

June 2008

## The Desired Outcome

### This Month: Are you a Work-horse?

#### In this issue:

- Your Business: Thinking vs. Doing >>
- Your People: Develop your replacement or you're stuck >>
- Your Visibility: Don't be known as a work-horse >>
- Your Life: Remember what you enjoy >>



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#### YOUR BUSINESS

## Thinking vs. Doing

If you had 20 percent more time magically appear in your work week -- a full uncommitted, unscheduled work day, every week -- what would you do with it?

Would you do more email? Would you go to more meetings? Would you do even more of what you are already doing?

Or would you do something different? Better?

### **Most people say they would use extra time for thinking, or strategic planning.**

This is what I refer to as **working ON your business vs. working IN your business.**

It's very easy to get consumed working IN your business, creating, writing, meeting, selling, building. It all feels like it's important and necessary. All this activity is working IN your business -- it's working on the content of what your business does.

But if this type of activity consumes all of your working time -- you are being a work-horse.

Some of the pressure to do this comes from your boss, some of it comes from your peers, and some of it if you inflict upon yourself. I know because I've done it too.

#### **Letting go of over-busy-ness.**

### **You need to stop thinking of being over-busy as being effective, important, or required.**

Give yourself permission. Not only is it OK to let go, it's necessary. It is a core trait and competency of a highly effective leader to let stuff go.

Letting go is what gives you time to focus on the highest-impact activities, and create the most efficient ways of doing things.

Even if you are an individual contributor, it is your job to lead, and to find ways to focus your work to be the most effective and productive vs. accepting your workload as is, without optimizing it.

**In fact you could think of staying over-busy as a form of laziness -- not getting the job done, because you have failed to apply the hard, strategic thinking to tune and balance your workload for the highest impact.**

You can get more ideas for how to deal with this in [April's issue](#) in the article "[Don't Do Everything](#)"

As leaders, whether managing large or small organizations, or working on our own, we need to learn how to take a step back and spend time working ON our business.

There are three things you need to consider

- ✦ Understand why this is hard to do
- ✦ Know what it looks like when you are doing it right
- ✦ Focus on what the benefits are

### **Why this is hard to do:**

**Because it feels non-negotiable** – Things need to get done! There is always more stuff that seems like it needs to get done than you will ever do. So why not think about attacking 120% of what is possible than 180%. You are not going to get it all done anyway so draw the line in a different place.

**It feels good** - Let's face it, it feels good to be recognized as being someone who always delivers no matter what. You can be highly regarded and even rewarded as a work-horse, but it will always keep you from being recognized as a leader. You can learn much more about this in [The Career Building Handbook](#).

**Guilt** - Many people feel like taking time for thinking or planning, or just to catch their breath and renew themselves is not real work. It's almost like they feel like doing this is stealing from the company.

You need to get over this. Not only is it real work, it is better work than being over-busy. If you must do something to alleviate your guilt over taking some time to do this, give it a label like "time for the extra-hard work"!

**Delegating poorly** – Delegating effectively is hard work, and wouldn't you know it, requires that you give yourself some thinking and planning time, to do it really well.

If you are jumping in to do the work that your team should be doing, this is never the right choice, for many reasons, AND as a result keeps you in work-horse mode. For more discussion on delegating effectively see [April's issue on Making time and energy](#).

### **What it looks like when you are doing it right:**

If you are using your time well, you will explicitly carve out and schedule time for thinking and planning (or whatever you name it). It will be regularly scheduled, vs. 2 hours this month and then never again.

During this time you will be working ON your business.

### **You will be focused on leading your team vs. managing their work.**

Some of the things this looks like (but certainly are not limited to) are:

- ✦ Plans that are six months to one year out or more
- ✦ Clarifying Desired Outcomes
- ✦ Setting & ratifying priorities, with your team and your boss
- ✦ Organizational and process planning
- ✦ Communications, increasing clarity and focus on core outcomes

- ✦ People Development
- ✦ Developing an explicit learning agenda for your team
- ✦ Managing & optimizing spending
  - ✦ Budget planning
  - ✦ Unit cost/steady state reductions
  - ✦ Prioritization
- ✦ Building networks of support outside your organization

### What the benefits are:

**Key benefits are increased sanity and effectiveness, AND creating even more Time.**

Try to think of it as an investment in making more time.

For example, if you take two hours to improve a process or clarify an outcome or a delegated task, you could gain another five hours in saved time.

Then you use those five hours to communicate more effectively, and re-assess priorities and outcomes for your team. When those efforts then take hold you have created even more time. And so on...

**You become more valuable to the company because you are leading and building capacity – not being a work-horse.**

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[Back to top >>](#)

#### YOUR PEOPLE

## Develop your replacement or you're stuck

Part of the thinking vs. Doing, and working ON your business is succession planning. Succession planning is not just for CEO's.

One of the many good reasons to build the best team (and then not do their work for them), is that If you have any desire to get promoted, you will be held back if your departure leaves a big gap.

Many people equate staying deeply involved in the work with adding value – and therefore getting ahead. This is not how it works.

**Working really hard IN your business and consistently delivering results, will sentence you to a life of working really hard in your business and delivering results.**

Why would anyone other than you want that to stop?

**I'm not talking about NOT-delivering results.** I'm talking about delivering results in a way that you rise above the work. You still get the work done, but you do it by leading your team and building capacity vs. sheer will and busy-ness.

