awaken your
genius

by Ricardo Andorinho

Passion and excellence comes from within

It´s not about me …
it´s all about You!!!

*Ricardo Andorinho's **Awaken Your Genius** is a renaissance book. It will show how there is a brilliance inside of us all and offers guidance for uncovering it. I heartily endorse it and believe it to be an important part of the fabric of the emerging new paradigm.*
—Dave Guerra, Author *Superperformance*
         and *The Superperforming CEO*

This book speaks much to the concept of personal competency, a foundational principle of the founding fathers who wrote the U.S constitution, but a universal truth for every country and every generation. Any aspiring leader, of themselves or of others should read this book, perhaps
several times. I know I will!
—Mark F. Herbert, Principal, New Paradigms LLC

This is a timely book and the messages are loud and clear: "you are in charge of your life!" And Ricardo will provide the tools and tips on how you can do that. The principles and concepts outlined transcend time and geography, and there is some business and life lessons explained that should be utilized more by all. A lot of common sense and practical tools that apply to young or old, experienced or not, and privileged or less fortunate. Truly an outstanding testament of hope and belief in awakening yourself.
—Dan Hanlon, General Manager, Union Hill Ventures

The closer we are in actions and choices to our core unique self the happier we are, the more alive we feel. To get in touch with our personal genius, however, to change the things that get in our way, certain conditions need to be present. Ricardo's book aims at the heart, giving you, the reader, the best conditions to reach your hidden potential.
—Reut Schwartz-Hebron, President, The KindExcellence Institute

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Ricardo Andorinho

Foreword by
Jeff 'SKI' Kinsey

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Dedication

I dedicate this book to Sara Borges and Maria do Carmo Borges Andorinho.

Even today, I am inquisitive about who I am, and yet I am a person, like you.

How did I get here? Once upon a time, my parents wanted to have a child. It was their love that conceived me and made a way for my birth. This, I can never forget. Thank you, António Manuel Roma Andorinho and Teresa Maria da Costa.

To my little sister, Rita.

And to each of you, the readers. You are my mentors—the best mentors.

I owe you my life.

Ricardo da Costa Andorinho
Lisbon, Portugal
December 2009

Table of Contents

FOREWORD: Forget the Numbers

Not an easy thing to do for some of us. What's in a number, anyhow? Can a number be passionate? I think not.

Ricardo is nothing if not passionate.

I met him a year or so ago over the net as I have done with so many of my business colleagues. A fast relationship of mutual trust quickly gave way to numerous conversations about business but more importantly, about results. Throughput, as I like to call it.

> "Money in your pocket now, and even more
> money in your pockets in the future."

And thus (give or take a few details) this book was birthed. With a simple focus: To help the reader explore and uncover the genius within us all. Perhaps not the official "number" of genius (for those with IQs over 135), but the real flash of brilliance that comes from solving real problems. In other words, forget the number that society might assign your mental prowess and look within for the spark of true genius.

Real people solving real problems... that is the genius that is Ricardo da Costa Andorinho, and it is his wish for his fellow man: The ability to see the world from various, if not numerous, vantage points, and to see the end of a matter before beginning a journey of a thousand miles. Or a few steps.

In America, we value our athletes. World class stand outs such as LeBron James (NBA) and Pete Sampras (Tennis) come to mind. These are masters on and off the courts. Until Ricardo and I started communing, I had not heard of professional handball as played throughout Europe and mastered by Ricardo. So my first reaction might have been, "What can this kid teach me about business?"

Maybe that is your first thought.

It would be wrong, but I understand the thinking that drives such jumps into the world of false conclusions. I have learned to value a book by its cover and yet, at the same time, not to judge a book by its cover. A Zen thing, I suppose. Which brings to mind the perfect quote to explain why this book is valuable. First to me (it's always about me, right?), but more importantly, why this book should be valuable to you.

> First there is a mountain,
> Then there is no mountain,
> Then there is.
> —Zen proverb

First, I read the draft of this book thinking Ricardo is onto something. His passion to get the reader to look inward for success struck a nerve. The mountaintop experience! Then, upon reflection, my thoughts suggested to me, "Who is this kid from Portugal who wants to tell the world about the genius that lives within us all?"

But then, a light went on. I actually said out loud "simply brilliant."

In fact, I have goose bumps just thinking about that moment! This book came alive within me at that very moment. I could see what Ricardo so passionately wanted to communicate. And that, my dear reader, is my hope for you.

Jeff 'SKI' Kinsey
Hilton Head Island, SC

Chapter I
Introduction

> A pessimist sees the difficulty in every opportunity;
> an optimist sees the opportunity in every difficulty.
> —Sir Winston Churchill

Why would anyone make the decision to write a book? For me, the short answer was my belief that a book is the best way to give form to my thoughts. It's the perfect medium to share my observations.

I have always written my thoughts down since the days of my youth. I don't recall the year this began, I just know that I felt the need to write. At times, I couldn't understand the meaning of something and suddenly, I was writing about it. Most of those early papers are gone. They are of very little value, or so I thought.

What makes me write today?

I feel that somehow, somewhere within me, I have a message to deliver, something that I must share with a larger audience. I have this need to expose my thoughts, all the while I am aware that I can't reach the entire world. I had a teacher and mentor, Carlos Gonçalves, who once said:

> If your company is not on the Internet,
> it doesn't exist.

I agree. I love to apply this thought to other situations. Do you exist? If you do not expose your inner self, you cannot fly high. May I suggest that you cannot validate your expertise if you do not share your knowledge? Are you one to share?

Do you exist?

Awaken Your Genius

Chapter II
Why I wrote this book

> Unless you try to do something beyond what you
> have already mastered, you will never grow.
> —Ralph Waldo Emerson

I wrote this book to open myself and my thoughts to you, and to solicit your opinion. To take a chance! I also wrote this book because I am sufficiently selfish to expect that maybe, just maybe, I can help others. What if I could make your life better?

My use of the word "better," in this case, is to suggest that after reading this book, you might come to understand that you are the most important person in your life. Only you can create your present as well as your future. Our past is history, the present is the basis for opportunity, and the future is uncertain.

Yes, this is my first book, maybe my last, but the future is uncertain. My musings are the consequence of deep yet mostly semiconscious thinking. It has been an unusual process for sure. However, I believe these words to be irrefutable. I consider my words to be the "truth." I will believe this until the day someone can explain why my words are not truth for him or her.

Consider the statement: "There are lots of great books that nobody reads." I don't know or cannot remember who said it, however, that is not the most important concept on earth. Yet it probably is the truth. In the passages of this book I will share some thoughts that are not mine. Each time I do, I will share the author's name. It is a simple approach to highlight the power that we each have to impact the lives of others.

This book is about you. It is for you, whether you are in the supermarket, in the street, at home, or perhaps at work. Maybe it will impact you when you are driving, fishing, entertaining, or just plain having fun. It is a book about everything you like to do as well as everything you don't! Need to earn a wage? This book is not theory. It is pure practice.

Do I have your attention?

The needs of any one person are so unique that the best selling books on earth might not help. Plus, when you add politics to the mix, the manipulation of facts are forcing decisions to be made from inaccurate data and therefore, lead the masses to take actions that may not be in the best interest of society, or in their own best interests.

Therefore, my goal in writing this book is simple: that some number of readers may use common sense and self-confidence as the keys to excellence for making the decisions facing them. I have. I believe that both common sense and self-confidence are already a part of the human condition. Allow this book to direct you and help you discover and apply the common sense and self-confidence within.

My goal is to awaken your conscious mind to the processes that influence the very manner by which you manage your life. Do you consider yourself a genius? Most of us do not. Is it sometimes difficult to solve some of life's problems?

Do you want to discover the "genius" within?

I believe I can help.

Not interested?

You could just forget this book, or maybe give it away. Better yet, donate it to your local library. Maybe someone will discover it and use it to empower themselves to make a difference in the world.

Regardless, it gave me great pleasure to write it.

It would give me more pleasure if somehow, somewhere, a reader came to understand that change can, in fact, be positive. I would love for you to experience just fifty percent of the confidence I have in dealing with the challenges of life, be they young or old. I believe that although confidence is inside each of us, it must be awakened.

The mission to write this book took shape as I realized that I could see a number of valuable concepts in their true state, even though they are rarely communicated. Thus was born the desire to share my thoughts on those concepts. Not too long ago, Reut Schwartz-Hebron, founder of the KindExcellence Institute, made a comment about my personality, which touched a nerve. Her words provided sufficient confidence for me to undertake this adventure. Reut served as the perfect mentor, awakening the desire to share my life and to hopefully awaken the confidence inside of you.

This book is about us—you and me. Let us not forget that we each possess the keys to live our own lives. I may not have your key. I don't even know you. I just know that, as humans, we have a body, a soul, and a mind, which gives us the ability to think or reason. Allow me the opportunity to shed some light on the subject of confidence. You need confidence to succeed.

Now what?

In the pages that follow I will ask some questions, and share my answers to those questions. In order to maximize your potential reward as you read this book you should mark your best answer. The "best answer" is the one that you feel is correct for you at this moment in your life. I trust you will find the questions to be easy. Be honest with yourself. At the end of the book you will be asked to review your answers. You may want to read this book at least twice. Have you ever bought a book that needs to be read twice?

Writing this book was a labor of love. It was the best way I know to reach out. I am available on the Internet if you have questions. I am an "open-networker." So, if you think I could help, reach out to me. I consider this book a tool for success, in life and business, each and every day that you apply it to your challenges.

One brain. Two brains. The whole world.

Question 1

Why did you buy this book?
1. To learn something.
2. Someone recommended it.
3. I wondered why I am not a genius.
4. I had the money and didn't know where to spend it.
5. I liked the title.
6. I am searching for new sources of information that will allow me to succeed in life.
7. I consider myself a genius, and I want to see if you can compete with me.
8. The cover of the book caught my eye.
9. I bought it as a present for someone, but then I started reading it.

Write your thoughts:

_____

_____

This simple question could spark a very interesting debate. There are great authors, speakers, professors, and people in every walk of life who manage their personal lives and business endeavors through questions. It is called the Socratic Method. You might be surprised to learn that it is an accepted practice in the scientific community.

You alone will decide if you find this book interesting. But, in order to make a purchase, there must first be a reason. What was it?

If that reason is present each day of your life, day in and day out, I would expect that you will see that reason change. Not all at once, but in small variations day-by-day.

I don't always purchase a book because I like it. Other factors are present such as the subject matter, the product or service, the marketing associated with the book, the influence of others, the perceived need weighed against the real need.

It is my evaluation internally at that moment in time that controls my decision. It's the same as Abraham Maslow's "Hierarchy of Needs," where basic needs are compared to secondary needs. Each individual has his or her own pyramid (or hierarchy) of needs.

If you can prioritize your pyramid and identify what is crucial for you or your family versus what is not important, you will gain a mental picture of your decision-making process. Which item(s) you can afford to buy or perhaps those that you should not buy. Therefore, I suggest this approach is very easy to understand.

But here's the problem

If this is so simple to understand, why are so many people having huge difficulties creating a simple personal household budget? Where is the financial plan that directs spending toward valid needs?

Guess what? I include myself in that group of people who are making financial decisions based on wrong or invalid judgments. My analysis is faulty, too! Mankind has a long litany of inabilities, many of which are exploited by the unscrupulous, both people and companies.

The decision-making process is the key to understanding how the world works. This is doubly so in the world of business. It is not about theories, it is not about culture, and it is not even about education!

Let us explore the exact moment you made the decision to buy this book. We could analyze most any decision: to purchase a car, a rose, bread, or milk for your child.

Consider the business setting. A company's marketplace is determined by sales and those sales are based on consumer decisions. There are a large number of companies that wouldn't exist if they were dependent on my needs alone. Prioritization plays a decisive role when one is comparing one's needs and how important those needs are at any given moment. I'm suggesting that most companies are aware of the importance of every single piece of marketing material they produce. Professionals understand how just one piece of material can influence organizational performance.

If you were to stop and think about your life, you would conclude that every attitude or thought counts. Your thoughts drive your actions.

