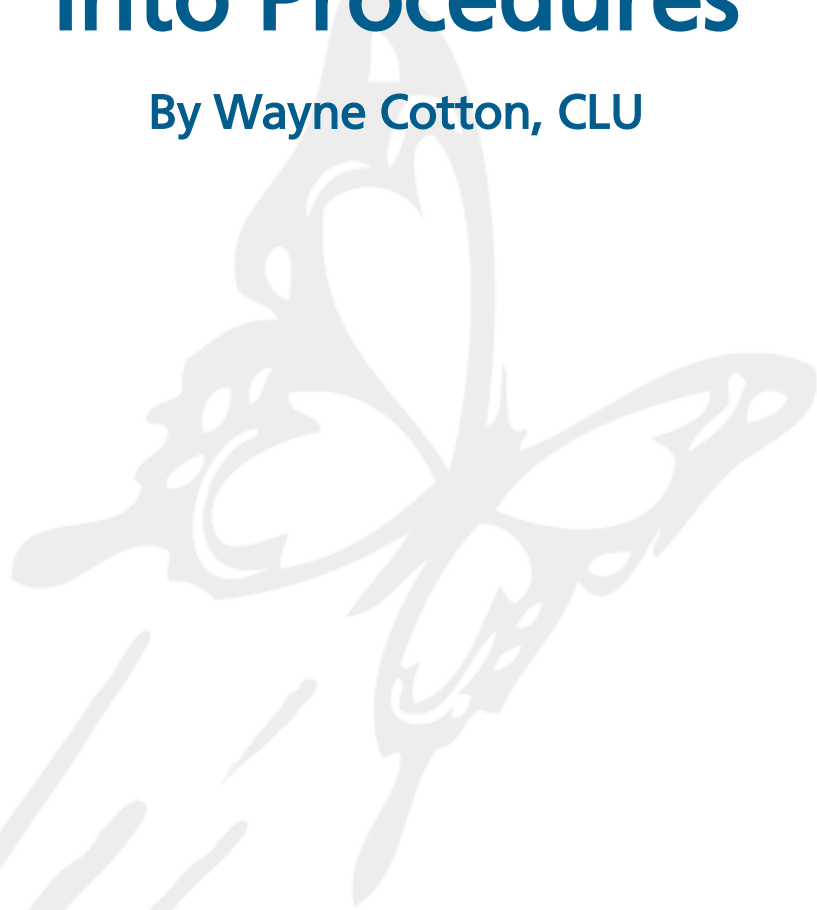


# Convert Problems Into Procedures

By Wayne Cotton, CLU



## Convert Problems into Procedures

### Is your practice personality driven or process driven?

Many insurance agents and financial advisors build their practices around themselves, their personality, and their ability to make things happen. They don't consider the long-term consequences of a personality driven practice.

Building your practice around your personality may work out fine in the early stages of the business, but unless you make the transition to a process-driven business you will limit your ability to achieve higher levels of success and freedom. Too much is dependent on you. The final impact happens when you try to implement a succession plan – without a process-driven practice, the transition is far more difficult.



### Flexibility Fosters Failure

Some of us came into this career because we wanted flexibility and freedom. As a result of that belief, we tend to fight structure, regardless of whether it is delivered by a third party or simply self-imposed. But when you create the structure and gain the many benefits of what you can accomplish, there is no reason to fight against the structure.

Flexibility fosters failure and structure buys you freedom. Structure is a series of processes that integrate and align to become your business model. You create the infrastructure so you can accelerate your growth.

Structure gives you the ability to bring others in to help you. It is the key to your freedom and the pathway towards an easier succession plan. Build your practice with an objective of more leverage and less labor. If you want personal freedom, you must develop a foundation of processes that allow you to grow your results.

### How did I learn this?

I had the good fortune of attending a company meeting in New York City in 1970 near the end of my second year in the business. The great Ben Feldman spoke at a

meeting I attended. He said many amazing things, but one sentence really caught my attention:

*"If you've got a problem, make it a procedure and it won't be a problem anymore."*

Before that time I was all over the map. I had little in the way of organized structure and my results were up and down like a yo-yo.

You see, I had based the success of my practice on my personality and my ability to push through by working very hard. My business up to that point in time was based on a foundation of personality and perseverance, not process.

When I realized the fundamental issue, my mind began to race with possibilities. I became very motivated with the belief that if I could convert core problems into effective procedures, I could make it. I knew I could get my act together and recover from my nasty situation.

**"Process" was my new mantra.**

I worked hard to convert problems to procedures. I focused on the big issues that needed to be fixed. My resolve was to turn every problem I had into a process, so that I didn't have to think or re-evaluate everything all the time. I also decided to implement model methods – and to have one way of doing each step of the process.

Before that time, I often had multiple or muddled methods of doing the same thing. I was always on an incessant search for new and better ideas, but during this quest I passed over some of the best methods while looking for even better ones.

My objective was to transition from complicated sophistication to mature simplicity. I had to keep things simple so I could get functional fast. I had some processes, but they were not aligned and integrated into a smooth process that led to the consistent flow of new clients.

**What was the outcome?**

The more I worked on creating a process driven practice, the better the result. It didn't all happen overnight, but soon I realized that with my business system in place, I could control the outcome of my efforts. My ratios improved and I became more efficient. I could handle more business, more consistently, and the business was no longer a mountain for me to climb.

I was running the business instead of it running me; it was a part of my life instead of my life being a part of it. I was able to calm down, and feel more competent and more confident. I knew what I was doing instead of always thinking I had a long ways to go.



You can build a much better business by converting everyday problems into repeatable processes that generate predictable results.

### **Make the transition to freedom...**

Resolve to de-escalate your tendency to run a personality-driven practice. Make the conversion to a process-driven business that focuses on more leverage and less on labor.

Your business process takes on a life of its own. Over time, you become a part of the process you have created. That allows you to concentrate on those areas where only you can handle a specific step. You can become a specialist, doing what you do best while delegating the rest.

You'll achieve higher levels of personal freedom while your business continues to build, bloom, and boom. And when you are ready, you'll be better prepared to implement a great succession plan.

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