

Time for a Challenge



You know the line about give the busy man the work and he'll get it done? It's true. The more you do the more you *can* do, but here's a twist you may find helpful especially if you're trying to balance all the exigencies of running a company.

You'll do more and be more satisfied with your job, too, if you take on something challenging and stimulating in your "off" time.

There are people - you probably know some - who run high-demand businesses yet still have enough time and energy to indulge in things they enjoy and grow from. They take on "parallel challenges" in addition to their demanding professional responsibilities. Effective people know that extra challenges make them better in all dimensions.

The magic in all this, especially if you tackle some long-buried desire to do something you've always wanted to do, is you'll get more done at your regular job while you make a dream come true. Take on a "Gee-it-would-be-great-to..." project and daily work chores become easier and your confidence and enthusiasm improve. Along the way your neurotransmitter connections get polished up and all those mood-plussing chemicals we keep reading about start circulating more freely.

Like a sleeping acorn harboring the potential of an oak, dormant aspirations never really go away. They just need to be dusted off and fired up. Maybe you always wanted to play the piano, learn to fly, speed read, master French cuisine, ride a motorcycle...I don't know. What's important is it's a blood-pumping challenge and when you take a step in its direction other issues in your life immediately become easier.

So what's holding you back? Money? Doubt it, probably not at this point in your life. Not enough time?

Ahh. . .time! Let's talk about time management for a moment. It's so often misunderstood. The key is to remember that time management is not about time at all: it's about priorities.

Think about the following.

1) We get done what we *want* to get done, what matters most to us.

2) Decisions about using our time, i.e. what we do next, are based on what's important at the moment - if you see your wastebasket burning, getting that client brief written will not be as big a priority as dousing the fire.

3) Doing important things is what matters most because people who accomplish their priorities are the ones who squeeze the best out of their lives and get ahead.

Look, forget about how many hours are available or how many items you check off a to-do list. Processing more minutiae will just make the wheel in your personal hamster cage spin faster. Getting the important things done - the priorities - is what makes the difference.

At the heart of all this is deciding what those priorities are and then committing to them. And if you look inside and begin to actualize a long-unfulfilled desire you'll be making a decision which will not only make you happier, it will sharpen your judgment and heighten productivity.

I mention all this because we frequently work with senior agency executives who don't understand after attaining considerable material success why they're so damn disenchanting. The answer is they've checked off the "run my own agency" box and now need additional challenges. If your DNA programs you for measurable accomplishment, now's the time to stretch for something else - true happiness and satisfaction don't come from status quo. As the artist Paul Klee said, "Becoming is superior to being."

A great resource on this subject of time and getting the important stuff done is *First Things First* by Stephen Covey.

Reading it would be a good priority, huh?

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Joe Grant". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large, sweeping initial "J".