You need commitment to deal with the world that surrounds us. Risk is a common variable in each decision. Regardless of how good your decisions are, there is always a small amount of risk (at least in the form of opportunity cost). Managers control, or make efforts to control, the specific risk of each decision. If possible, you will do likewise. Closer study will reveal that only a small portion of our decisions do not depend on one's attitude. This is true for both individuals and for a company's decision-making process.

There are people who study each day of their lives in order to address the challenges facing them. The problem; however, is our ability to generate a never-ending stream of issues that we need to analyze. To some, this statement may sound too simplistic.

This is the heart of the matter with human systems

Managers are studying performance with regard to strategy, marketing, and information technology (IT/IS). Few managers in this world are able to deliver true excellence with regard to decisions and processes, in part, because few managers take the time to study people. And yet, a company is a collection of people.

In laboratories around the globe, year-in and year-out, we study the human brain with little impact on decision-making. It has been said that it is difficult to quantify attitude. We are at a loss to explain the variation in attitude among people.

One person's reaction to input, perhaps absolute, could very well be utter and complete nonsense for another. It is my opinion that we need to respect the workings of the brain. Perhaps we need to acknowledge that the human brain may be impossible to fully explore with complete satisfaction. Likewise, opinions voiced aloud are just individual words that show a particular vision or a snapshot of a given moment in time. Nothing more, nothing less.

We are more alike than not

While each reaction to a specific situation or challenge may appear unique, I'm suggesting that everyone's lives are much the same, regardless of where you live. The same is true in America, Europe, Africa, Asia or Australia. May I suggest that my problems are the same as yours? Why would I say this? Because every human being was born and, one day, will die. The time interval between these two dates is something we call life.

Please understand that, to me, you are just a regular fellow who is a lot more like me than different. This is my opinion. I would suggest that man's best friend is not the dog but another human.

We have the same problems, and we need to find the best solutions for those problems. Does that make sense?

This book is about you and your mind. However, we are now connected by your purchase of this book. Let us travel together on a short adventure and maybe, just maybe, you will experience some great results just by opening your mind to allow my thoughts to enter. My mind is open and expanding each day, and that gives me sufficient power to write these words and share them. With this writing exercise I am consciously sharing my thoughts for the critics as well as my supporters.

Let us assume that your mind works perfectly. I would suppose that you are not a genius. (Otherwise, why would you read this book?) I am not a genius. That makes us equals. I have many of the same needs, and I share many of the same problems. In the developed nations of the world, we all wake up, take a shower, dress, eat, and march off to work.

What is a genius anyway? Can you describe it? Who is a genius? Would our opinions differ? I have the same brain structure as you. Maybe you should be writing this book, not me!

What makes the difference?

I am putting myself out there for others to criticize. Or hail. I am willing to take that risk by sharing my deepest thoughts. If you wrote this book, it

could be equal to, or better (perhaps even worse) than my attempt. The true judge is the reader.

The brain is a trap. It needs to judge and to decide according to one's values, experiences, and needs. Often, I'm sure I know the best decision in a given circumstance. It seems to be an easy problem and my brain directs my efforts to solve the challenge. I am confident, yet I need to be objective. Solving problems is a natural occurrence each day. However, our senses can lie to us. When faced with the requirement to make a split-second decision, we often don't have sufficient tools to be absolutely certain that we are making the correct decision. If it is a decision that is not important (in my opinion all decisions are important), we might not ever give the decision a second thought. Use caution if the situation requires introspection and involves others or the application of material resources. Otherwise, we could find ourselves sliding into a deepening hole of never ending problems.

It is my expectation that after reading this book you will see the world that surrounds us with a new "pair of glasses." Common sense, as my colleague 'SKI' loves to say, is not so common. I agree.

Let us apply a little common sense in order to increase our chances for success either business or personal. What are some of the keys to apply when making important decisions?

How might we close the circle around decision-making?

- ➢ Give yourself adequate time to study the situation.
- ➢ Research the facts surrounding the decision.
- ➢ Involve people who deal with similar problems.
- ➢ Compare the possibilities and ramifications.
- ➢ Consider the risks associated with each scenario.
- ➢ Prepare for the possibility of failure.

Open-Mindedness

When two people meet they begin to establish a bridge over which information flows from one side to the other and back again.

Communication is a bi-directional, open channel that allows us to understand one another. If you think you know everything that affects your life and that you don't need others, then you are most likely isolated and will die alone. However, if you try to understand that by being open-minded you can learn faster, generate more options, increase your capabilities, and comprehend or begin to understand things that might otherwise seem impossible. Open-minded people know from experience that a thing is possible when others have only doubt. If you are open (or wanting to become more open) then this book is tailor-made for you.

If we can connect as you read my thoughts, which are captured in this book, such a bridge will be established. We may generate value through this channel if our minds are open.

When there is mutual understanding of a concept, it means that two people were able to negotiate the communication process to arrive at a common point of view. It's like any other process. I have my opinions or thoughts and you have yours. If we are unwilling to open a window to the other person's opinion, we are unable to connect, even though we may be seated at the same table. Two brains will be aligned every time the individuals recognize the other's point of view. Two formerly separated pieces of understanding can now be aligned. It doesn't matter who leads or who possesses the power or the knowledge in order to influence the other. What matters is the final result. This result is a purely rational process that is easy to explain and easier to teach because it is reasonable. If we have two aligned brains, then we have a team. A team is not easy to form, and it's even harder to maintain. Therefore, we need a few basic rules.

Involving the people around you to help make decisions can only make you stronger. The decision may take another form from that of your original thoughts; however, it will be more consistent and you will receive additional support to make minor changes, which improve the initial decision. Involving others is one of the keys to making great decisions. In the end, responsibility plays a minor role. What matters most is the power of a specific decision and the commitment of the team to implement.

This process leads to a consensus. If a particular decision becomes a bad choice, no one who was involved can say she had a different opinion or point of view. Those involved from the beginning had their chances to

affect the decision. The better the input in the process, the better the output.

The world around us is shrinking. I was born in a city with 42,000 citizens. At the age of seventeen, I moved to Lisbon, Spain. The population at that time was more than 3,000,000. At twenty-seven I moved to Pamplona, Spain and at thirty-two, moved back to Lisbon in my homeland of Portugal. With the Internet and mass media, trains and planes, telephones and facsimile machines, the infrastructure around me appears the same regardless of the town I call home. Today, I call myself an "open-networker," a philosophy I have embraced since March 2008.

Today and each day brings a surprise. The world is not as big as I once thought.

Question 2

How much do you trust yourself?
1. I trust my working skills.
2. I trust myself as a person.
3. I trust my working skills, but I don't trust my communication skills.
4. I trust both, but I feel that no one can understand me or my message.
5. I trust my communication skills, but my working skills are not the best.
6. I am actively trying to improve my professional skills.
7. I fully trust myself, and I think I can manage quite well.
8. I trust myself, but I am a shy person. I don't like to share my emotions, skills, or beliefs.
9. I am not comfortable quantifying the "trust" inside me.

Write your thoughts:

_____

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Understanding Confidence

Confidence lurks inside each of us. There are millions of people who are born and die before expressing any real self-confidence. Confidence is a feeling that comes and goes according to the external environment and our perceptions of that environment. We behave, in great part, to the environment around us based on our self-confidence. Sometimes we are fully confident, and at other times we behave as if we are without any measure of confidence. I would add that confidence is a state of mind to which we may or may not be conscious. It's about moods and feeling "okay" with ourselves. Confidence can build if first one thing goes well, then the next, and so forth.

Who is responsible for creating that perfect environment where that first thing might go well? You are! Not sure if it will happen? Not sure how to make it happen? Sports elite are an example of self-confidence. Confidence is what makes the difference between the best player and the second best. When you think of talented sports teams or the individuals on those teams, it is easy to understand that a lot of technical work was performed to reach such levels of excellence, such as long hours of practice which increased performance.

What makes a talented player?

What distinguishes them?

Character and self-confidence.

Awaken Your Genius

Chapter III
What's the goal of this book?

> Most discussions of decision making assume
> that only senior executives make decisions or
> that only senior executives' decisions matter.
> This is a dangerous mistake.
> —Peter Drucker

This is a management book. I am a manager, like you. If you have read this far you must be a manager, of that I am sure. You make decisions each day in order to manage the world around you.

It is my opinion that we are all managers, every single human on this planet. Are you cognizant of this fact? First, you are a manager. Next, your distinct areas of interest can be close to infinity. This is not a problem. Again, that simply makes you human. Let us focus on management for a minute.

Management education is like any other area of education. Education is an incredible business that crisscrosses the planet. I have studied the rankings of the best MBA (Masters of Business Administration) schools from the Financial Times and investigated some of the courses offered by the leaders.

I like that sense of competition. It seems analogous to a race where Ferrari and Renault are fighting for the pole position of an automobile race. I would like to suggest that seeking additional higher education inside certain areas of expertise has not produced the expected results. Quite the opposite, it is another example of institutions earning a lot of money without any accurate method to measure the results. Do they, in fact, offer the "best approach" when addressing the individual's educational requirements?

The status quo is to seek higher and higher levels of education. Ask the university professors (the "experts") how to achieve greater effectiveness and they will respond by suggesting even more education.

Consider a new Approach

What if you began by looking inward and asked a simple question: "What do I really want to learn?"

What is the goal of this book? To gain your confidence. Then, with that trust, I will ask you to allow me to help you focus all your attention on the critical information that presents itself each day. This book is mostly about management education; however, I am doing my best to avoid technical terms and long-winded explanations. I want to focus on something I call Core Evidence (CE).

Core Evidence is the key that unlocks a given system. This "evidence" will clearly show which mechanism is the required driver to understand any specific business or any SBU (Strategic Business Unit). Identifying the CE for a given system is more powerful than one might imagine. It gives us the sufficient knowledge to talk about a business (or business model) without having any depth of experience in the specific market. It simply requires that you identify the mechanism that produces the revenue stream. More importantly, using this simple mechanism, you can make decisions with greater confidence. Plus, you will produce results which were not possible using your previous analysis and execution.

My goal is to explain the power of this Core Evidence to every reader. Allow me to be your teacher if you are ready to be the student. Otherwise, I cannot see any relationship between us. I strongly believe in Socratic Methodology, where the focus is on the student, not the teacher. Perhaps one day we might switch roles. But for now, allow me to lead.

Self-confidence is the trait required to push forward from the gate—your physical location is not relevant, your vocation is not an issue, nor even the lack of gainful employment. Frankly, what matters is that you are able to recognize an internal desire to excel. I would suggest that we are all fans of the Olympic games or at least one or more of the sporting events.

Our personal lives are events as well. I want to excel every day of my life. That was my goal as a professional handball player; I now seek to do likewise in management.

Question 3

How do you like what you do for a living?
1. I love what I do.
2. I hate what I do.
3. I like what I do, however, it's not what I want to do for a living.
4. I like what I do. It is my work and, for me, work means earning money.
5. I don't like what I do; however, I hate change.
6. I don't like what I do, but I feel good because people praise my efforts at work so why change.

Write your thoughts:

_____

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By analyzing your answer to question three, you should learn some interesting things about yourself. You should begin to ask "why" questions of yourself. If you love what you do, I really think you have a high probability of success, if that is not already the case.

Markets change. Perhaps the marketplace no longer values your contributions. It might be the case that the approach that produced results in the past no longer works.

Allow me to put your brain to work thinking about the issues surrounding your life and your standard of living. That is my challenge.

Awaken Your Genius

Chapter IV
Management Education

> A life isn't significant except for its impact on other lives.
> —Jackie Robinson

Definition

Management education is a formal instruction in the principles and techniques of management and related subjects leading to a degree. Management education strives to develop knowledge, understanding, and competence in the field of management through classroom or distance-based methods. It is the main component of management development and differs from management training in that the latter may exploit any one of a variety of formal or informal methods and training tends to be focused on a specific skill and rarely results in a formal degree. (citation: Bnet, Business Dictionary).

Basic Rules

Consider the principles and techniques of management? Which principles? There are thousands. Which techniques? There are millions. Trying to understand principles or techniques can drive a person crazy. If you are unwilling to search for education on your own, you can always buy an MBA or a Ph.D. However, it is my opinion that self-oriented study produces much better results. It is possible to learn faster and improve your skills without a formal schedule if you can manage it.

The first question to ask regarding education is simple: Do I want (or need) to study in order to add one more line to my Curriculum Vitae (CV)?

