Medium, or Low.* Based on your assessment, how likely is this Bad Situation to occur?

Warning: If you have a Bad Situation with a *Significant* Impact and a *High* Probability of occurring, tell your boss or client immediately, because adjustments will need to be made.

5. By anticipating and eliminating the Unresolved Issues.

What unanswered questions, unknowns, concerns, shortfalls, obstacles, or problems could slow or stop your progress?

6. By anticipating and mitigating the Unintended Consequences and Second and Third-Order Effects (Chapter 10).

7. By understanding your Risk Options.

I'll bet you didn't realize that when it comes to risk, you always have these options to mitigate it: *avoid, reduce, share, transfer, or accept.*

a. Risk Avoidance: This method for mitigating risk involves not participating in activities that may negatively impact your work. Not making an investment or starting a product line are examples of such activities, as they avoid the risk of loss.

Here are the most common actions to avoid these risks:

- Change the scope of the project.
- Adjust the schedule to eliminate a risk.
- Change project objectives.
- Clarify requirements to eliminate ambiguities and misunderstandings.
- Gain expertise to remove technical risks.

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, you may miss an opportunity

when you avoid a potential risk entirely. So, explore all your options before deciding.

b. Risk Reduction: This method of risk management attempts to minimize the loss rather than eliminate it. While accepting the risk, it stays focused on keeping the loss contained and preventing it from spreading.

c. Risk Sharing: When risks are shared, the possibility of loss is transferred from the individual to the group. For example, a corporation that has several investors pool their capital and each bears a portion of the risk could decide to share the risk and the potential gain with others. For example, you share risks when you insure your project site or partner with another company.

d. Risk Transfer: Contractually transferring a risk to a third party, like insurance, to cover possible property damage or injury. Subcontracting some work can also transfer risk.

e. Risk Acceptance: Some risks will remain after implementing all the above measures. Mitigation efforts can be passive, whereby the consequences are monitored, tracked, and dealt with after the risk occurs. Some are active, like Contingency Plans, to reduce or eliminate the probability and severity of the risk.

This option is usually best under these three conditions:

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

- When the potential loss is less than the cost of insuring 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 still cover your costs.

8. By being sensitive to Scope Creep.

Scope means your project's requirements, complexity, and goals.

Scope creep occurs when others want to change your project.

So, negotiate these changes to gain more time, money, or both.

9. By using Preventive Actions.

Effective people anticipate and mitigate risk by adding *Preventive Actions* to their *Project's Timetable*. This is done to find and fix problems before they get in front of the boss.

10. By anticipating all the things that could reasonably go wrong.

Anticipating what could reasonably go wrong means identifying all the things that have gone wrong in the past during similar projects.

Think about it. Everything that *"could reasonably go wrong"* falls into these three categories:

- *Unresolved Issues.*
- *Unintended Consequences.*
- *And Second and Third-Order Effects.*

Also, if this is your project, you must anticipate all three before starting work. But how do you do that?

You do it by asking your team to help you brainstorm to identify all the things that *could reasonably go wrong* by using what you've learned thus far.

11. By being mindful of Murphy's Law.

In case you've forgotten, here's my **Law on Steroids.**

"If anything can go wrong, it will, at the worst possible time!"

"And just when you thought it was safe to go back in the water."

When you think about it, **Murphy's Law** is less about being *pessimistic* and more about being *realistic* or being a *forward thinker*.

When **Murphy's Law** shows up in your life, it's easy to feel like you couldn't possibly control every situation or anticipate every risk.

However, you'll learn here that even though circumstances will be beyond your control, you can still proactively plan how best to respond.

It's about anticipating what *could reasonably go wrong* and devising Contingency Plans to reduce the probability and impact of adverse outcomes.

12. By knowing how to make changes.

And as the situation changes, your project plans will need to be modified.

Mike Tyson said it best,

> **"Everybody has a plan until they get punched in the face."**

In the US Military, changes are made using "Fragmentary Orders," an abbreviated form of the original plan that is necessary when the situation changes. They're usually issued on an "as-needed" basis, eliminating the need to restate the original plan.

In American Football, they're called "Audibles," a verbal signal or code that changes the intended play or deletes it for something else. If the quarterback sees a hole in the defensive formation, he can exploit the situation by calling an audible.

Why do things sometimes get worse after making changes?

Just know that changes can be dangerous for three reasons:

First, there's always the ten percent who never received the change.

Second, there are always those who received the change but didn't fully understand its effects on them.

Finally, some received the change but made assumptions about the change, which are often wrong.

