

Have you ever thought about...

... sharpening your saw?

IN OREGON, with its history of agriculture and forestry, the concept of “sharpening your saw” has real meaning. It refers to keeping your tools, your skills, and your attitude maintained, sharp and ready.

This week, I read an article about applying these principles to your computer and I thought about how they apply across the board in business. To expand your business or achieve any significant goal, you need the best tools you can find.

Whether the challenge is harvesting lumber, making a sale, or teaching school, the person with the best tools will always do the best job. Here are some critical areas to re-examine

1. Your computer. Get and USE good maintenance tools. Run a thorough check for viruses, de-fragment your hard disk and check it for errors at least once a week. Norton, McAfee and others sell tools that make this easy and automated. Do it!

2. Voice communication. Get and use a great voice mail system. If your clients, customers, friends and colleagues can't reach you, they won't do business with you. And NEVER require people to identify themselves before they call your business phone.

Never make it difficult for people to do business with you!

3. Get and use a PDA or similar system. Every professional has a vital list of appointments, phone numbers, names and data that you must have with you at all times. Don't leave home without it.

4. Superb email and Internet services. It's not enough to “have” email. Make it work for you! Become an expert at quickly sharing articles, notes, data and humour with your clients and customers. If you're serious about business get serious about your email.

5. Specific tools for your niche and profession. Every industry has it's own tools, language, skills and standards. Become an expert in them, become known as an “early adopter,” the person who invests heavily in new technology and the latest solutions.

It costs money; it pays in profits.



WORDS OF WISDOM

“A committee is a group of people which, individually, can do nothing, but who, as a group, can meet and decide that nothing can be done.”

— Source Unknown

BUSINESS

ALERT!

Hands-on help that works Vol 11 No 3

Interim executives

How to manage an introvert

Introverts may be less noisy in the workplace, but by all accounts they outnumber extroverts.

by Jennifer B Kahnweiler

IF YOU LEAD OR MANAGE others in your organisation, odds are, there are at least a few introverts on your team. To get the best from these “innies,” it's important to learn how to speak their language, whether you are an extrovert or an introvert yourself.

How can you tell if someone is introverted?

You might be asking, “What is introversion, anyway?” or “How can I tell if someone on my team really is an introvert?”

Unlike shyness, a product of anxiety or fear in social settings, introversion is a key part of personality — a hard-wired orientation — and may be best defined by several characteristic behaviours. Introverts derive their energy from within, avoid showing emotion and keep personal matters private. Five more defining behaviours to look for within your team:

- **Seeking solitude.** Introverts need and want to spend time alone. They frequently suffer from people exhaustion and, when they do, they like to retreat to recharge their batteries.

At work, they prefer quiet, private spaces, and enjoy managing projects on their own or with a small, trusted group.

- **Thinking first, talking later.** Introverts think before they speak. Even in casual watercooler chats, they consider others' comments carefully and pause and reflect before responding. They dislike interruptions, especially when they are thinking things through.

- **Focusing on depth.** Introverts seek depth over breadth. They like to dig deep — delving into issues and ideas before moving on to new ones.

They are drawn to meaningful conversations — not superficial chatter — and know how to tune in and listen to others.

Draw out your quieter employees by

following these techniques.

Letting their fingers do the talking. Introverts prefer writing to talking. On the job, they opt for email or texting over the telephone and stop by to talk only when necessary.

Averse to excessive conversation, many gravitate toward social networking websites such as LinkedIn, Facebook and Twitter.

Exhibiting calmness. Introverts are quiet and reserved. Unlike extroverts, they have little desire to be the centre of attention and prefer to fly below the radar instead. In heated conversations or circumstances, they tend to stay calm — at least on the outside — and speak softly and slowly.

What's in it for you?

There are a whole host of good reasons for learning how to communicate with your introverts. For starters, we create our best results through relationships. In truly communicating and connecting with your introverts, you will understand their wants and needs and know how to best engage them.

When you tap into your introverts' hearts and minds, you also promote more creativity and innovation. Their individual ideas can help advance your entire team.