As we are thinking about senior management education, we must identify your real need. I might say that I want to educate myself at some higher

level, speaking in generalities, or I might say that I really need additional education in a specific subject to help improve my efforts at work. We could also simply want to feed our personal interests. This last option has been the most positive force in my life.

I try to educate myself every single day. How? By practicing the art of "receptiveness." Receptiveness is the ability to understand others. The parents among us understand this concept. If you want to teach your children, you need to be able to learn from them. From their first breath, children want to communicate! Perceiving the meaning of the signs they give us is the best practice for receptiveness. Regardless the child's age, it is the same. Each day, I try to understand the true intent of each person whose path I cross. I try to view the problem or issue through his or her eyes. This is receptiveness. Never give up your opinion easily, but learn to criticize it when someone shares a more rational approach.

If you read financial, economic, or social sources to gather information, the study of management should come naturally. Management is the ability to deal with multiple variables within a system. The goal of most systems includes the desire to build sustainable decisions. It is my opinion that management is not a close-ended science like so many others. If you are a civil engineer you might know how to build a house, while other civil engineers may not.

It is my assertion that there are millions of people who possess great management talent without ever receiving any specific education in the field of management.

Allow me suggest that the basic rules are listening and filtering, followed closely by the ability to prioritize. Life requires that we are always prioritizing. The challenge arises when your primary rules of prioritization are broken. I think I have the same hierarchy of "consumer needs" that I had when I was younger. It does not depend on the money you earn. It depends more on the commitment you have to your pyramid of needs.

I want to focus your attention on your personal rules. Not societal rules for managers—you are a manager, you already manage a quantity of resources, or you are in the process of finding a way to acquire resources. Without resources, life is impossible.

For now, please understand that you need to establish a code of ethics for yourself—incorruptible ethics.

Management education is a form of education that allows you to manage resources and transform them into something useful. Management is the only activity that is present in every other aspect of knowledge. Another key issue to understand, is that data is everywhere around us and is used to corrupt society. Please be aware of this fact. The sheer volume of data that reaches you is brutal in its quantity; however, it lacks quality. We must be alert to pick out the necessary information from the sea of data. Also, we must acknowledge the data that is used to form "disinformation." Unfortunately, it exists because there is a huge market for it, so we need to open our eyes and ears every single minute of the day.

What is Information?

Information is considered by Eliyahu M. Goldratt to be "the answer to the question that one asks of data." It is the key that leads us to make excellent business decisions. Good information is gold; bad information is garbage. I would further define knowledge as a combination of small pieces of information, small parts of the answer. Our knowledge is a collection of information gathered by procedures that allows one to build an opinion around specific subjects. Our modern "knowledge base" is immense concerning management practices today.

It is important to search for the thing that will assure your success. That thing is called "Real Knowledge" (a term coined by Reut Schwartz-Hebron). Real knowledge is every piece of understanding that can be incorporated into your activity, which can then transform your activity into something powerful with differentiation. In a word: unique.

If you agree that each person on earth is unique regarding his or her needs, then it is a simple matter to agree that each group of people forming a company is able to achieve results that no other can. I am not addressing the legal barriers approved by associations and governments, I am talking about thinking, intensive, individual employees who can integrate one intangible concept called knowledge.

Flexibility

Flexibility is a state of mind. It comes from awakening your receptiveness. In management education, flexibility allows you to criticize your own perspective about a specific system. For example, if I was certain about something in the past (my opinion was clear, at least to myself) and I receive a new piece of understanding that affects my opinion, I may simply choose to change my point of view and, therefore, my opinion. Of course, this new piece of knowledge has to prove that I was wrong in the past, or at least ill informed. This is a form of "continuous improvement" around a specific issue. Imagine that you are comparing two companies. One company employs one worker; the other employs more than one million workers. Flexibility is obviously easier to achieve in the first example, right? One can change direction easier than two and two can change direction easier than three. This concept is important, because if you want to innovate and integrate knowledge, you should be aware that you must be the first person open to a change in process. Are you?

Flexibility suggests intelligence. Intelligence suggests preparation. Be flexible, prepared, and seek additional education in your area of expertise.

Knowledge Integration

Real knowledge in management is a piece of understanding that can be integrated into a process, which will create customer satisfaction. Integrating knowledge is the process that allows you to form Core Evidence (CE). It means that you understand a certain system and you have the key that opens the door of that strategic business unit or department. In other words, you simply understand what drives the existence of an organization. To be able to integrate knowledge, you must first understand the subject you need to study. Studying, for me, is a natural process. I believe that I will always be a student. I studied for my first degree for nine years, and when I completed my formal educational career, I was very happy. But, I continue the trip of learning, which, for me, leads to more and more happiness. Learning is a natural state, or environment, for me today. I can learn from anyone, and I can integrate his or her knowledge into my processes. This allows my beliefs to stay strong, and I can more easily adapt to new and rational explanations.

Like all humans, I may be wrong in many of my assumptions. However, if you prove me wrong, I am quick to change my point of view.

In management education, students find it is quite difficult to integrate knowledge. There are so many sources of good and bad information. The sea of data can be overwhelming. It can be impossible to drive through such masses of data. Digging deeper into each resource provides contradictions and obstacles, which are not often perceptible by the seller's speech. Taking the time to do this now adds value to your future decisions. At this moment you are filtering the data for any possible needs you may have as a student, an investor, or as a professional. Just by the act of researching, you are producing a sort of market analysis. You don't need to buy everything that the market wants to sell. You only need to identify exactly what you are looking for. It takes time, which is the most important resource in your life. Time requires priorities. There are tasks you need to do now while others can wait until later. I used to say that there's time for everything in our lives. Maybe I was luckier than most? However, I prefer to think that I have always had the desire to excel.

Knowledge integration happens when you start to connect the pieces you hold in your brain about a certain system, product, or service. One can get a pretty good picture of how a particular system works. If something is crucial for you and you are driven to understand how it works, you find the time to research it. If you practice for several weeks, you will see that it gets easier. Focus on the Core Evidence (CE) and watch as otherwise "superficial variables" exert influence on the center of the business or system.

Formal Education

In this section, allow me to share an educational example. We cannot improve our skills if we can't teach others what we have learned. In Management Education, I can identify CE in every subject I studied toward my degree. I was able to identify the value of studying certain aspects of each subject. What I cannot understand is the continuous fight between university departments regarding the ranking of each piece of knowledge inside the institution. It just does not make sense. No professor was able to teach me how to integrate the knowledge into a clear example of practical management situations.

It is my belief that management schools today are still trying to fill a deep hole inside each area of expertise. A significant percentage of this knowledge cannot be applied by the student in real companies out in the real world. Remember that I am always writing about management techniques and principles. This specific "tunneling technique" is not presenting competitive advantages for students. If you want to stay inside a management school it might be acceptable but outside of school, you need problem solving skills… and I can't find much (if any) specific coursework in problem solving at our modern business schools. I can't find "knowledge management" as a subject in business schools. No one wants to teach the students how to integrate management techniques with life experience. Of course, this is just an opinion that you are free to critique.

People have said: "Everything that could be invented, has already been invented." I am suggesting that we have not scratched the surface of what can be invented! I believe that in my multifaceted life, experiences can be converted to knowledge, even simple ones such as surfing the web. Debra Amidon is an incredible person (and author) who created a "knowledge integrative process" and is sharing it with the world via the Internet.

I am pleased to interact with her and to share her work:
http://www.entovation.com/amidon/biographical.htm

Question 4

Have you considered taking an educational program centered around management?
1. I don't know.
2. Yes, but I don't know which one.
3. No, because I read, "Managers not MBAs," by Henry Mintzberg.
4. Yes, because I don't believe Mintzberg.
5. Yes, I agree that it worth's paying $70,000 USD to have an MBA degree.
6. No, because I already have one.

Write your thoughts:

_____

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Deciding to educate yourself about management can be simple or complicated. It can be simple if your superiors like you and are willing to send you to a recognized business school in pursuit of a MBA. If they are, do it! Go off and get the knowledge to improve your department's performance. However, it is complicated if you seek a degree to add to your curriculum vitae (CV) and you are not currently working. Plus, integrating the knowledge learned through an MBA is not an easy task. For the best results, the company where you work should be quite special. Or, you could create a "start-up business" and put into practice everything you have learned up to this point in your life. We all understand that graduate level education as a business is much more profitable than basic education. May I suggest that if we were to invest more money in basic education, our long-term future would be better? I am not suggesting that there aren't terrific professionals in every field of study in business schools. I am only pointing out that you need to be conscious of your decision to pursue a top-level management degree.

Soon, colleges and universities will offer even more degrees, something called PhV or ChT or maybe RxV. If they run out of ideas, the motorcycle world can offer some great three-letter acronyms for new degrees.

We are seeking knowledge inside narrow veins of expertise, reaching limits that are no longer profitable for the student merely to put it on your CV.

My concern? All this effort might not make you a different person, and you might not gain any new capability.

Awaken Your Genius

Chapter V
Team Building

> A team is where a boy can prove courage on his own. A gang is where a coward goes to hide.
> —Mickey Mantle

Definition

Creating a group of individuals aligned to a specific goal.

Basic Rules

Building a strong team is, in my opinion, the hardest task for an organization. Each individual member has his own interests. Building a mediocre team is easy. Building a good team is difficult. Building a great team is even more difficult to achieve. So, where is the problem? I would say that a large number of systemic situations are born from the efforts of teams because most teams seem to be created backwards.

Assume that we want to set up a team to earn money. The need is always forcing the cart in front of the horse. If I need to set up a team tomorrow, it is impossible to set up a winning team. I need time to create the team in a manner that I consider to be effective for the long-term. So, the goal of the team is to make money; however, the necessity of taking time to set up the team to reach the goal cannot influence our decisions. If I have too little time to build my team, then my risk will increase, and I will face the market with a weak team.

Now the question: What should drive the decision? Is it the time to market or long-term team quality to get exponential results? Both situations can be defended; however, you must understand that the risk is different in numbers and in nature. In other words, each decision leads to a completely different output either in numbers or nature.

There are great examples of team building. Sports are a great help to comprehend how a system can produce great results. But, in sports, as in business, it is always difficult to identify the variables that are responsible for the success of the team. I consider the best answer to be an integration of multiple Core Evidence (CE). I read a study produced by a university that identified the most profitable football soccer player. He was the most expensive, the most productive, and the most popular. Anyone could do likewise, but if the study doesn't provide the variables used in the process of ranking players, it is worthless. I can justify different results just by giving a certain variable more weight in the overall formula. In team sports, it is very difficult to link performance to a set of variables. Why? You are dealing with a team, not just with individual skills.

Example: Which player is more important?

The one who scores two (2) goals but is also individually responsible for receiving one (1) red card.

Or, the one who doesn't score, but through sheer effort, defeats five (5) attempts by the other team to score.

The point is to understand that a sports player is a manager who must integrate attitude, behavior, and physical skills into his or her efforts on the field. Picking the right percentage weight for variables can drive you crazy. It's a subjective task. We can understand that if we select two or three "key" variables the probability of getting good results is higher. I would not conclude that it is a cause-effect phenomenon.

A team is a system that works beyond tangibles and objective principles, and you simply need to identify the key that allows the car to run. Don't worry about identifying the unique variable that is responsible for winning the race. I do not think that it can be isolated. The business world is the same except for one issue: In sports, when you are in competition, there is no time to talk, explain, or fully explore the thoughts of your teammates. The only link that connects members inside a sports team is the performance. Each individual is working to reach a team goal. Off the court, individual interactions among members are like any other group of people. During business "competition" we have the opportunity to talk and communicate.

At times it is a problem; imperfect communication may create performance barriers. However, it is a huge competitive advantage for the business environment. Communication is what makes it possible for a team to work in the same direction. Without it, it would be impossible. The goal of setting basic rules inside the team requires a mutual and beneficial respect between each of the members of the team. Without respect and a minimum code of ethics it is quite difficult to manage and organize the work of a large number of people.