The problems come later when things start to go sideways, and everyone is shocked.

You can avoid this by ensuring all members understand how each change affects them by reviewing it during future meetings.

13. By creating Contingency Plans.

The purpose of any *Contingency Plan* is to respond to an anticipated bad situation to mitigate its severity when it occurs. Ensure you rehearse your CONPLANs with all team members.

14. By anticipating the Single Points of Failure (or SPFs).

Every project has at least one activity that, if it fails, will cause the entire project to fail. One example is planning for an outdoor picnic; they fail to reserve an indoor location, and it rains. What's the most important task of your project?

15. By maintaining your Focus and Vigilance.

Risk management is about focus and vigilance. Focus on your *SPF*s and be vigilant for all the things that *could reasonably go wrong*. This can be done through the use of policies, procedures, systems, processes, safeguards, redundancies, cross-training, playbooks, and backups.

Warning. Failing to consider these risk fundamentals before your next project will put you on the wrong side of *Murphy's Law.*

10

BY ANTICIPATING

CONSEQUENCES & 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

The eighth *best practice* you'll need to master to achieve the success you deserve is your ability to *anticipate the consequences and effects of your work before starting.*

Do you know how to anticipate and mitigate all the things that could reasonably go wrong? Most people don't.

By anticipating the 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 that is usually referred to as serendipity or a windfall.

- A negative, unexpected problem, like irrigation providing 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 me what's wrong with this picture? Look closer!

Does Starbucks really suck? Of course not! So, what went wrong? The painters hurriedly applied the Starbucks advertisement on the delivery van with the doors closed.

However, they failed to consider the unintended consequences of what the advertising would say when the side door was open for loading and unloading. Not good! And they had to redo it!

By anticipating the Second and Third-Order Effects

Be mindful of how your work impacts 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 are we forgetting?
And what could happen or what might we need to do in 30, 60, or 90 days?

11

BY ANTICIPATING

ALMOST ANYTHING

"Wisdom consists of the anticipation of consequences."
- Norman Cousins

The ninth *best practice* you'll need to master to achieve the success you deserve is your ability to *anticipate almost anything.*

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

But how can you do this when your crystal ball is no less clear than mine? It's not as hard as you may think. All you have to do, with the help of your team, is to follow these steps as if your life depended on it.

Step 1: By finding others who have dealt with similar projects, ask these questions:

- Did everything go as planned?

- Any do-overs or surprises?

- What problems did you encounter, and how were they resolved?

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

- Was there anything 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?

- Is there anything you'd start, stop, or change if you had to do it again?

- And was everyone satisfied with the results?

Note: Never ask anyone about their unresolved issues, unintended consequences, or second and third-order effects because they will not understand what you mean.

Step 2: Contact vendors and suppliers.

Contact vendors and suppliers who have worked with those who have dealt with similar projects. Ask the questions from Step 1.

Step 3: By contacting government offices.

Also, contact the city, county, or state agencies that must inspect similar projects to see if it meets the code. Ask the same questions.

Step 4: By using YouTube to find others.

Use YouTube to search for videos (DIY) of others who have dealt with similar projects. Attempt to contact them and ask the questions from Step 1.

Step 5: By using social media.

Now, use social media to ask if anyone has conducted something similar to what you're about to conduct. When you find someone, ask the questions from Step 1.

Failing to identify everything that *"could reasonably go wrong"* before your next project will put you on a collision course with **Murphy's Law**.

12

BY CONDUCTING A

BACKBRIEFING

"We don't see the things the way they are.
We see things the way WE are."
-. Talmud

The tenth and final *best practice* you'll need to master to achieve the success you deserve is your ability to *identify your boss's or client's expectations before starting work*.

How do you know if your project meets your boss's expectations?

Well, let's face it. No matter how talented you are, you'll be starting over or looking for a new job if you don't meet your boss's expectations.

One of the primary causes of project problems is the failure to clearly understand the project's objectives and expectations before commencing work. But how do you do that?

One way is to give your boss a Backbriefing before starting work.

A Backbriefing is a Plan of Action briefing you give your boss explaining how you intend to accomplish his objective.

This *best practice* is a great way to achieve a "meeting of the minds" before work begins.

Backbriefings enhance mutual understanding and trust by exchanging questions and answers to ensure no unmet expectations or hidden surprises appear later.

And they also enhance your credibility, thus relieving the need for micromanagement.

When should Backbriefings be conducted?

In business, there are two types of projects: Expected and Requested.

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

Requested Projects are different; they're newly assigned projects. For requested projects, provide a Backbriefing to your boss no more than a week after receiving the assignment.

