

**Tom Peters'**

**EXCELLENCE!**

**“THE WORKS”**

**A Half-Century's Reflections/1966-2016**

**Chapter ONE:**

**EXECUTION IS STRATEGY**

**01 January 2016**

**(10+ years of presentation slides at [tompeters.com](http://tompeters.com))**

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## STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

This—circa January 2016—is my best shot. It took 50 years to write! (From 1966, Vietnam, U.S. Navy ensign, combat engineer/Navy Seabees—my 1st “management” job—to today, 2016.) It is ... **“THE WORKS.”** THE WORKS is presented in PowerPoint format—but it includes 50,000++ words of annotation, the equivalent of a 250-page book.

The times are nutty—and getting nuttier at an exponential pace. I have taken into account as best I can (there really are no “experts”) the current context. But I have given equal attention to more or less eternal (i.e., human) verities that will continue to drive organizational performance and a quest for EXCELLENCE for the next several years—and perhaps beyond. (Maybe this bifurcation results from my odd adult life circumstances: 30 years in Silicon Valley, 20 years in Vermont.)

Enjoy.

Steal.

**P-L-E-A-S-E** try something, better yet several somethings.\* \*\* \*\*\* \*\*\*\*\*

\*Make no mistake ... **THIS IS A 17-CHAPTER BOOK** ... which happens to be in PowerPoint format; I invite you to join me in this unfinished—half century to date—journey.

\*\*My “Life Mantra #1”: WTTMSW/Whoever Tries The Most Stuff Wins.

\*\*\*I am quite taken by N.N. Taleb’s term “antifragile” (it’s the title of his most recent book). The point is not “resilience” in the face of change; that’s reactive. Instead the idea is proactive—literally “getting off” on the madness per se; perhaps I somewhat anticipated this with my 1987 book, *Thriving on Chaos*.

\*\*\*\*Re “new stuff,” this presentation has benefited immensely from Social Media—e.g., I have learned a great deal from my 125K+ twitter followers; that is, some fraction of this material is “crowdsourced.”

\*\*\*\*\* ***I am not interested in providing a “good presentation.” I am interested in spurring practical action. Otherwise, why waste your time—or mine?***

**Note:** There is considerable **DUPLICATION** in what follows. I do not imagine you will read this book straight through. Hence, to some extent, each chapter is a stand-alone story.

## Epigraphs

***“Business has to give people enriching, rewarding lives ... or it’s simply not worth doing.”*** —Richard Branson

***“Your customers will never be any happier than your employees.”*** —John DiJulius

***“We have a strategic plan. It’s called ‘doing things.’”*** —Herb Kelleher

***“You miss 100% of the shots you never take.”*** —Wayne Gretzky

***“Ready. Fire. Aim.”*** —Ross Perot

***“Execution is strategy.”*** —Fred Malek

***“Avoid moderation.”*** —Kevin Roberts

***“I’m not comfortable unless I’m uncomfortable.”*** —Jay Chiat

***“It takes 20 years to build a reputation and five minutes to ruin it.”***  
—John DiJulius on social media

***“Courtesies of a small and trivial character are the ones which strike deepest in the grateful and appreciating heart.”*** —Henry Clay