Flexibility

Inside the dynamics of team building, flexibility allows us to understand the differences between team members. You must respect others in order to earn their respect. Never allow others to break your personal set of rules; otherwise you are putting yourself in a fragile position within the group. One must have full confidence in one's self to create a trustworthy environment. If you practice receptiveness it is easier for you to be flexible. You choose to understand others. You don't need to agree with every opinion offered by members of the team; however, you need to respect each opinion. We each have the ability to be flexible. When at our best, we learn from other team members and integrate their knowledge into our own area of expertise. Be flexible and you will gain the recognition and respect of your team.

This attitude is productivity independent. It's not about your efficiency as a worker, it is about your attitude for the work. No one is the center of the universe when team building and each opinion is as important as the next. Instead of being focused on the negative criticisms concerning a team member, try to find in his or her speech, positive and intelligent sentences. When you find them, integrate them into the team building. Isolate the facts of the sentence being offered by a team member who you don't especially like. By doing this you are practicing flexibility and integration inside the team. Focus on the strongest link of each piece of knowledge related to your area of expertise. Perhaps with time you will become the member who is professionally and positively connected with everyone on the team. This flexibility within team building is one trait that allows you to become a continuous student, all by simply being a member of the group. Inside any given group you have the potential for an education that can't easily be identified. Search for it, and learn to incorporate it. Focus on the good of each member and integrate the

positive thoughts. Leaders are flexible people who have learned how to leverage their core skills and their expertise inside groups. I believe that everyone can become a tremendous leader.

Knowledge Integration

Communicating the goal of the team should be its top priority. If you want to build a system that delivers efficiency, you must understand that each individual has tremendous potential value, and that they can produce outstanding results. Or, they can destroy the team. Every single person involved in the team needs to feel his or her role is crucial. The truth is that each member of a team is important for the life of the group.

If you, as a leader, can't deliver one single message to a group of people seeking to act as a unit, it is quite difficult to create a good team. Respecting each member's message and then putting the goal above any individual work or recognition will lead to great teams. One person in a team of twenty may produce five (5) times more results than any other member of the team. It is important that the most productive person respects the value of his teammates. In this case, productivity is not a question of attitude but of natural skills.

The team members must know that, around the globe, no two equal people are equal. This fact must lead team members to understand that, in this particular case, one gifted individual can excel at times. This is not a problem. It is a fact. We all must learn to live with it, face it, and keep on track. The problem arises when one member of the team senses a lack of commitment from another member. In a perfect environment (if there are any) the member who sees it should be sufficiently open to help solve the unbalanced situation. However, not everyone is willing to face such a delicate situation. In other words, the team environment must be completely open in order to share not just real knowledge work related to its goal but to openly discuss unbalanced situations caused by mood or emotional aspects. These non-knowledge based emotions are normal and exist in each of us.

A good team should be an example of knowledge integration. At Motorola, the story is told that the first mobile phone was developed in a very complicated environment.

Radio and Telephony departments inside Motorola were having relationship issues. When a senior director noticed the competitive subculture, he merged the two departments and gave them one task: Develop a shared program. The mobile phone emerged.

Formal Education

Learning how to behave inside a group is not a simple issue. There is always a constant struggle between individual and community efforts. If you work for a company, then you already have an individual reward: your salary. If you are using "political techniques" to climb up the organizational structure, then you must understand that you are just competing in political terms, not on individual performance.

Every team should produce a unique result. This result should be the integration of small pieces of knowledge owned by the individuals that compose the team. Team building should be a continuous process inside organizations. Practicing team building is an inherent task inside member's relationships. Formal education can be an additional benefit inside your organization if you teach your employees how to effectively work inside a team structure. By establishing and following a few basic rules, and allowing the community to open their minds for the purpose of integrating knowledge oriented to the goal, team members working together to excel may deliver outstanding results.

These are excellent results, which would otherwise be impossible to achieve if the work was done separately and integrated after the fact. This is one reason the best companies have excellent teams. Most universities don't teach students how to behave inside a team. It seems as if every course is based on individual competition, even when we have group assignments. There is often fighting inside the group to try to win a discussion or advance our personal tactics. Team building is a matter of education.

Consider the decision: Do I need a team to get a certain result, or can I do it alone? May I suggest that alone, you can accomplish very few things. Educating individuals to work among a team is a process that should be recognized by every organization. There are too many companies that don't consider this process necessary. In my opinion, it is one of the most important processes in organizational development.

Question 5

Do you recognize the value of a strong team?
1. Yes, but I have never integrated a team as you described.
2. Yes, I work in a team such as this, and I am a happy person.
3. Yes; however, I can't measure it.
4. Yes; however, is worthless because the boss doesn't recognize it.
5. No, I work better alone.
6. No, I don't agree with your team building description, and I think I have a better approach.
7. No, I see team work as an obligation.

Write your thoughts:

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Your perception of what a team should be is important. If you are not painting a picture that shows an optimal environment for a team to develop and grow, then you are stuck in "individual mode," when you need to jump to "group mode."

We each shall die alone. We are social creatures; we need others to survive. Why do you or I need to be right every time? I don't need to be right every time. I am wrong too many times. That bothers me; however, I move forward. It is not the error itself that stops me. It is when I can't identify my error. In sports, errors are easy to identify. In a business team, it is harder. Much harder. The mistakes can be hidden by too many factors.

Don't remain stuck in the mud because you made a mistake. Errors are normal because we are humans, not machines. Face the errors. Try to avoid them. If you can't avoid them, identify them quickly and make corrections.

Chapter VI
Process Building

> I never failed once. It just happened to be a
> 2000-step process.
> —Thomas Alva Edison

Definition

A process is a group of tasks that when combined and completed produces some result. Building a process can be quite simple, however, it can also be very difficult. Even those processes that we create with 100% confidence may prove that you were wrong when it comes time to implement.

Basic Rules

Building a single process does not require a secret ingredient, and every person can do it. The hard work comes into play when you need to test the process. Through repeated testing, it might be revealed that the process cannot deliver the expected results. There are many possible causes; however, with a little forethought, you can predict possible failures and the likelihood that an error will occur. A closed process is one that has a low probability of failure. Building a system that can accurately deal with failures, if they happen, can be quite difficult to achieve.

There will always be points or steps in the process where the system can break, and yet I strongly believe that we can reduce the probability of system failures. Murphy's Law states that if the system has just one component with a failure probability >0, that system will fail. I agree. My point is that a well-designed process can be a matter of simple steps if the tasks that support the process are simple and straightforward. It is possible to draw a simple diagram of the resources required to meet the goal. This is the first step to create efficiency and to avoid problems. It always takes time to set up good processes.

Flexibility

The goal here is to build continuous improvements into the system, which promotes better overall performance. Flexibility requires the process be questioned every day. Why? That is the only way to control any new variables that might influence the process in a negative way. The risk may increase if the process is not continuously checked. If we are receptive about which forces can damage your process, then it is easier to change the process to reduce the probability of failure. More care is required when you need to integrate more assets into a process. You need to be aware of the elements that are being integrated. The process becomes more complex as you add people and financial resources, which heightens the importance of simplicity. By adding resources, you elevate potential complexity.

The answer is not to increase complexity in your processes—seek simplicity. If the goal is growth, be sure the system's final state, after all integration, remains simple at its core. Flexibility that is applied during the process-building creates an intelligent auto-controlled system. The managers of each process are responsible for its change because it is like one of the tasks inside the process. Integrate market variables to improve any internal processes. Reinventing basic processes is what should drive innovation inside organizations. If a process changes, we should label this simply "innovation." Innovation is not an impossible goal to reach. It is just change. If I change my point of view because you taught me something, I am an innovator regarding knowledge.

Building great processes is what makes a company intelligent. If you think in a specific mode, the processes would be the "mechanics" of the organization, while the overall strategy might represent the "electronics" of the organization.

Formal Education

How can you create a system based on processes in order to achieve excellence? By teaching and awakening managers to the importance of controlling the overall process. Control, in this context, means that those who deal with a process must be ready with the answers to every question that the process might produce. It also involves the right attitude and commitment when selecting and implementing a group of important and

critical decisions. Understand that every process might have a long life, but it will require changes as the market that surrounds it changes. This must be communicated to your team members. If the team understands the importance of each process, it can help improve the system. On the other hand, if you deliver a closed loop process to a team and only require execution without thought, you are killing the potential of the team to excel and to achieve success.

To control processes you need tools. Integrated systems follow a series of processes. In order to judge the effectiveness of the system, you require output. That output would signal if changes are required.

Question 6

Do you think you can create a closed loop single process?
1. Yes, if it is a simple one.
2. Yes, if I have the time needed.
3. No, I need others to help understand every variable that might influence the process.
4. No way.
5. Yes, if it is related to my area of expertise.
6. Yes, if I know what the goal is, and I have the resources needed to accomplish it.

Write your thoughts:

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A process can be considered a mechanism. The mechanism should fulfill a certain purpose that was responsible for its creation. If you have this information available every time you are dealing with a process, it will help you stay focused. Simplicity is the key. To create good processes, one needs to integrate all critical information with the established "best practices" to produce the one best solution.

It is possible to create numerous workable solutions, but there are not so many ways to create a simply great process.

Chapter VII
Drive to Perform

> He who is most slow in making a promise is the
> most faithful in performance of it.
> —Jean-Jacques Rousseau

Definition

The concept of "drive performance" is nothing more than knowing
exactly what you are doing in a certain moment, why you are doing it
that way, and which steps you are prepared to take in order to be ready
for the future. Performance is how you work, such as your skills at a
certain job or activity. Drive performance is the ability to lead resources
to the goal or result. I am aware of thousands of models for drive
performance. Everyone needs to choose the model that fits his or her
needs. It is also possible to create your own system based on the critical
processes that support your business model.

It is not necessary to purchase instruments developed by third parties in
which the seller tells you how to organize your business. You are
responsible for your business; therefore, it is important to be aware of
your exact needs regarding drive performance. Poor decisions can
compromise your company's future. Integrate every variable that can
influence the decision and proceed.

Remember that many of the small efficient businesses on the planet don't
use the more well-known tools to drive performance. They build their
own tools. Why, then, do large enterprises believe that they need a closed
IT/IS solution?

Basic Rules

For drive performance, you need to create timetables for your efforts. When taking a trip by automobile, we cannot know what will happen. Even the most prepared traveler might get a flat tire, or another car might cause an accident. Driving the performance of a business is the same. I use some procedures that I believe can give me a nice and peaceful trip. However, suddenly the market gives me a sign: I must change the way I measure system performance. Failure to act increases the risk; the opportunity to make bad decisions rises. Performance is, in my opinion, a valuable benchmark. There are thousands of tools to measure performance. It is important to understand you are the only person who can drive your performance as a worker. The system can recognize your performance (or not); however, you are responsible for changing your results.

In organizational development, the majority of the problems that companies face are caused by a lack of commitment to the mission. The complexity inside organizations increases when processes are not integrated in a simple manner. This makes performance harder to evaluate. Complexity forces us to lose focus on our core business. This is, in my opinion, the biggest source of problems inside companies today.

Flexibility

Every tool should be responsible for delivering an accurate output. If I am buying a tool to drive performance, I need to confirm that I have, in my hands, something that fits my need. If I produce the tool internally the requirement remains the same. Driving performance requires an accurate output. Every tool must be in a state of constant adaptation. Tomorrow's tools do not exist today, so I may need to adapt existing tools. Is it expensive? Maybe, but it will be cheaper than losing efficiency. The tool to drive performance must take precedence over every other process in the company, because it has the most affect on your product or service. Formal Education

Studying is a natural activity for me, so I understand that if you want to drive performance, you need to practice. The best practices in driving performance for you, are the ones created by you. This book gives tips to improve your confidence in order to achieve excellent results.

But, first understand that your needs are unique, as are mine, and any other persons'. Therefore, we need to create different tools to drive different performances. Inside companies, it is the same. I doubt that one close loop tool would be able to address the needs of two different companies.

Everyone must be involved in order to drive performance. Mutual benefit will emerge if the organization can admit that there is just one performance to drive. I have experienced internal organizational problems that were self-inflicted. It is difficult competing against both one's own organization and the competition at the same time. So, we should make an effort to avoid internal conflict. This point could lead us to another book; however, let's focus on the good part. Driving performance is the key ingredient, above all others, to producing results. Custom software from a Fortune 500 company might not be required to drive your company's performance ahead of your competition. It might be cheaper, in the long-term, to build the solution in-house rather than outsourcing it.