How are Backbriefings conducted?

They're best conducted in these four phases:

Phase 1. Identify the project's requirements first!

Situation: Let's assume that you've just received an important project from your boss. A few days later, you meet with her to capture her requirements before proceeding.

Here's what to ask to understand your requirements.

- Who's this project for? What, when, and where is this project, and why is it being conducted?

- How important is this project, and to whom?

- What's the desired result, and how will it be measured?

- What's the limit of my authority to spend money, make assignments, hire, fire, or make decisions?

- What must be started, ordered, or purchased soonest?

- What are the most important tasks that must be completed for this project to succeed?

- Which task is most critical to the success of this project?

- Who's responsible for each major task?

- Who has conducted a similar project before?

But what if you already know the requirements?

If you've conducted this project before, it might be okay to skip Phase 1. However, don't skip the other phases.

This is because during Phase Two, as you brief your boss on your Plan of Action, you'll know if your assumption was correct.

Just know that assumptions can be dangerous for many reasons.

This is why effective people always confirm the requirements before starting work.

So, be careful! You don't want to be starting over.

Phase 2. Create your Plan of Action (POA).

Create your Plan of Action. Anything you didn't know for sure, you listed as TBA or to be announced.

Phase 3. Conduct your Backbriefing.

You gave the boss and her team a hard copy of your Draft Plan of Action. You then discussed each of the six paragraphs from the POA while your boss helped you fill in the blanks.

Remember, you're not expected to have all the answers, but you're expected to have all the questions.

You also recorded any assignments your boss made during the briefing and any questions you couldn't answer.

Phase 4. After the Backbriefing.

First: Create a Memorandum For Record or MFR.

After the Backbriefing, you created an MFR, documenting what happened during the meeting, including any assignments your boss made and any questions you couldn't answer. The next day, you gave your boss a copy of your memo.

Second: Follow through.

A few days later, you followed through to provide your boss with the answers to the questions she couldn't answer during the Backbriefing. You continued to provide periodic Project Updates and took charge of your project. Good Job!

If you fail to conduct a Backbriefing with your boss before starting your next project, do so at your peril.

Warning! If your boss ever asks, "*What if this happens?*" She's asking you for a Contingency Plan.

Also, if your boss doesn't want a Backbriefing, provide her with a draft copy of your POA for approval.

Final Note: *This ends this free book.*

I'm confident in saying that if all you did for the next 90 days was to use and share these ten best practices, these three things will happen:

First, those around you will be asking, "How did you know how to do that?"

Second, your credibility and reputation will be enhanced.

Third, you'll be well on your way to achieving the effectiveness and success you deserve.

There's only one way to find out.

To your success!

Ed

CONCLUSION

"Strive not to be a success but rather to be of value."
- Albert Einstein

CONGRATULATIONS!

And thank you for reviewing this book.

As promised, you now have the ten most important *best practices* in business to assist you in achieving the effectiveness and success you deserve.

Every boss needs effective team members who can consistently produce excellent results, add greater value to those who helped produce those results, and treat everyone with courtesy and respect.

You now have the most actionable *best practices* you were never taught in school 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.

To your SUCCESS!

We are invested in your SUCCESS! Are You?

Ed

Founder of *TheEffectivenessInstitute.com*.

PS: If you feel this information could help someone else, please let them know. If it makes 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!

OTHER BOOKS

Here are the books from SUCCESS MADE SIMPLE:

The Real-World Business Success Training you'll need to achieve the effectiveness and success you deserve.

YOUR EFFECTIVE LEADER'S GUIDE Series

VOLUME 1: The ART of FOLLOWERSHIP

VOLUME 2: The ART of DELEGATING

VOLUME 3: The ART of PLANNING

VOLUME 4: The ART of ORGANIZING

VOLUME 5: The ART of COMMUNICATION

VOLUME 6: The ART of PROBLEM-SOLVING

VOLUME 7: The ART of AWARENESS

VOLUME 8: The ART of TRAINING

VOLUME 9: The ART of MOTIVATION

VOLUME 10: The ART of CHARACTER-BUILDING

The BUSINESS MADE SIMPLE Series

VOLUME 11: WRITING FOR BUSINESS

VOLUME 12: SPEAKING FOR BUSINESS

VOLUME 13: TEAM BUILDING FOR BUSINESS

VOLUME 14: MANAGING RISK FOR BUSINESS

VOLUME 15: COACHING FOR BUSINESS

VOLUME 16: MANAGING PROJECTS FOR BUSINESS

VOLUME 17: MANAGING MEETINGS FOR BUSINESS

VOLUME 18: ACHIEVING GOALS FOR BUSINESS

VOLUME 19: DECISION-MAKING FOR BUSINESS

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The BEST PRACTICES MADE SIMPLE Series

