



Things not getting done

By Guy Arnold

How often do we have meetings and arrange things that simply just don't get done? Of course: you're normal: this happens all the time.

So how do we make things happen and get things done?

Again: counter intuitive: people will only do things if they want to: you cannot force them to do them (unless you want two people doing one job at the same time!).

You can only create the circumstances where they want to do it excellently and joyously.

So how do you do this? We suggest you use the format of a win/win agreement which goes like this:

Intent: the intent of the conversation is to find an outcome that all parties are happy with and committed to.

Desired results: the desired results for the person doing the job are win/win

- A win for the Individual: The things that the person will feel motivated by and which are congruent with their role and goals, (things that they will feel committed to that meet their own personal and emotional needs).
- A win for the Organisation: The things that the Company needs to get achieved, (the results that everyone is aware of and aligned with).

Guidelines: the conversation and the meeting where we discuss what's going to happen and we thrash out ideas and different scenarios.

Resources: the resources that will be needed to make the above guidelines happen: time, people, money and anything else.

Accountability: how we will hold each other accountable, what measures we will use, and when we will meet and discuss progress.

Consequences:

- What are the consequences of success? What will we do next?
- What are the consequences of failure? How would we move forward and what price would be paid by whom if this doesn't work out?

This is a simple format, but very few people use it because **everyone is so busy being efficient, they are forgetting to be effective:** effectiveness requires great relationships and long-term efforts on clear, intents, desired results and aligned goals, and using this format to achieve win/win outcomes. But, so often, people are so busy putting out fires in their business, that they don't have time to install sprinklers and a fire alarm.

People not having enough time to work on their business because they are so busy working in their business.

This is a huge issue today (which is of course surprising, bearing in mind how many time saving devices we have at our disposal!), but **there is so much information produced today, that filtering it all to get the wheat separated from the chaff, is a job in itself.**

So many people are so busy in their roles that they can't find time to step back from the day to day and work on the truly important things, and so their business starts to suffer and they start to become uncompetitive and therefore busier and busier ... and more and more stressed.

People tend to be too busy doing:

- Command and control management.
- Ineffective communication.
- Managing problems.
- Reacting to unexpected issues.
- Doing thousands of urgent things at the expense of the important things.

This is a huge issue in itself and many books have been written on this subject. But, the answer lies as ever, in simplicity: if you have a clear customer focused mission, if your processes are aligned around your internal and external customers' real needs, if you continually go the extra inch and hold your 'go the extra inch sessions', if you have clear measures and everyone is clear about how their own measures are aligned with the overall measures, then everyone will be clear on what they need to do.

Then what the Management have to do is, **hold them accountable using win, win agreements, regular reviews and strategy sessions.**

Dealing with challenges well

Because everyone is so busy rushing around putting out fires, there often seems to be little if any time, to look for potential new challenges coming over the horizon: so **the first many people and businesses know about key and critical challenges is when they've already arrived.**

This is of course very normal, but incredibly wasteful and very damaging and dangerous.

Intuitively we are frightened of challenges and tend to shy away from them therefore, the answer to this problem is to counter intuitively seek out problems while they are small and far away ... before they become big and urgent problems.

- **To seek out challenges to test you for the future.**
- **To seek out what issues are going to arrive before they arrive,** because if you can get to grips with them before they've arrived, when they do arrive they are expected and planned for and not part of the overall panic and maelstrom of everyday.

Therefore, the key is your customer focused mission, your customers real needs driving your processes, your 'go the extra inch' sessions, and your clear measures, it makes it much easier to identify challenges and issues before they've arrived and plan to deal with them effectively using everyone's excellence and teamwork capabilities.

Without this sort of structure and these sorts of processes in your business, it becomes more and more difficult to do this, and challenges become great hairy monsters that everyone avoids ... and that eventually tear you all apart. Just look at what happened to Kodak, General Motors, Woolworth, HMV, M&S etc

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About the Author

Guy Arnold is a Self-employed business adviser and coach, delivering business support across the UK: specialising in:

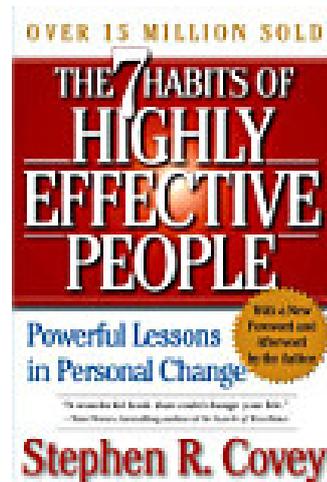
- Building sales via consistent delivery of outstanding customer experiences
 - Personal and Organisational effectiveness
 - Empowering and motivating teams
- he is a flexible, independent, constructive, and diligent person, known for his focused & positive approach to issues, and thrives by helping others get the best out of themselves.

Guy's two main business interests:
 1. His own training and consultancy Company, specializing in organizational and personal effectiveness, leadership, customer service, sales and time management: either working independently, or in conjunction with Franklin Covey Europe.
 2. Authoring & publishing material on building sales through service in the customer empowered social media world: following 4 years research into 1 question: 'If GREAT customer service is blindingly obvious common sense, why isn't it common practice?'

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Just How Effective are You?



Dr Stephen Covey (1932-2012) has hugely influenced management thoughts mostly through his most famous book, *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People*. The book became a blueprint for personal development when it was published in 1990. The principles may be used for life in general - they are not limited to workplaces, management or leadership, etc. Covey's concepts actually can help people to grow, change, and become more effective in really any other aspect of human responsibility that you might imagine.

Wikipedia summarises the Habits, saying that the first three Habits surround moving from dependence to independence (i.e., self-mastery):

- **Habit 1: Be Proactive:** Take initiative in life by realizing that your decisions (and how they align with life's principles) are the primary determining factor for effectiveness in your life. Take responsibility for your choices and the consequences that follow.
- **Habit 2: Begin with the End in Mind:** Self-discover and clarify your deeply important character values and life goals. Envision the ideal characteristics for each of your various roles and relationships in life. Create a mission statement.
- **Habit 3: Put First Things First:** Prioritize, plan, and execute your week's tasks based on importance rather than urgency. Evaluate whether your efforts exemplify your desired character values, propel you toward goals, and enrich the roles and relationships that were elaborated in Habit 2.

The next four Habits have to do with Interdependence (i.e., working with others):

- **Habit 4: Think Win-Win:** Genuinely strive for mutually beneficial solutions or agreements in your relationships. Value and respect people by understanding a "win" for all is ultimately a better long-term resolution than if only one person in the situation had gotten his way.
- **Habit 5: Seek First to Understand - then to be Understood:** Use empathic listening to be genuinely influenced by a person, which compels them to reciprocate the listening and take an open mind to being influenced by you. This creates an atmosphere of caring, and positive problem solving.
- **Habit 6: Synergize:** Combine the strengths of people through positive teamwork, so as to achieve goals no one person could have done alone.
- **Habit 7: Sharpen the Saw:** Balance and renew your resources, energy, and health to create a sustainable, long-term, effective lifestyle. It primarily emphasizes exercise for physical renewal, prayer (meditation, yoga, etc.) and good reading for mental renewal. It also mentions service to society for spiritual renewal.