Yes, there are occasions when the required solution cannot be built in-house. This does not mean that you must buy a product or service for which you cannot explain either its operation or value. Your decision is very important and may put your company or business in a dangerous situation. Your responsibility is to accurately understand your needs. If you can't recognize your needs, you have a bigger problem to solve! In other words, don't buy a tool because it is the best tool on the market. It may not fit your application.

Question 7

Do you control your personal budget?
1. Yes, in an accurate manner.
2. Yes, I know my income and expenses, but I don't keep records.
3. Yes, I know how much I earn and that my expenses are less than what I earn.
4. More or less.
5. No, I just live day-by-day. I don't like to think about money.
6. No.
7. No, because it is not useful.
8. No, because I pay someone to organize my finances.

Write your thoughts:

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I deeply believe that in order to be a good manager, you need to feel that you are good. If you can't manage your life or your family's resources, how can you manage a group of people? It's possible, but difficult.

Solution: prepare yourself

Preparation is the key to getting good results. Prepare and practice every day. Maybe you can't be the best; however, you can try to be the best. If you don't try, you will never know what is possible. By trying, you produce a result, good or bad. The outcome doesn't matter in the beginning. If you can identify the result and recognize what went wrong, you are making progress. That is how you measure performance. Now, improve the results. Practice correcting the weaknesses you identified. Also, don't forget to practice your strengths; otherwise you will lose efficiency in your strengths. If you are conscious of these procedures every day, you are driving performance. If you think long-term and you have a good plan, the results will happen.

That is what Michael Phelps did in Beijing during the 2008 Olympic games. He is a human, just like you and me. He is not a machine. He needs to sleep, the same as us. Phelps had a good plan, he was prepared, and he had the opportunity. Do you really think that, when comparing the top world swimmers in Beijing, other competitors were as prepared as Michael Phelps? I doubt it.

Driving performance is easy if the company is simple. It can be very complicated if complexity has already taken hold in your organization. Complexity is the highest barrier that I can identify inside older companies.

Fortunately, I study every day from the best teachers the world has to offer. There are few big companies that have mastered the simple, flexible, and intelligent approach to producing results. Most of the business instructors are from small consulting companies, which offer a vision formed by peers or small groups of colleagues. Knowledge inside big companies rarely reaches "regular" people like us.

You can choose to dig inside your area of expertise without real guidance, or you can take time to study inside an existing program (to earn an MBA), or you can use your time to manage your own performance based on your needs. Take the time to identify those needs. Often, they may match an existing educational program. In this way, enrolling in the formal school can help you drive your personal performance and; therefore, your company's performance.

Awaken Your Genius

Chapter VIII
The Next Step

Becoming a genius step-by-step

➤ Realize that you can't possibly know everything in this life. It is just impossible.

➤ Realize that half of the population knows more than you.

➤ Learn how to improve your skills by focusing on the strengths of the people you meet during your life, personally and professionally. And, practice every day.

➤ Learn how to be flexible. If you are not able to change, you can't launch any new projects. You will learn how to change if you practice receptiveness. Receptiveness is required to understand the point of view of others. Practice every day.

➤ Learn how to integrate others' strengths into your way of visualizing the exact same problems. Integrate rational and logical thinking processes and ignore the superficial issues. And yes, practice every day.

➤ Apply what you learned in the previous points and measure the results (good or bad). Every day practice focusing on the good but don't forget the lessons learned from mistakes.

➤ Help others and involve them in your decisions. You will gain more knowledge this way and have even more to implement in real life. Forget the theories. Life is a practice field. Practice every day with someone.

➤ Study and teach. These practices will create a life that can be really interesting. Your body will die one day, but you may live on in the mind of millions.

Awaken Your Genius

Case Studies

Past sports stories – Individual vs. Team approach

Handball was my biggest and best school yet.

At the age of nine I was a swimmer. I had some hearing problems because of the water. And, the sport was boring; every day seemed to be the same. My results were based on my efforts. Mine alone. Swimming started to be a challenge without any fun. Then I had the chirurgical operation on my ears. I started to try other sports, most of them team sports. Fun was guaranteed, and a lot of times the team's result was not linked with my individual performance.

"Excellent," I thought. I started to play handball at the age of 12. In the first year I had the privilege of competing with the best Portuguese teams in my age group. For a child who starts a new adventure, taking part in a national championship is something he doesn't forget. That started my addiction for competition. Everything was incredibly good until one day, money became a factor when, at the age of 17, I gained financial independence from my parents. For me, money in sports is a consequence of doing things well. Or, so I thought. Nothing could be further from the truth. I felt business was the same. I thought I could manage quite well the importance of money in my sport's life. The problem was simple: I was a part of a team, and each team member had his own interpretation of money and what figure each member should, or should not earn.

I started to realize the existence of complicated individual problems regarding money. These directly affected the team environment and, subsequently, our productivity as a team. There are a lot of players who are more concerned about their financial contracts than with the pleasure the sport can produce. Among the elite this problem is not so common. They understand quite well why one player earns $1,000 and another $100. To further complicate the issue, most sports rely on the market to determine the value of a player. This produces an atmosphere that some individuals find difficult to understand and oft times affects the team in an illogical and selfish manner.

An athlete's life exists in a market where the rules are created according to visibility. If you are visible, you earn more money. If you are not visible, no one recognizes your labor, and you earn very little. What is the proper value of a sports player? It depends on the sport. Is it an individual or team sport? This is the one common variable that I have observed (individual vs. team).

I played at the professional level for two different teams. In both I experienced very complicated team situations. If I could isolate the major causes of the problems we faced, I would exclude our team performance and the work we performed. The problem was external. As individuals, we lost focus on the team and its goals. Everything affects overall performance and every move counts.

In both cases, these two teams were created the year I joined them. Everyone was new and; therefore, we only knew the value of the performance of each individual.

In the last team I played with, the first year we won two (2) competitions. Then, when the team started to get to know each other—the organization, the commitment of everyone, the structure of the club, the dimensions, the processes, the way the club was managed—people began to lose focus in the core. The individuals won a war against the team. After the first year and a half, we were playing for individual money without any pleasure. Well, everyone but me. I talked with everyone and listened to his preoccupations. The first team split into two teams: Spanish members and non-Spanish players. Inside those two groups I could see the existence of subgroups which included people who were not respecting the team as one. They were preoccupied with themselves.

By writing this, I am not implying that they weren't right in their explanations and worries. I am just pointing out that they forgot the commitment to the team. I always had my opinion of everyone. I started to share my thoughts about the other players' attitudes the day I realized that I couldn't play anymore. The reason I kept silent about important and possibly dangerous attitudes was now gone.

I must tell you that I consider athletes to be the most selfish people on earth. Why? Because to compete, you must think that you are better than everyone else. You need to hide inside yourself your ambition and your

desire to excel. You need to focus on yourself! You need to forget the world and prepare yourself mentally and physically for the "battle." This competitive and individual approach doesn't damage the tremendous capability that some globally recognized players have to encourage others. It is just marvelous to listen to them talk. They are mentors, they are teachers, and they share their keys of success with others. It is quite noble. I have seen this truth in sports, in business, and in life.

Globalization

In March 2008, the perspective I had about the business world started to change. I started a new adventure. I started to use the Web site, LinkedIn as my educational business tool. It has been a continuous process of practical examples on globalization. One week I received from a connection, three job offers in the IT/IS field. These offers were located in the U.S. then I forwarded the offers to the 156 IT/IS professionals I had in my network (LinkedIn members around the world). Many of them replied to the offers. I did this until I received an e-mail from one connection asking me to stop sending those messages. From that day on, I stopped sharing these messages with my network. The goal of this story is to show that by just forwarding those messages, I was improving my network contacts' chances of getting a better job. I was exchanging information with people around the globe. I was being global. The increase in opportunities raises the possibility of success as well.

Bruce Lewin

I met Bruce Lewin through a group on LinkedIn. We exchanged some e-mails and some great sources of information. One day, I commented that I was very interested in learning about Ray van den Bel and his work. The next message I received from Bruce read, "Yeah, I know Ray... we've spoken before!" I couldn't believe it. At the end of the day, the world is small. Today, Bruce and I work side-by-side on several projects.

Sophia Yang

I met Sophia Yang through LinkedIn. Sophia is a Chinese marketing manager at one of the best IT/IS companies in China. I believe that her

company will be a reference worldwide. Four months later, I was invited by the CEO of her company to join his network. I couldn't believe it.

Reut Schwartz-Hebron

I met Reut through LinkedIn. Reut Schwartz-Hebron is the president of the KindExcellence Institute. She started her career as a lieutenant commander in the military. She was the first woman consultant to be offered a field position with a combat unit and has since worked with all types of organizations including mega corporations such as Intel, Avaya, Marconi and GSK, and all the way to small non profit organizations. Reut's background is in physics, psychology, and business. She is also a published author, a radio and TV guest expert, and an international speaker. Imagine, I am just a guy from the street. I am a "nobody" in the business world. If I could meet Reut, so can you. LinkedIn provides a vehicle to reach people who you really want to meet.
Give it a try: ***http://www.LinkedIn.com***

Madonna

Sandra Correia is a member of The Star Tracker web 2.0, a Portuguese talent network that claims responsibility for helping the country succeed despite the political, economical, and socially difficult environment that "my Portugal" is living. Sandra is the CEO at Pelcor, a Portuguese company that is producing some incredible products for ladies in cork. If you are interested, visit ***http://www.pelcor.pt***

If you like Madonna, you know that she plays concerts all over the world. Well, Sandra awoke from sleep one night with the thought that it would be possible to give some lady's bags to Madonna. It would be her best worldwide marketing approach yet! She posted a text in Star Tracker network asking for help, and she was able to realize her plan. Madonna left Portugal with three of her bags.

I simply believe that your network, physical or virtual, can give you more than you might imagine. Today, there is a huge global movement on the web which involves an incredible amount of information sharing. It's a top class knowledge with an unrecognized value from inside organizations. People will always create problems, but people are the only

drivers who can avoid and solve them—not structures, not technology, not patents, not licenses, not even huge brands.

Dave Guerra

Dave Guerra is the author of SuperPerformance. As you may know, Superperformance is the highest category of organization performance, and it is technically defined as superior industry performance sustained over at least 12 years. It represents the discovery of a consistent pattern of processes wed to culture in every instance and points convincingly to the need for a new science of optimization. The International Society for Performance Improvement (ISPI) has dedicated a special issue of the Journal of Performance Improvement to an examination of Superperformance: What is it? Who has it? How do you get it? How do you lose it? How does it transform traditional management and leadership paradigms?

I met Dave through LinkedIn. One day I was checking my snail mail and found a management magazine... I read the front and recognized the name Dave Guerra from the cover. He had written an article in the magazine, and I was very glad. He did send me the magazine without expecting anything in return. I then e-mailed Dave and asked him to review this book, to which he agreed.

Top Strategy Networkers

I created a group on LinkedIn called, Top Strategy Networkers. I was the one who created it, but it was not my idea... It was Joep Thijssen's idea.

> *I posted this question on LinkedIn:*
>
> Ricardo: Which are the best web sites to research/discuss business strategy?
>
> Joep: With 155 CEO's listed on LinkedIn (check out the search engine and fill in "CEO") and their extensive personal network, I do think LinkedIn should be your top priority!

Ricardo: Thanks... I had to be sure on the power of this source... Can we stay connected in LinkedIn?

Joep: Next to the suggested option from Claudia Grammacia, you could also start your own group at LinkedIn.

Ricardo: Thanks for the tip and e-mail, I am very happy with the way I learn from you. Starting a new group has the benefit of providing focus on various questions, yet at the same time, reduces the possibilities of getting the best answers. Best answers are everywhere, not inside a group. Do you agree?

Joep: Glad to be of any help, Ricardo.

I do partly agree. From my point of view, a strategy discussion can embrace both paths. Why not collect both the direct output from the CEO's in a LinkedIn group and get involved in an existing blog like strategies (or start your own blog). Of course, strategy is, in a way, often corporate policy on which not every CEO is likely to start an open discussion. Nevertheless, an opportunity for the open-minded-ones to get some extra, free feedback from colleagues and people with gain. If the best answers are everywhere, then also this would include a group, I would suggest.