There is also a lot to be learned from introverts' behaviour. Xerox CEO Ursula Burns, who appears to me to be an extrovert, recently told a reporter from the New York Times about advice she received to “tone it down” with less-animated facial expressions. “On my face, you could tell everything in 30 seconds,” Burns explained. “You could tell exasperation. You could tell fed-up-ness.”

Tips for getting started

Learning a new language is never easy and the language of introverts is no exception. Here are four tips to help you get started:

1. Chill out. In meetings,

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HERE ARE A FEW convenient rules of thumb to keep in mind as you start up and operate your own Internet marketing business:

1 — The 10/10 rule.

This rule says always give your online customers a discount off the list price, but the discount doesn't have to be huge; either 10% or \$10 will do.

2 — The 99/1 rule.

99% of your affiliate sales will come from 1% of your affiliates.

3 — The 90/90 rule.

90% of the people who opt into your e-list who are going to buy something from you do so within 90 days.

Therefore, you want to get as many new subscribers as possible to make a purchase within that time frame — otherwise, they may never buy.

4 — The 3-month ROI rule.

This rule applies to buying traffic and new names for your e-list.

It says that, ideally, the revenue generated by new names added to your list should pay back the advertising cost to acquire those new names within 3 months. If not, you may be paying too much per name.

5 — The 10 X 10 = 100 rule.

If you can increase your click-through rates and conversion rates each by tenfold, you will increase your revenues one hundred-fold.

6-The 8:1 rule.

The minimum selling price of a product should be at least 8 times the cost of the goods. So a DVD set that costs \$10 to make must sell for at least \$80.

7 — The 0.1% rule.

Each time you broadcast an email to your list, no more than 0.1% of your subscribers should unsubscribe.

For a list of 100,000 subscribers, that would be a maximum of 100 opting out of the list.

If your opt-out rate exceeds 0.1%, consider throttling back on frequency or improving the content. ■

SOURCENOTE: Bob Bly



Lac Nguyen

The way I see it...

Success and achievement!

SUCCESS AND ACHIEVEMENT IN LIFE —from parenting to fitness to money or time management, to wealth, fame, power or athletic prowess —is the result of mastering the fundamentals.

It's about approaching the task as a problem to be solved, as a set of skills to be learned and applied.

In that sense, as long as we live in a predictable, orderly universe, success is basically an engineering problem. What a concept!

I anticipate expanding on this in many ways, for a long time to come. I don't know where it will lead but here are some of my initial thoughts on the Who, What, Why and How of success:

1. Success comes to those who are prepared. Success comes to some people more readily than others, but the difference has nothing (nothing!) to do with luck or genetic talent or family background. It comes to people who are balanced, healthy and structured.

It is not attracted to scenes of chaos, drama, confusion or impulsivity. Success in the outer world is built on mastering one's own inner world. Get good at living on purpose, with balance, enthusiasm, focus and energy.

2. Success comes to those who know what it is. Success comes to those who have defined their outcomes in advance, who know their purpose and are committed to their goals.

Success is not about "a little of this and some of that." It's not about starting over or giving up when things get hard. Success is about defining what you want, knowing where you're going, and pursuing your goals with creative, persistent determination.

3. Success comes to those who know why they want it. Success comes from purpose and passion, from having powerful

reasons for success. Successful people are described as "driven" by a dream or "pulled" by their sense of mission.

They are rarely distracted, seldom confused and they never give up. It's often impossible to tell whether they have a dream or the dream has them. They stay the course because it's important. They have their reasons.

4. Success comes to those who know how. Success requires effective strategies, solid plans, a budget, a schedule and talented partners, coaches and teammates. Success is not random!

We live in an orderly, predictable world and successful people often spend more time developing their "blueprint" or "path" than it takes to achieve their goals once they get into action.