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VOLUME 25: AFTER-ACTION REVIEWS MADE SIMPLE

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VOLUME 36: LINKEDIN MADE SIMPLE

VOLUME 37: FINDING YOUR CALLING MADE SIMPLE

VOLUME 38: CHANGING CAREERS MADE SIMPLE

VOLUME 39: PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT MADE SIMPLE

VOLUME 40: CAREER RESILIENCE MADE SIMPLE

All these books are available from

TheEffectivenessInstitute.com

and Amazon.com

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 professionalism and character I vividly recall, most of whom are not here today to tell their story. Whatever you learned here comes from them.

I thank Betty McEntee, 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 stellar example, which echoes throughout all my books.

Special thanks to my long-time mentor and friend, Joyce Kuntz, who encouraged me to write these books. After leaving the U.S. 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 these books.

*"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 also 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.

Most recently, I thank Greg and Andrew Potter, who were instrumental in our move to Phoenix, James Ricks for his technical support, and my partner Jason Bowne for his encouragement over the years.

And to all whose names are not found here, rest assured, you're not forgotten. Your legacy lives on in my heart and these books because of your immeasurable contributions to my life. This book is for you.

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 grew up in Western New York and considers himself lucky. From age 7, he knew what he wanted to be when he grew up: a Soldier. Three days after graduating from High School, he joined the US Army and completed Basic and Advanced Infantry Training at Fort Dix, NJ.

A year later, Ed became a Cadet at the United States Military Academy at West Point. In 1970, he graduated as a second Lieutenant, went to Airborne and Ranger School, and spent a year in Vietnam.

Ten years later, Ed returned to West Point to teach Military Science and earned an MS from LIU in night school.

During his two years as a Battalion Commander in West Germany, his greatest achievement was helping 1,400 soldiers begin their college education. He wanted to give them something of real value - something no one could ever take away.

He retired a few years after the first Gulf War, *Operation Desert Storm*.

For his second career, with a little help from **Tony Robbins**, he spent the next 21 years as an Executive Coach, working with hundreds of business executives, teams, and small business owners in Seattle, San Diego, Kansas City, and Phoenix.

After that, Ed retired again and decided to document everything he learned from those he admired most during his 50+ years in the US Military and Corporate America.

Two years later, he began writing books for Amazon dedicated to providing the best practices for achieving greater effectiveness and success in business. Currently, he's authored over 40 books on Amazon.

Today, at 78, Ed considers himself blessed because he gets to live in Mesa, AZ, where he is spared from snow, ice, massive floods, wildfires, earthquakes, tornadoes, hurricanes, and tsunamis.

In his retirement, he enjoys the sunshine, writing, eating sushi, genealogy, and spending time with his best friend and wife, **Diana.**

"I highly recommend the training from The Effectiveness Institute as required for new leaders and a review for seasoned leaders - as a reminder of what they should be doing. This training is unique because it's replete with valuable information that you can learn today and use tomorrow. If you want to become absolutely essential to any organization, this training is for you."

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

"I recommend the training from The Effectiveness Institute because Ed Murphy doesn't theorize; he draws on his extensive experience from many years of service in the US Military and working as an Executive Coach in Corporate America. His keen insights and practical advice make this training required for anyone trying to negotiate the maze of organizational chaos."

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

Ed grew up in Western New York and served 24 years as an Army Officer, from Viet Nam to Desert Storm. After the military, he spent the next 20+ years as an Executive Coach, working with hundreds of business executives, small business owners, and teams in San Diego, Seattle, Kansas City, and Phoenix.
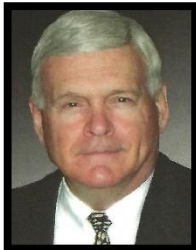
His entire life has been dedicated to documenting why some people are more effective and successful than others. His research has led to the creation of SUCCESS MADE SIMPLE, a Real World, Business Success Training Program consisting of ten volumes, one for each of these ten Core Competencies of your effectiveness and success in business:

Followership, Delegating, Planning, Organizing, Communicating, Problem-Solving, Awareness, Training, Motivating, and Character-Building.

He holds a BS from the United States Military Academy at West Point and an MS from LIU. Currently, he's the author of over 40 books on Amazon and Kindle, and creates online video training courses on how to become more effective and successful in business.