Today, Top Strategy Networkers has more than 650 members. Visit our group page on the LinkedIn web site:
http://www.linkedin.com/groups?gid=80341&trk=myg_ugrp_ovr

All thanks to an idea from a person whom I didn't actually know.

Getting there with a good question

As humans, we are afraid of many things. One person might be able to easily converse with people we consider outstanding in sports, economic matters, politics, or the like. We consider ourselves common people, and for this reason we can't talk with the "elite." I believe you can talk with anyone. Each person will either answer or not.

However, you risk nothing by asking a simple question to someone you just met. Or, to someone who is considered to be a top-class performer. I have trouble recognizing that "top class" group of people; I can't identify which are the points that lead to a clear understanding about good or bad people. Who is a great person, and who is not? Like sports evaluation, I think this question is subjective and depends on our experience dealing with that particular person.

I had the courage to call the CEO of the most important financial institution in Navarra, Spain. As you might imagine, I didn't get to speak with him; however, during the same morning I received a call from the institution because they wanted to identify who had wanted to talk with the president of the bank! They didn't ask me why I wanted to talk with the CEO. I didn't reach my goal; however, I spoke with the person who called me back. It's easier than you would imagine. Search for a good question. Curiosity from the other side will bring the answer.

One day, I entered a friend's company. I was not working, I just grabbed a chair and happened to overhear a problem between an employee and a manager. I could see the problem. So, I asked, "Why do you do it that way?" I was very calm, and I knew quite well the people involved. I didn't get an answer. The person asked his boss the same question. The boss answered, "I don't know." The task didn't make any sense. It couldn't produce any output. They were my friends, so I didn't ask anything else. That day, I learned a great lesson: Do things that are reasonable, otherwise don't do them.

Self-Confidence

I believe each of us, at times, lack confidence in our work or our skills. At these times, we need to focus on our strengths. We need to practice those strengths every day. Yes, we need to recognize our weaknesses in order to improve. We can increase our confidence from the strength to control and work on our weaknesses. The key is to identify strengths and weaknesses. It's not an easy task, but it's well worth it.

Test yourself and practice the search for Core Evidence (CE) in businesses you can easily understand. Do it in the street, on your way to work, or during vacation. No pressure. Try to identify attitudes and behaviors that

are related to a specific business. When I identify a strange behavior inside a market in which I can identify the CE, I ask, "Why are they exhibiting this behavior?" I need to identify the key that justifies a change in a typical behavior regarding various activities. This will permit you to understand how a specific market functions and to predict some short-term movements. Practice this search every day. Soon, it will become apparent that you can improve your skills. Your senses will start to become aware of things that, before, went unnoticed. It is always a question of common sense. But don't forget that common sense is rare. That is why we need to study every move.

Future

Too few people are preoccupied with the future. By observing the present (reality) a vision of certain facts become known. Through the news we see that for the majority of the world's people, it is the present that counts most. Today, I have money and can spend it as I see fit as long as I don't have a problem to solve. Allow me to suggest that we need to prepare our minds for the long-term; otherwise you won't be prepared for the next problem. Solving today's present is not sufficient to avoid future problems.

An example

One of my best friends (lets call him Joseph), bluntly put, is now financially "broke."

Cause: Lack of vision.

Consequence: My friend is behaving like most inefficient businesses without sufficient liquidity.

Joseph owned three houses, when suddenly his employer stopped paying him. He was living "paycheck to paycheck," or we might call it managing the short-term. If his boss hadn't stopped paying him, he wouldn't have this huge problem. However, he wasn't prepared for the probability of living without a salary for even one month.

When writing this short story, I have withheld a lot of information that is unnecessary to appreciate the situation. Let's focus on the keys that will

allow you to understand the solution. When I became aware of the problem, Joseph was already inside a deep hole without any "room to breathe." When we formulated the best approach to solve the problem, he resisted. He couldn't stop telling me that it might be better to make a deal with his former boss. I told him that if his boss didn't want to pay him, there was nothing that he could do about it. I tried humor and suggested that unless he was prepared to try violence, and confront his former boss, his options were limited. Of course, he did not consider this approach funny. But, I was joking in order to make Joseph understand that his boss was not the problem.

I actually did call his boss once (and only once). His boss wanted to make a deal to negotiate the money owed to Joseph and address some future issues. I said, "First you pay your past debt, then we negotiate the future." His boss congratulated me on my approach. However, after a year, his boss still has yet to pay a single euro. Joseph still thinks that he can schedule a meeting with his former boss and negotiate some sort of payment. He refuses to understand that he won't be paid, even a year later. I knew he wouldn't be paid after just one phone call.

In life, there are few guarantees. Don't count on your salary as if it is something safe or guaranteed. It is not.

You are safest with your family members or good friends. My friend Joseph still thinks that in this world, everyone is a good person. I wish he was right.

Awaken Your Genius

A simple system: A Company

Utopia? Not really!

System – A group of rules and principles related to a certain subject and connected to each other in a rational way. A group of things which, related to each other in certain order, contribute to achieve a certain objective.

Simple – Easy to understand, deal with, use, etc.: a simple matter; simple tools. Not elaborate or artificial; plain: a simple style. Something that lacks complexity and expresses things in a naïve and natural way.

Referring to a person: natural, spontaneous, plain.

System

It is necessary to define a code of behavior and the principles that a company needs in order to function. We should practice strict adherence when it comes to basic principles and be more open when it comes to everything else.

Defining the behaviors gives birth to the organizational structure. What kind of an organization do we want? Is it one that generates profit in two years, and then closes its doors? Or do we want to build it to last? Do we want it to transform into something beautiful that is capable of changing its direction when its own intelligence says so? It is important, in any company, to create an ethics' code; a method of integrating our beliefs with present and future employees in order to create a deep, inner bond. We learn from one another in order to carry out the objectives of the system's creator(s). We must never forget why we exist. Individually, we exist in order to be happy performing the tasks that make us feel fulfilled. In a company, employees are involved to differing degrees of participation each day. And together, they give life to the organization which is made up of people.

Rational behavior is only rational if we know how to communicate with one another. If we all understand the code of behavior and value its

integrity, its truth, and respect the community, then we are contributing to something that can really become significant. Trust and teamwork are required for growth.

A system includes all the accounts, revenue, obligations, contracts, agreements, as well as internal or external pending deals. It's a properly functioning company collaboration within the system.

Simple

To be understood. This definition leads us to conclude that if we speak in a natural and truthful way, we will get the most out of being simple. The best way to demonstrate this would be to imagine a person who is attempting to focus on the subject matter she is talking about, but she is unable to control her thoughts for external reasons (social status, employment status, politics, money, etc.). Because of this lack of control that we all share, regardless of the speaker, we may not tell the whole truth and; therefore, we don't contribute to building trust within a given system. In our society, we have to live within our means (simple), and we should not be ashamed of this. If we are aware of what we are able to accomplish, we can help a lot of people and in the process, learn from many of them.

> I only know that I don't know anything; but I'm trying to learn a bit more.
> —Socrates

Socrates knew a lot, and his humility is a real inspiration for those who are interested in learning more in this world. The truth is that, day-by-day, we know less and less. Now that could be explained by the fact that we have less time to learn, and the fact that we think what we already know is enough. And, for some of us, this may be true. However, there are people in a system who take advantage of an imbalance in information flow. This is where, in my opinion, the most significant problems are created. Because of the asymmetry of the information that is held back by each collaborator in the company, it serves a destructive purpose. In theory, competition among the individuals working in the same company makes no sense. In the end, if the system is efficient, one employee's achievements will serve as the achievements of all.

In the beginning, the objective for all is the same; however, that common purpose disappears a few days after the real work begins. We should always stay focused and follow the company's strategy.

If we are willing to share our knowledge, we can have access to more information in a quicker and simpler way. When joining a company, we should always bear in mind that we are a part of a team, which has its own objectives that go beyond our individual values. This should lead us to respect the greater purpose and yet should never limit our ideas. The working relations are, in most cases, quite fair to a greater degree than we might think. I give my efforts in exchange for salary. It's fair. We shouldn't think too much about it. We should realize that the responsibility of a company towards its employees is not unlimited.

Intellectual Capital = Competitive Advantage

There are very good people in this world. These are people who can teach us a lot about Intellectual Capital and Competitive Advantage. It is incredible how much investigation is taking place in each area of knowledge. There are many examples; they are everywhere. Intellectual Capital could be defined as the value created by means of human intervention by various processes, both strategic and operative. Once again, this is high quality information. Intellectual capital is a popular measurement to justify mergers and acquisitions. It is often used for justifying synergies. Each day brings more and better ways to acknowledge this form of capital. It is an intangible value (rather broad in scope and includes brands, patents, licenses, contracts and strategic elements) which enables company valuation, apart from its accounting, "book" value.

Such intangible information combined with insight concerning the objectives of a given organization provides a basis for differing valuations among analysts. It can be difficult to evaluate the strategic value and to determine who in an organization has the best grasp on such matters. When it comes to valuation, there will always be opportunities to justify more than one value.

Expectations are responsible for valuations and experience offers knowledge, which deducts the future of the market. However, there are unpredictable situations in every business. In this case, once again, we need innovative people to solve the problem. Asymmetry of information will also provide a means to challenge valuations.

International Financial Reporting Standards

We are heading towards IFRS (International Financial Reporting Standards), where the basic rules of the game are being manipulated. I hope it's for the better (for comparability of accounts across the world, investment mobility, clarity of interpretation, and the use of common indicators).

Intellectual Capital may prove a competitive advantage, but the company which possesses it has the responsibility to know how to apply it, either using specific technology or by relating to it directly. This would be the conventional way of evaluating or interpreting the environment. If the evaluation tendency is negative, it becomes destructive. Many companies in the U.S.A. have created positions such as, CKO (Chief Knowledge Officer) and CDO (Chief Destruction Officer).

By having good insight into its human capital value, a company gets the advantage of obtaining more information about its own value in the marketplace. It is vital to know (as much as possible) how reliable is one's knowledge of its own organization.

There are companies that don't know how to properly value themselves, and yet they may still be very competitive. There are people capable of moving mountains, motivating others, and managing their enterprises, which may consist of many companies. Knowing the field in which they work and the rules of the game is essential, but knowing the intellectual capital available will decide their future.

Teaching methods. Keep educating/learning

In my opinion, an "integral education" prepares us better for living in the society we have created. Allow me to point out some principles presented

at a Chicago conference in 2000 organized by GATE (Global Alliance for Transforming Education). The following principles have been accepted by the holistic community:

- ➤ Globalism of an individual
- ➤ Spiritualism
- ➤ Interrelations
- ➤ Balance
- ➤ Cooperation
- ➤ Inclusiveness
- ➤ Experience
- ➤ Contextualization

If we use these concepts in our company, or if we pay some attention to, or at least acknowledge them, we should be more productive as well as more efficient. Considering these concepts actively, we should be able to increase our problem solving "successes." Yes, this is a subjective opinion.

We are facing a paradigm which goes beyond any one company. Consider our planet's whole society – we have another opportunity here – a company can become an example for society. Social responsibility is a highly important aspect of existence. We must tend to it. We all gain if we communicate well. It's a chance to educate one another and to learn at the same time.

And we consider a paradigm. Change the "chip?" According to professor and author Thomas Kuhn, "A paradigm conditions the vision of the world." It's a way of seeing things, or the way we connect with the world around us. When a paradigm cannot solve the problems that come up, the need for change increases. When a paradigm is changed, the rules change, and when the rules change, everything else changes as well. The more prepared a company is for a change, the more flexible it becomes, and it easily adapts to its environment.

Knowledge Management and the Importance of Experience

Knowledge management is a set of rules which enables interrelations among organizations as well as people within a certain community. Each of us manages our knowledge. Although subconsciously, this

management defines us. The same happens within a company. Usually, as there is chain of command, it is understood the higher one is on the hierarchical chart, the more knowledgeable. However, frequently that is not true. With the use of specific tools, knowledge management enables organizations to identify and share knowledge within companies. If used correctly, this process offers huge potential (effective communication without mistakes or trickery) for increased profitability.