Eager, impulsive failures tend to launch before they are ready. Winners focus on the plan. **They know how their plan is going to work and they work their plan.** ■

SOURCENOTE: © Copyright Philip E. Humbert. All Rights Reserved. Written by Dr. Philip E. Humbert, writer, speaker and success coach. Dr. Humbert has over 300 free articles, tools and resources for your success, including a great newsletter! It's all on his website at: <http://www.philiphumbert.com>



Brainstorming

GIVE THE RIGHT NON-VERBAL SIGNALS.

Use a strong handshake to communicate energy and drive. Maintain eye contact. Avoid nervous mannerisms, doodling, tapping your fingers. Smile often. Avoid slouching and other forms of bad posture that make you seem to lack confidence. Do not send mixed signals. Example: Leaning forward in a chair to indicate you are paying attention, then glancing around the room as if you are bored.

Frank Grazian, executive editor, Communication Briefing

HOW TO MANAGE AN INTROVERT — Concluded

conversations and even casual chats, slow down and give your introverts time to reflect and respond. Put space between your questions — counting "1...2...3" in your head if you have to — and avoid what most introverts perceive as a cross-examination. I know several extroverted managers who also post a reminder next to their phone: "Shut up and listen."

2. Give the gift of solitude. Introverts need alone time. As a manager, refrain from judging this need and do what it takes to honour it instead.

One simple technique: rather than stopping by throughout the workday, bundle your non-priority items and schedule a single conversation.

3. Write more, converse less. Accommodate your introverts' preferences for

writing over conversation. Instead of picking up the phone or showing up unannounced at their desks, communicate through email or online chats whenever possible.

4. Pass the megaphone. Encourage balanced participation in meetings and help introverts prepare. Ask for agenda items in advance, assign pre-work, and agree on a system that invites everyone to be heard. One group I know distributes 10 tokens to each team member at the start of a meeting. When someone speaks, he or she gives up a token. The idea: no tokens, no talking.

Finally, avoid many introverts' least favourite question: "What's wrong?" For these quiet, reserved types, nothing is wrong. So, why not leave them alone — and enjoy a little peace and quiet yourself? ■

SOURCENOTE: Jennifer B. Kahnweiler is author of "THE INTROVERTED LEADER: BUILDING ON YOUR QUIET STRENGTH." Founder and president of AboutYOU, Inc., an Atlanta-based leadership consultancy, she is an executive coach and corporate speaker.

A DATABASE that contains the names and details of your existing customers and your prospective customers is the great treasure trove of your business.

Use it wisely and you'll be able to generate massive sales and retain the loyalty of your clients and customers for years to come.

If you don't have a customer and prospect database already, set it up immediately. **Why?** If you don't have information on your customers, you can't look after them properly and you can't return to them with new products and services as you develop them.

A database of potential customers is also crucial. **Why?** If you don't have information on your prospects then you have to constantly spend money to generate new leads. With a prospect database, you can actually go back to your old leads, your old enquiries and reactivate them.

The more information you have on people interested in your business, the more you can return to them with additional offers, even when they don't buy the first time.

You can categorise your customer database into:

- The people who buy.
- The people who bought the most recently.
- The hot prospects — the people who are the most likely to buy.

The easiest way to segment your database is through the age of the data. By that I mean: did this person enquire in the past four weeks or did they enquire four years ago? Once you've segmented your database, you can tailor your marketing appropriately, targeting the right message and the right offering to the right kind of people.

The more information you collect about the preferences of your prospects and your customers, the more efficient and the more tailor-made you can make the offer that you're proposing to that person. ■

SOURCENOTE: Jonathan Jay, the founder of SuccessTrack - Success Strategies for Business Owners.

Information marketing

Your intangible USP

Your business has not one but two unique selling propositions (USPs): the tangible and the intangible. **by Bob Bly**

THE TANGIBLE USP IS THE VISIBLE, quantifiable (or at least describable) differentiator between you and your competitors.

Because it can be seen, felt, described and grasped, the tangible USP is the one you feature in your marketing copy.

Example: Years ago, before digital cameras were invented, Polaroid's USP was that its cameras produced instant pictures.