***“You know a design is cool when you want to lick it.”*** —Steve Jobs

***“This will be the women’s century.”*** —Dilma Rousseff

***“Be the best. It’s the only market that’s not crowded.”*** —George Whalin

## **First Principles. Guiding Stars. Minimums.**

**\* EXECUTION! The “Last 99%.”**

**GET IT (Whatever) DONE.**

**\* EXCELLENCE. Always. PERIOD.**

**\* People REALLY First! Moral Obligation #1.**

**\* EXPONENTIAL Tech Tsunami.**

**GET OFF ON CONTINUOUS UPHEAVALS!**

**\* Innovate or DIE!**

**WTTMSW/Whoever Tries The Most Stuff Wins!**

**\* Women Buy (EVERYTHING)!**

**Women Are the Best Leaders! Women RULE!**

**\* Oldies Have (All of) the Market Power!**

**\* DESIGN Matters! EVERYWHERE!**

**\* Maximize TGRs!/Things Gone RIGHT!**

**\* SMEs, Age of/“Be the Best,**

**It’s the Only Market That’s Not Crowded”**

**\* Moderation KILLS!**

**NEW WORLD ORDER ?!**

**0810/2011:**

**Apple > Exxon\***

**0724/2015:**

**Amazon > Walmart\*\***

**\*Market capitalization; Apple became #1 in the world.**

**\*\*Market capitalization; Walmart is a “Fortune 1” company—the biggest in the world by sales.**

***Phew.***

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# Chapter ONE

**FIRST THINGS FIRST:  
EXECUTION IS  
STRATEGY!**

**So what comes first?**

**People?**

**(I've been saying that for 35 years.)**

**A “bias for action”?**

**#1 in *In Search of Excellence*.**

**But at the end of the day, come hell AND high water ... yougottagetitdone.**

**Which is to say ...**

***Execution* is where we should/MUST begin.**

**Conrad Hilton will give us a hand ...**

**1.1 REALLY FIRST**  
**THINGS BEFORE FIRST**  
**THINGS:**  
**Conrad's**  
**Commandment ...**

**CONRAD HILTON**, at a gala celebrating his career, was called to the podium and asked,

**“What were the most important lessons you learned in your long and distinguished career?”** His answer ...

**“Remember**  
**to tuck the**  
**shower curtain**  
**inside the**  
**bathhtub.”**

**You get 'em in the door  
with “location, location,  
location”—and gorgeous  
appointments. You keep  
'em coming back \*  
with the tucked in shower  
curtain.**

**\*Profit rarely/never comes from transaction #1;  
it is a byproduct of transaction #2, #3, #4 ...**

**This Hilton-ism earns pride of place. In the hotel business, “location location location” (and a great architect) matter, they entice me through the door—**  
***but it's the tucked in shower curtain that brings me back and induces me to recommend your home-away-from-home to my friends.***

**And as businesspeople know so well, you typically lose money on the 1<sup>st</sup> transaction and roll in the \$\$\$ on #18, #19, #20 ... and via that vital word of mouth.**

**(And what holds for hotels holds, well, universally.)**

**(And of course, lots more later ... e.g., this elevates enormously the attention, love and care we should shower upon our cadre of shower-curtain-tuckers! )**

**1.2 EXECUTION IS  
STRATEGY  
(AN ODE TO “THE LAST 95%”)**

**“EXECUTION IS  
STRATEGY.”**

**—Fred Malek**

**Fred, a very successful entrepreneur also committed to public service, was my boss at the White House/OMB in 1973-74. He was an execution “nut”—and passed his fiery passion along to me and many others.**

***“In real life, strategy  
is actually very  
straightforward. Pick  
a general direction ...  
and implement  
like hell.”*** —Jack Welch

**We think of Welch and strategy as synonymous. Fact is, his greatest accomplishment, from the start of his tenure as CEO, was to shake off GE's lethargy and focus laserlike on ... EXECUTION.**

***“The art of war does not require complicated maneuvers; the simplest are the best and common sense is fundamental. From which one might wonder how it is generals make blunders; it is because they try to be clever.”*** —Napoleon

**Successful execution?**  
**KEEP IT SIMPLE!**  
**(From Napoleon to Costco.)**

**“COSTCO FIGURED OUT**

**THE BIG,**

**SIMPLE THINGS**

**AND EXECUTED**

**WITH TOTAL**

**FANATICISM.”**

—Charles Munger, Berkshire Hathaway

**As so many have said before ... there's nothing more difficult than keeping it simple. It requires constant, proactive vigilance to keep the fangs of complexification from sinking into the veins of the organization.**

**Anybody for a corps of “Keep It Simple Cops” with “00” licenses? (No joke.)**

***(Reminds me of a Warren Buffett-ism. If you need a computer, he said, to analyze a company's numbers—don't invest. )***