There is a whole world to explore in this area and it is difficult to clearly identify relations among the various elements. Companies have the opportunity to answer various questions on a daily basis. Understanding how it was possible to send a man to the moon seems much more difficult. Nevertheless, it happened. I see only one possible answer: It was possible because knowledge was shared. A small number of people may have been crucial in this process, but it was the result of communication, of sharing information, and the passion of the team. Of course, we should not forget the money necessary to execute the plan.

We gain experience every day and yet more possibilities are out there for us to explore. Moreover, there are possibilities within each one of us. A solid knowledge management tool can do wonders. Innovation is not something that comes from a select group of enlightened ones.

Experience is gaining essential importance: it forces us to know ourselves better; it makes us think more; it makes us face every problem in a way that changes depending on the knowledge of each one of us in a given situation. The objective is to do the same with companies. We can change behavior if a company decides to do so; if the company believes that the path toward the future differs from the present choice. Whether it is possible to develop the tools that would make this possible is something that depends on the people involved. It is much simpler then sending someone to the moon, isn't it?

Intangible Value Evaluation

How can an intangible be evaluated? The tendency is the Just Value (an approximation to the market value). However, the Just Value is something completely different. What is just? For whom is it just? The information is asymmetric, and therefore difficult to analyze. The debate about this

 could continue for quite some time, or maybe not, because those who could debate this criterion are not, in economic terms, interested in doing so. We can ask many questions related to this topic. But, talking about problems is crucial. Einstein said, "The formulation of a problem is often more essential than its solution."

IFRS 6 identifies the evaluation criteria available for quantifying this value. Among these are: historical cost, reasonable value, net realizable value, usage and current value, amortized cost, account value or book value, and residual value. Which one should we use when evaluating intangible values? Apart from two or three which could not be applied because of the substance principle, the rest of the criteria would have advantages and disadvantages, which would depend on the value in question and on the limitations anticipated in the rules for each case. However, even with all the efforts of all the organisms responsible within accounting, there will always be a way to evaluate intangible value in a superior or inferior manner. The arguments that arise when one knows this value and has the information about this market, will bring many advantages to a certain owner.

Some multimillionaires simply evaluate. The spin-off of a division is a good example. Huge companies which have problems measuring their capital are easy prey. Consider these two tendencies: First, in the 70s and 80s, mergers and acquisitions dominated the world of big businesses in the U.S.A.. Then, the specialization and expropriations appeared and started to increase and gave way to the SBUs (Strategic Business Units), which was composed of companies that could be evaluated by comparison to other companies from the specialized sector and therefore, "justify" a transaction.

Question

Is the buying or selling of the these companies vitally important and necessary, or are we granting the wish of certain shareholders to earn a lot of money very quickly?

This should always be kept in mind when organizing a company, and it will eventually mean exploring the concept of the Conflict of Agencies (Managers vs. shareholders).

The Society

> What have we done?
> What do we want to do?

Society is the environment in which our company has to breathe. We are lucky to live in a part of the world that is considered "rich" in resources and opportunities. However, we have a responsibility to help those who weren't so lucky.

Human life means little unless we make some space where our children's children can live. And the truth is that we are not doing a very good job with this responsibility. If we keep doing what we're doing now, we will definitely destroy the species. We are not talking about some distant future but rather about near future, if not the present. Companies could share in saving our planet. My hope is that they do it right, in an honest and ethical manner. We have not created a very democratic democracy. We have created economic machinery capable of buying politics and corrupting the church. I haven't invented this, it's something we witness every day. That which seems impossible is happening right in front of us, and we don't even bother to stop and think about it. Everything can be bought. Our society is an egotistic one, and that is where business opportunities lie. We do it so well that society no longer considers it reprehensible.

We have the obligation to think for ourselves, to be aware of what this approach is doing to society. Sell, sell, sell… in order to finance badly managed companies. Consumers shouldn't be the ones who pay for management mistakes. This imbalance occurs because we are flooded, and we don't have any time to think. But, I'm not willing to stop thinking.

We can talk about everything.
Can we do something big?
I think we can.

What kind of companies do we want today?

How can we help create a good company? Never allow external elements to influence the creation of a new community. Every collaborator should have all the information at his or her disposal, according to his or her

needs and interests. Each person in the new organization should be passionate about his or her work. People should be dedicated and willing to do the things which, on their own, they would not be able to accomplish. Today, we are almost certain to fail if left to our own devices.

However, there are brave individuals who conquer all kinds of endeavors for all sorts of goals. Most every example of success has one thing in common: a great deal of sharing. If there is anything that can be identified as the school of innovation, from my experience, it is knowledge communication. Great ideas, which are the result of good team communication. Every day, Infonomia (a spanish network on innovation issues) gives us a new idea. We are grateful for this. Its creators know a lot and; therefore, seek to teach us a lot. These creators also learn a lot from the different communities they communicate with.

If this is valid, why don't we learn from it? Perhaps because we have to learn so quickly, because paradigms are the businesses of the day, and we have to solve them by using "Business Intelligence."

The whole organization should participate in strategic decisions. We have to adapt the information, and there are many people who are responsible for preparing the data so that we can use it. If we want it, we can have it. That is the good side of technology. Trust and ambition should be necessary qualities people possess. But, we should never forget the holistic principles: A person is a physical and intellectual being but also emotional, social, creative/intuitive, and spiritual. We have to bear that in mind and respect it. This is how strong, working relations will be created and how a specific organizational structure will be transferred to the market. The rest is in your hands. Organizing tasks, production, managing stock, clients, suppliers, treasury, banks, personnel, technology, information systems, and activity networks will be much easier if we all think together (brainstorm) about the ways in which we can help our company. In addition, we should not forget that the structure of our company does not have to be pyramid-like, nor are there any other limitations, except obeying the legal requirements.

The decision is yours (and mine). Actually, it doesn't really matter whose it is!

Awaken Your Genius

Conclusion

> Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you
> will find; knock, and it will be opened to you.
> For everyone who asks receives, and he who
> seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be
> opened.
> —Matthew 7:7-8

This book is about you. It is my gift to you.

I would like you to write the conclusion of this book. I will be pleased if you find information that changes your point of view. I will never know if I succeeded or the impact of my words on the way you see things unless you write me.

You decide every moment of your life. Just remember that only you can make the difference in today's world. If you learn how to be confident in yourself, you will discover that you are much more important than the world that surrounds you. The responsibility of your decisions has a greater importance than you might think. One person is much more important than you might imagine. One's behavior doesn't influence a supplier; however, it can influence 10 million consumer decisions. If this is true, then one person can influence an entire market, or the world, just as other personalities have done throughout time.

It was a pleasure writing this book. Use it. And I mean consume it and apply the material. If you didn't like the book, I ask that you please give it to someone, donate it, or just recycle it.

Consider re-reading each one of your answers from the exercises. See if after reading the book, your answers remain the same. I believe that if your answers are the same, you truly trust in your beliefs. You are confident in the answers you gave and about each variable that influenced your thoughts on each question.

If this is not the case, ask yourself why. You alone are the one person who needs to identify internal contradictions and change accordingly. It's not an easy task. If you doubt any answer you gave, you just found a way to practice self-confidence in today's world.

Try it! There's no cost beyond the book's price.

I am certain about few things in this life; however, this approach has worked for me, and I am prepared for your criticism.

> I couldn't wait for success, so I went ahead
> without it.
> —Jonathan Winters

The last question

I want to dedicate it to Randy Pausch, author of the The Last Lecture, in remembrance of what his life brought us.

I would like to say that confidence in myself allows me to enter any organization, anywhere in the world, orient myself, and then contribute to the achievement of success.

Do you feel more confident? If so, why?

Write your thoughts:

_____

_____

_____

Appendix A:
Theory or Opportunity?

Management Business Unit (MBU)

Professional Advisors. A project from a personal perspective, fall 2008 case study. The next document was shared with approximately 50 people on the Internet. Everyone it was shared with is a professional manager, some of them have tremendous responsibilities within their area of expertise.

What was the goal of sending my document?
1. To see how people reacted to a document that was sent by someone they'd never met in person.
2. To see the link between how well I knew one particular person and his feedback.
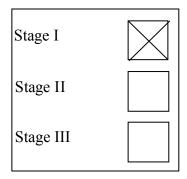3. To see if this document had some potential among a particular group of peers.

The conclusions were not what I expected... (Remember, it was an 18-page document written in a language that is not my first language, so it had a lot of mistakes.)

➢ I received my first feedback from India.
➢ People who I know personally showed more interest in the beginning and then lost faith in reading or giving it a chance, as I expected.
➢ I received positive feedback from some contacts, most were my university colleagues.
➢ I never received any feedback from several people.

I didn't need to try this small experiment to notice that people, in general, care about themselves. People are interested in how they may improve, or earn more money, or know more in their area of expertise. It's not about you, it is all about what can you do for others. If you speak to someone and clearly show someone that you can help him, you should expect to get his attention. Use that attention to accurately communicate what you

think or how you feel. People are not really interested in your point of view, what you do for a living, or how excited are you about something you really like. This attitude is normal and reasonable. People don't have the time. And as you well know, a lot of people in this world just talk and don't listen.

An exercise

```
┌─────────────────────────────┐
│                             │
│  Stage I        ┌──────┐    │
│                 │  ✕   │    │
│                 └──────┘    │
│                             │
│  Stage II       ┌──────┐    │
│                 │      │    │
│                 └──────┘    │
│                             │
│  Stage III      ┌──────┐    │
│                 │      │    │
│                 └──────┘    │
│                             │
└─────────────────────────────┘
```

Goal: Set up a discussion group to validate a "unique" business project. Stage I aims to set a first discussion group. Stage II and Stage III, respectively, are to gather critical mass and study implementation. Reaching the second stage means that we have already built a thinking team to validate this document.

Theme: Knowledge Management in Organizational Environments

Target: The people I've met, people I want to meet, and thinkers. If you received this document, you understand that, for me, you can make the difference. With your opinion, I can keep dreaming or just forget this way of thinking. No problem. I just want to understand, why not?

Focus: Top Decision-Making Process
What lessons are learned from the exercise?

I realized the potential of these thoughts after a tough decision: quitting handball. After this decision, I immediately started a new adventure. I

attempted to find a job in which I could apply my expertise: organizations. During my life, I have always thought about the consequences of my behavior and how it could affect the group of people around me. For the past 20 years I was a member of a number of "strange" companies: professional handball teams. I learned a lot, and I wouldn't change my experiences, not even for the chance to work at CitiGroup or Airbus or even IBM or Google. I like who I am and what I have become.

My decision for life after professional sports was perfectly conceived from within and well digested. But, suddenly, something started to not make sense. Everyone I questioned (managers, professors, even innovators) about my future plans were saying something like, "The perfect company doesn't exist." I was terrified. I just want to work with the best of the best. I know what the "bests" are doing in the rest of the world. I am an innovative person. I can change my opinion in a few seconds if you prove that I am wrong. It was at this moment that I started studying the concept of Knowledge Management. Not in IT/IS but in real business issues. Just as social media arrives, where sharing knowledge with others results in their sharing knowledge in return, usually without paying. Thanks, LinkedIn. You were my first experiment in this new philosophy.

Codex and Concepts

First, allow me to introduce some of the rules that should increase the effectiveness of this project. I won't present a business plan; the numbers are too easy to manipulate at this stage. For the present, let us think in terms of concepts. All the evaluation models that I know are based on predicting the future.

Principles

Economy is a social science. Every tax cut, increase in interest rates, or increase of inflation has a consequence. This consequence, many times, touches most other indicators. This is a primary reason it is so difficult to control monetary and fiscal policy.

Value = Cost

For us, there are two concepts of value. The first is transactional value. It is the real value for a product or a service being sold. It includes production cost + margin.

The second concept is perceptible value, which has a subjective interpretation. In this case, it would be the value given by the client, which is recognized by him but not necessarily by us. This value can be negative, positive, or zero. For us, the concept of value has one purpose: justify the creation of the business. Accountants have five or six definitions for value. It takes knowledge to justify any value proposition.

Change: Every process that the activity justifies. A need to improve our skills and meet our clients' needs. Change is a continuous process that allows one to develop efficiency.

Activity: The driver for all decisions. If there is any doubt about the decision-making process in a company, look to the core activity for clues. We must never lose focus on what generates revenue.