### Step Up & Step Back

Every time you take a step up you need to take a step back from the content and the detail. That's your job. You need to make sure your team is capable of delivering on the content. If you can get your team to deliver without your involvement you are doing it right!

Here are some ideas for how to do this.

### **Just enough process**

Create processes for planning, doing, and reviewing. Make the desired outcome clear and expect people to rise to the challenge. Review and measure outcomes, not steps along the way.

### **Be unavailable to come to the rescue**

If they know you are not available, they will deal with it. Your team will survive and they will step up and deliver.

**If you are always available you will always get sucked in.** You are staying a work-horse and failing to develop capacity in your team.

### **Focus on the Desired Outcome**

Shift the focus of what you talk about to Desired Outcomes. Start every meeting, phone call, email, and project with a clear articulation of the desired outcome. You will be amazed at the time you will save and the quality of the results.

### **Don't forget to take care of your work-horses**

Likewise as a leader, it's up to you to guide the work-horses that work for you to prioritize better, create systems and process to streamline their work.

The worst thing you can do to a high performer is to give them the same kind of work they are doing so well now, forever after. You need to help them break this cycle too.

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[Back to top >>](#)

YOUR VISIBILITY

## Don't be known as a work-horse

If you are a work-horse you will become known for being someone who can always take on more and get it done.

In last month's [Member Call on Personal Brand](#) we talked about managing what you are known for.

**It's really important to manage what you are known for to be a leader who is building capacity vs. being a work-horse who can handle a virtually unlimited amount of work.**

Here are a few ways to do this:

### **Forecast bottlenecks ahead of time**

Show your processes and capacity improvements to your boss. Impress him/her with the proactive management you are doing, and forecast where the breaking points will be as more work is added. Doing this ahead of the curve shows you as a thoughtful and in control vs. a reactive person who can't deliver.

Even if you are an individual contributor, exposing your process for how you do your work will have the three-fold benefit of 1) uncovering ways for you to streamline it, 2) letting you show what capacity is and what impacts it, and 3) creating positive visibility for you what you do, which was before, mostly invisible.

### **Make your top performers famous**

This also has multiple wins, such as motivating your top performers, giving them visibility, and demonstrating yourself as a leader who can recruit and maintain top talent.

But it also shows people that you are not doing all the work personally. By exposing all the people involved in doing the work, you are giving credit where credit is due, and showing yourself as a leader vs. a work-horse.

### **Say NO sometimes**

It's your job to train your boss and the people around you to respect priorities, capacities, and agreed desired outcomes.

You can always have the discussion about the desired outcomes you are working toward, and invite your people, even your boss, to clarify if this new thing is to be done instead of something that is already prioritized and committed.

This has the double benefit of only adding work once you make room for it, and getting people in the habit of not just dumping work on you because you always say yes and always get it done.

Remember, this is not about being unresponsive, it's about creating big success on the core priorities that you will do really well, vs. diluting your effort among too many things and not doing any of them well.

This is better for you, your credibility, your boss, and your company. You can read more about this in the [April issue article "Don't Do Everything"](#)

Also, don't miss this month's member call on [Ruthless Priorities, saying No to say Yes.](#)

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[Back to top >>](#)

YOUR LIFE

## Remember what you enjoy

Another trait of the work-horse is to put off enjoying life until all the work is done.

People used to tell me with pride that they had maxed out on vacation days and were no longer accruing them. Never let this happen to you.

Remember the most inspiring and successful executives and people are the ones who's lives are working. They take time to enjoy their life. Their work and their life -works. They are good at both.

### **And it's not because highly successful people were less busy than everyone else along the way!**

At the very least, take some time to remember what it is you enjoy. It's easy to forget what you enjoy when obligations squeeze out everything else for a long time.

Once you remember, focus on it, then set a goal, even a small one. If you enjoy world travel, don't think the only way to do that is to quit your job and go off on a life changing adventure (which you probably won't do). Plan a weekend somewhere you haven't been before (which you probably will do).

The difference in emotional payoff between doing zero and doing something that is meaningful to you is way bigger than the difference between something and a lot.

Focus on something you enjoy and if you can't set a big goal set a small one and actually do it!

You will feel different, gain energy and be better at your job too!

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[Back to top >>](#)

I hope you have found some useful ideas that will help you do something specific to build value in your career and business and enjoy your life.

**If you were sent this issue of  
The Desired Outcome by a friend,  
Sign up now,  
to get your own copy each month.**

### Bullfighter Scores:

In this article [Bullfighter](#) did not like my use of the words strategic, and proactive.

This issue scored an 8.8 out of 10. I make sure my documents always score higher than an 8 to re-inforce my brand value of "Straightforward".

Bullfighter Diagnosis: Mostly clear, with some unnecessarily long words and sentences. You get to the point, although with an occasional detour.

### About Patty

Patty Azzarello was the youngest general manager at HP ever at the age of 33. She ran a \$1B software business at the age of 35 and was a CEO for the first time at the age of 38. Patty is known for her personal leadership qualities, her straightforward and practical manner, and her genuine interest in making a real connection with people to help them to advance their career and business, and to find ways to enjoy their life more.

[More About Patty >>](#)

Today Patty Azzarello is the CEO of Azzarello Group, [www.AzzarelloGroup.com](http://www.AzzarelloGroup.com) a unique services organization focused on helping companies develop and motivate their top performers and grow their business.

Azzarello Group delivers practical, experience-based tools, through products and services including, executive coaching, public speaking, leadership workshops, online programs, and consulting with teams on business execution.

[Back to top >>](#)