With all other cameras, you had to take the film someplace to get it developed. But with Polaroid, the picture would develop when exposed to air in about a minute.

The intangible USP, for most entrepreneurs as well as many larger companies, is your personality and reputation. In the corporate marketing world, it might be called your "image."

The intangible benefit can be just as important in closing sales and attracting repeat business as the tangible benefit. Yet it takes a secondary place in marketing copy, if it is there at all.

The reason is that an intangible USP is difficult to describe in a way that is clear and compelling — even though it may be enormously valuable.

For instance, TP owns a camera store near my office that sells the same cameras as just about every other camera store.

Many of the big chains sell those cameras at lower prices and carry a wider selection. That gives them a tangible advantage over TP.

But TP has several advantages over them which translates into several intangible benefits for his customers.

TP is a successful semi-professional photographer whose work has been widely published. (He specialises in photographing fires and firefighters.) The most obvious benefit to the customer is his superior advice and guidance on camera selection and usage.

But there's another, even less tangible, benefit: when you go to TP's store, you can talk photography with him and his enthusiasm is contagious.

Being around TP, a professional who takes pride in his work — both as a photographer and a store owner — gives you a sense of camaraderie with a fellow shutterbug. It makes you eager to improve as an amateur photographer and eventually master the craft. These are goals that TP can help you achieve, both with the products he sells and the advice he dispenses for free.

I see a parallel between TP's photo shop and the business of marketing information products.

The tangible USP of an information product is usually inherent in either the content of the product itself or the credentials of the product's author. You can also build a tangible USP into the offer.

For example, Prentice Hall was selling a book on how to create a marketing plan. The offer included a 30-day free trial of the book: if you did not like the book you returned it within 30 days for a refund.

The copywriter who wrote the direct-mail package to sell the book realised that a customer could get the book, follow the instructions and then return the book within 30 days for refund — in essence, getting a free marketing plan.

So he used this as the USP in the headline of his sales letter: "Create a Breakthrough Marketing Plan in 30 Days — Guaranteed or Your Money Back."

But when you are an information marketer, especially on the Internet, you also have an intangible USP that becomes important to your customers. That USP is who you are — your personality. Some marketing experts call it your "personal brand."

It is an old axiom in selling that customers prefer to do business with people they know and like. So the more you come across as someone your customers respect and trust, the more they will seek your advice and, in turn, the more products they will buy from you.

Unlike consumer brands successful personal brands are not manufactured by advertising agencies. They are natural reflections of the marketer — his personality, experiences, beliefs, strengths, prejudices, opinions and attitudes.

To use your personal brand to your advantage, it is best to be true to yourself, to be the person you really are, rather than to fabricate some artificial *persona* you think more people will like and buy from.

In matters of personal branding, heed motivational speaker Rob Gilbert's formula: SWL + SWL = SW. This stands for: "Some will like you and your products. Some won't like you and your products. So what?"

Be yourself. It's the only personal brand you can pull off with credibility. If you try to be someone you're not, your customers will sense it in everything you write or say and distance themselves from you.

Yes, your *persona* will attract some customers and repulse others. But SWL + SWL = SW.

The number of loyal readers and fans you attract by being yourself will be more than sufficient to earn a handsome living by selling information products to your core mailing list.

One more thing: your *persona* or personal brand is established primarily in your communications with your prospects and customers. On the Internet, these communications include your e-newsletter, email marketing messages, transactional emails, website, landing pages, blog, teleseminars, customer service emails and phone calls, Facebook account, YouTube videos and, of course, your information products.

While it makes sense to develop your own style in written and spoken communications, you should always present your best, most positive, self — the "you" that is most helpful, friendly, and caring about your readers' success.

That's something your customers will like. **A lot.** ■

SOURCENOTE: Bob Bly is the author of more than 70 books and an undisputed master of the art of selling. Don't forget to subscribe to Bob's free e-zine, THE DIRECT RESPONSE LETTER.

The Institute for Independent Business

FOUNDED IN 1984 in the UK, the Institute for Independent Business (IIB) is now one of the world's largest international networks of business advice providers.