Managers: People who are in love with their work. Managers are people who think through the obvious, and the not-so-obvious considerations of their decisions. Often, more intensive study is required before making a decision. Managers exist because companies exist, and there is a need to organize and manage tasks. We are aware that the value of a company is greater than the value of each employee. Personal goals are achieved through team goals. It takes time and effort to achieve goals. We all work by the same principles. We want to be good managers. We aim to achieve that which is before us, not to be a writer or politician. "There are thousands of great books that nobody reads."

Recruitment Process: The most important process in any organization. Time is not considered a key variable in the admission process. CV is merely an image at a particular moment in time. It can't translate what somebody knows or what he or she is capable of contributing to our mission.

Mission: To be a "unique" environment where everyone knows what to do in order to accomplish our mission. We want to advise companies in

order to produce good decisions. Currently, we know that a bad decision can close your company's doors. For this reason, "time" is seen as an investment, not as a resource. If we need to take the time to study in order to decide appropriately, that is better than making a "stupid" decision.

Information: Information is the key for 99% of all decision-making in businesses today. Information asymmetry is what guarantees market share. Your business practices are different from mine. Our goal is to earn money by explaining our point of view to the clients who are willing to trust our skills. Every innovation project has in common, the fact that almost all of them are reducing the information gap. The client who wants to be informed about our procedures will be provided with a complete overview. What we do is not a secret, and we are not afraid of the competition. We want to be a solid bridge, managing the best information available between MBU and our customers.

Resources: We believe that we have the best resource information in the world. We will research and provide the best solution, one that fits the decision-making process of the client's company. Knowledge is everywhere. The best knowledge in each area is more available than the worst sources of information. Why? Because if you reach the best guy in the world and you ask him a technical question about his area of expertise he will confide in you without blinking. He shares the passion for his work and delivers his knowledge freely. We need to reach the best people and the best resources. How? Research.

Consultants: We don't want to confuse our market. We are not consultants, and we don't need to carry that burden of distrust. In the 1980s, a few firms were able to buy the best thinkers. A small group of companies called the "Big 5" started a run on markets—all of them. The greatest thing that these companies did was to build a structure based on intensive thinking processes by people in areas that the customers didn't manage. This way, they could control their knowledge by investing in new products and new ways of selling these products. Companies don't have the time or the resources to think because they have to focus on the activity. This is the market opportunity for services inside companies.

Outsourcing: MBU advises clients to work with the best available resources. Specialization is important for some SBUs.

One of those, in our opinion, is the legal work that companies must complete to form and operate. We believe such legal activities do not add value. That's the reason we advise outsourcing this activity. There are numerous qualified and professional people who can deliver results.

Specialization: For us, expertise has a limit. For the Big 5, that limit doesn't exist. For the Big 5, reaching the limit means a closed market. The limit is marked by the need of each company. Why buy SAP if my intellectual capital (my people) don't know how to use it? The costs associated with educating people in a large company to get benefits from using specific software are huge and difficult to measure. We have sufficient knowledge to offer advice about the best software for a single company. This is true for other areas of knowledge. We all know academics who cannot perform in the corporate environment because their studies are too specialized. In financial markets, there are fewer examples. There's an optimum point even for earning money with knowledge. We also have that power in our own hands. It is up to us. It should be on our minds.

Mistakes: Errors are common in people-based environments. If we fail to recognize it, we can't open our eyes to what we do, let alone the efforts of others. This concept is important because mistakes, in our opinion, are the main factor responsible for empowering employees. Without mistakes, there is no contrast between procedures. If we want to be one of the best worldwide companies, we must acknowledge that mistakes will happen. Error is a powerful learning driver. In the companies where we have worked, we learned a lot from our mistakes and the mistakes of others. Recognition of this challenge gives us knowledge and therefore, self-confidence.

Trust: In this project trust is one of the keys to developing a relationship with customers. We need to trust our skills, our people, and our clients. We need to build a relationship based on 100% trust. If we don't trust, we surely can't accept that client. This relationship requires that we go to another level. Getting all of the available input from all of the available sources, the client could influence the decision-making process. If in any moment we feel that our trust has been betrayed, our contracts contain a clause documenting the fact that we have the option to sever relations with the customer.

Numbers: Numbers are the instruments that allow us to compare the different activities in organizations. Numbers are responsible for the development of a series of new modeling concepts and interpretations in management, finance, and marketing. Every area of knowledge requires the use of numbers. One way or another, we have to deal with them accurately. Reporting performance is a science that many financial organizations, accountants, and brokers control. It is important to not only present but to explain their meaning.

Structure: Our structure doesn't exist. Better said, it is a flat one. We are all managers with different areas of expertise, skills, and beliefs. We share the common passion of delivering something significant to our client. It doesn't matter how you gain your knowledge, just that your organization has it. Never forget the goal. Spread knowledge around the team, and with the client in order to produce the best decision available in the world.

Risk: Every transaction has a risk. Almost every attitude involves risk. When we are born, we depend on the same variables. We have a high probability of dying during birth. In the business world, it is the same. My company produces a product that needs to be sold. My company has the risk of not selling it. If the company sells the product, it is transferring the risk of owning the product to the buyer. Now, consider a mortgage. The bank needs clients. You don't need to purchase five houses throughout your lifetime. More than likely, your grandfathers kept one house in the family for three generations. Real estate is a business that deals with risk transfer. Construction firms have the risk of not selling their spec houses. When they sell them, they transfer the risk to consumers who own that risk for 20, 30, or 40 years.

Time: We want to set up a knowledge company. MBU will bring to their clients the best management practices in the world. US, EU, Japan, and the Nordic countries provide the management practices and methods we want to deliver to our customers. Time is seen as an investment made to produce better results. However, time is the only resource we can control in order to deliver results. The consumption of this resource is a constant restriction, although the most important challenge is to deal with time in a profitable way.

Ideas: Ideas are what keep us alive. We transfer these ideas into action in order to get outputs. It has been said, "Ideas are worth spreading." Now, more than ever, companies worry about change and efficiency. They are observing that infrastructures are old, expensive, and inefficient. The only solution leaders are finding to solve this daunting issue is to change the company to enhance communications and to bring flexibility to the organizational environment. One good idea can make the difference, but be careful. Don't forget that in each movement there is a consequence that can affect other areas of the company.

How do you manage it?

The answer is the same. People with high levels of confidence and organizational culture can manage some of these items with ease.

People: They are the last but most important resource of this project. Failing to hire and retain the best people will often kill a project. I think it is simple to find some of the best thinking minds in business. Not easy, but simpler than getting the wrong people for critical areas. LinkedIn is a tool to facilitate such quests. We find incredible people learning and teaching each day with clever questions and smarter answers. Social networks are producing unrecognized value that lies inside each mind that uses the various SocMed tools. MBU wants to bring that knowledge to society, business, and to the world. We want to amaze people.

Approach

Attitudes and behaviors are present in every moment of our life. Through those concepts we will be able to communicate our approach to business. Indirectly, we will bond with customers. We are unique because we want to help our clients, not to gain a political or economic advantage. Above all, we respect the activity that brings revenue into the organization. At the same time, we believe that we can manage any activity in the world. We are professional managers. Management is a concept that doesn't depend on the object of that process. Another key is our knowledge about the basic needs. Who needs to buy and who needs to sell? Examples are brought to us each day.

TV is a manipulated example where sellers can deliver their products to the market. A study measuring the impact of marketing techniques and the selling company's workforces' actions, would show that the majority of consumer decisions are based not on the needs of the buyer, but the needs of the seller!

Key Phrases

> ➢ It's not about time, it's about knowledge.
> ➢ We work with two main goals. First, find the best solution for a recognized need. If the client doesn't know the need, we will "fight" to find that need. We don't forget that the need of buying something is not ours, but the client's. Second, we don't sell any close-ended products. We sell our knowledge. If we agree that buying a product is urgent, we will try to find the best solution available worldwide.
> ➢ Money will come for clients and for MBU. Our differentiation is built day-by-day, with our studies and behaviors. It's not a variable. It's a huge sum of many "small things."

At the forefront of our efforts, there will be our conspicuous efforts about our work, our way of making things happen, and our professional resources. That's why we believe that this project can make the difference.

Why are we different?

Because we are showing our project to people who are in love with their professions. We are unique because this project is an "open source." Our existence depends on knowledge sharing, and this will make the difference.

We want to find and meet the needs of our customers. We don't want to create the need in their heads. We are not developing technical skills to create amazing software, video games, 3D printers, or a new kind of material to build planes. These types of things are for special people who love doing this incredible stuff. We just want to be good managers, the best managers in the world. Why? Because we strongly believe that the "best" would appreciate working in such an environment.

MBU is defined by the sentence, "***Business is not about secrecy.***" Secrecy is often responsible for driving the information asymmetry to limits where the inefficiency is clearly observed. In the global economy, as in our lives, there is an optimum for almost every situation. There are thousands of practical examples.

We want to fulfill the knowledge gap inside organizations. We don't want political influences in our management procedures. Each project is customized to the requirements. Sharing knowledge gained from experience will guide the research and development of field work. We only need to know why the company wants to hire us. In our opinion, this first step can influence on a large scale, all the work that is required and can be decisive for the benefits of our efforts.

Who is responsible to hire us inside the company? Which person is responsible for our entrance? Who knows about that decision? Is it a need? Is it identified? We will present step-by-step requirements.

Drawing Revenue

MBU's revenue is built from two perspectives:

Objective: We have a fixed hourly rate. MBU team members receive the same amount of compensation for each hour worked. We are equal. If somebody moves too fast or holds a dangerous attitude, we all fail together.

Subjective: After finishing our work, we will receive an evaluation. Our clients decide if our work deserves a cash bonus or another type of performance reward. If so, our client will rate each of us according to his experience working with us.

As you can imagine, this is a simple system that tries to evaluate performance, as we all know, this is a difficult task. Often, no one is satisfied with the review of his or her work. So, the evaluation process is not produced by us, but by the client.

MBU's Team Building

MBU's team will be formed without a deadline. Possible team members will be evaluated through phone calls, e-mails, SocMed, and any public materials. We do it in an open environment. Specific knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors will be the keys for choosing people from all over the world.
An IT/IS platform will be created later to put faces to the names. It's not an easy process, but it is possible.

This process of team building is the most important one in our organization. If we can't find the best team, it is possible that this plane will never fly. Business professionals only see money. That's why this project is so ambitious and so difficult to put on track. A member of this team has to love his job. If he does, he will be recognized and will receive the money he deserves. Money is a consequence, not a cause. You work in your area of expertise and you receive money for your work.

You don't receive a salary for merely showing up!

Awaken Your Genius

Appendix B:
Idea Creation Process

How does MBU approach it?

We will build successful projects because:

✔   We love what we do.

✔   We have confidence in ourselves.

✔   We trust each other.

✔   We trust our knowledge and the source of it.

✔   We feel a power inside, which no one can see but everyone can feel.

✔   We want to help those who believe they need a hand in developing and improving their businesses.

✔   We believe that everything is hard work, but we have found a job where hard work means huge pleasure.

✔   We are humans, and we will die as humans. Let's risk ourselves in this tremendous challenge.

Awaken Your Genius

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Lars Hilse
Leandro Massada
Lewis Howes
Luis Gomes
Luis Pimentel
Luis Pinto
Magic Johnson
Manish Manakchand
Manuel Gomes Costa
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Manuel Oliveira
Manuel Torres
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Maria do Carmo Silvério
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Maria João Major
Maria Montesori
Maria Sanz
Maria Spinola
Mariana Costa
Mark Herbert
Mats Olsson
Merydith Willoughby
Michael Jordan
Michael Phelps
Michael Wolf
Mick Jagger
Miguel Cal
Miguel Eiras
Miguel Lagarticha
Miguel Maia
Miguel Monteiro
Miguel Velhinho
Mikel Lopez
Moncho Aguinaga
Muhammad Yunus
Naide Gomes
Nelson Fernandes
Noam Chomsky
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Nuno Lourenço
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Paula Martins
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Paula Testa
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Paulo Faria
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Pedro Mendive

Pedro Moura
Pedro Soares
Perry Belcher
Peter Drucker
Phil Jackson
Pilar Irigoyen
Pilar Valadares
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