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WORDS OF WISDOM

"A billion here, a billion there, and pretty soon you're talking big money."

— **Everett M. Dirksen**

Selling

Secrets of selling success

There are very few secrets to successful selling. Here are a few of them

PEOPLE DON'T BUY PRODUCTS — they buy solutions to their problems: you have nothing to sell but benefits.

1 Be clear about the benefits

- What will the customer gain personally by buying your product or service?
- Will it save them time/make them money/improve their status?
- In what ways is it different from/better than your competitors' products?
- These are all benefits, and these are what you have to sell, not the features of the product.

2 Plan your selling before the meeting

Think about the balance of power: does the customer need the product more than you need to sell it, or vice versa? What do you have to/want to achieve from the meeting? What are you prepared to give away?

3 Ask questions and listen

Ask the right questions, to find out what benefits matter to them. Plan your questions beforehand, and make sure you listen to the

answers. That way, you can focus your sales presentation on the aspects of your product or service that meet their needs.

4 Empathise with the customer

You may not agree with their opinions or their attitude, but you are more likely to win the sale if you empathise. "I can see why you feel this way about it, but you'll find it lasts twice as long as the others on the market" is much less likely to cause offence than "It's not expensive! We build them to last!"

5 Welcome objections

Objections are an opportunity! They show that the buyer is interested. Welcome them and don't see them as a threat. You may even be able to use them to close the sale:

"It's too expensive."

"It does cost a bit more than the others on the market, but it's guaranteed for five years."

Or: "If we reduce the price by 2%, will you buy it today?"

SOURCENOTE: This advice was kindly provided to Bytestart readers by THE ESSENTIAL BUSINESS GUIDE

Careers — what's in the box?

A YOUNG MAN NAMED TROYAL went to Oklahoma State University in the USA on a javelin-throwing scholarship. But athletics didn't feel like his real calling, so he asked himself a crucial question:

"If God came to earth with a box containing the reason for my life inside of it, what words would I most like to find in that box?"

It didn't take Troyal long to decide that the box would contain two words, "The Music."

He could pick a little guitar; his voice wasn't half bad; and he'd written some great songs. He set off for Nashville.

He got nowhere on his first venture in the music business. So he returned to Oklahoma City.

But two years later, Troyal tried Nashville again. He worked at a boot shop, while his wife Sandy worked at a dry cleaner.

One night he showed up at an "audition evening" at the Bluebird Cafe. A Columbia Records scout caught Troyal's act and signed him to a record contract.

Troyal Garth Brooks, now the best selling country and western artist of all time (having sold more records than Michael Jackson or Madonna) found the race he wanted to run and didn't quit until he had won. ■

SOURCENOTE: Bruce Jenner with Mark Seal, Finding the Champion Within: A Step-by-step Plan for Reaching Your Full Potential

Why are you doing this?

EVERY SUCCESSFUL BUSINESS leader has a clear answer to this vital question: why are you building this company? Who does it serve and what's your greater purpose?

For some entrepreneurs, the primary purpose is simply to create a business that can be sold. They have a talent for designing systems to meet a real need while making a profit, and they love starting new businesses. Once the company is established, they often sell it and may repeat the process again and again through the years.

Most business owners, however, have some other purpose in mind and it is often deeply personal. Some want to build a company they can pass on to their children. Others want to see how large and profitable they can make it and they dream of a vast enterprise with thousands of employees.

Still others want a business that expresses their values or contributes to society in some way.

In coaching hundreds of entrepreneurs, I am struck that it does not seem to matter what the reason actually is.

What matters is the ability to keep it in sight at all times. Knowing your personal vision, your purpose or mission, the "reason why we do this", is absolutely critical.

The solution is simple: Keep your eyes on the prize! Step back, gain perspective, renew your commitment. Remember WHY you are doing this! If you are clear about the "why", you'll figure out the "how". ■

SOURCENOTE: Dr Philip E. Humbert

For more information, please call Lac Nguyen on 647 401 3447