**“EXECUTION**  
**IS THE JOB OF**  
**THE BUSINESS**  
**LEADER.”**

—Larry Bossidy & Ram Charan/*Execution: The Discipline of Getting Things Done*

***“Execution is a***

***SYSTEMATIC***

***PROCESS*** *of*

***rigorously discussing hows and  
whats, tenaciously following  
through, and ensuring  
accountability.”***

**—Larry Bossidy & Ram Charan/*Execution:  
The Discipline of Getting Things Done***

**Larry Bossidy, former GE Vice-chairman and then CEO of Allied, may have written the 1<sup>st</sup> book with the simple title ... ***EXECUTION.*****

***Why 10,000 books on accounting or marketing ... and ONE on EXECUTION?***

**God alone knows.  
I surely don't.**

**The point of the slide: “Execution” isn’t “the grunt work” to be overseen by others—a “culture of execution-accountability” starts at the tippy top, and must be the relentless, visible concern of the CEO and his top lieutenants.**

**(FYI: *Bossidy's book is superb!* )**

**(1) SUM OF PROJECTS =  
GOAL (“VISION”)**

**(2) SUM OF MILESTONES =  
PROJECT**

**(3) RAPID REVIEW +  
TRUTH-TELLING =  
ACCOUNTABILITY**

The “business plan” should be primarily devoted not to strategy—but to execution. *(Count the pages devoted to each.)* If a division boss promises 18% revenue growth in 2016 ... ***precisely how does she or he plan to get there?***

There necessarily ... **MUST BE** ... a set of projects which will collectively make (add up to) that leap happen; and those projects in turn consist of a series of milestones.

*Yes, lots and lots will change along the way—but at least we leap into the blue with something that tallies with “the promise”!*

***“When assessing candidates, the first thing I looked for was energy and enthusiasm for execution. Does she talk about the thrill of getting things done, the obstacles overcome, the role her people played—or does she keep wandering back to strategy or philosophy?”*** —Larry Bossidy, *Execution*

***“The person who is a little less conceptual but is absolutely determined to succeed will usually find the right people and get them together to achieve objectives. I’m not knocking education or looking for dumb people. BUT IF YOU HAVE TO CHOOSE BETWEEN SOMEONE WITH A STAGGERING IQ AND AN ELITE EDUCATION WHO’S GLIDING ALONG, AND SOMEONE WITH A LOWER IQ BUT WHO IS ABSOLUTELY DETERMINED TO SUCCEED, YOU’LL ALWAYS DO BETTER WITH THE SECOND PERSON.”***

**—Larry Bossidy/*Execution: The Discipline of Getting Things Done***

Execution starts with ... **HIRING.**

**Want an inclination for relentless execution?  
*Look for it.* It'll have been exhibited early  
and often—or not.**

***(I am totally smitten by both of the prior  
slides. PLEASE RE-READ. This duo is  
operational; you can apply it directly—ASAP.)***

**“I saw that leaders placed too much emphasis on what some call high-level strategy, on intellectualizing and philosophizing, and not enough on implementation. People would agree on a project or initiative, and then nothing would come of it.”** —Larry Bossidy & Ram Charan,  
*Execution: The Discipline of Getting Things Done*

**A variation on the same theme. What do people in general talk about/worry about?**

**Conceptual stuff?**

**Doin' stuff?**

***(It's up to you to shift the dialog toward the doin'. It takes constant-conscious attention.)***

***“The head of one of the large management consulting firms asks [members of a client organization], ‘And what do you do that justifies your being on the payroll?’ The great majority answer, ‘I run the accounting department,’ or ‘I am in charge of the sales force’ ... Only a few say, ‘It’s my job to give our managers the information they need to make the right decisions,’ or ‘I am responsible for finding out what products the customer will want tomorrow.’ The man who focuses on efforts and stresses his downward authority is a subordinate no matter how exalted his rank or title. But the man who focuses on contributions and who takes responsibility for results, no matter how junior, is in the most literal sense of the phrase, ‘top management.’ He holds himself responsible for the performance of the whole.”*** —Peter Drucker

**It's not the position you hold; it's the *work you do* and the *service you render* that matters—and your willingness-eagerness to be held accountable for you efforts.**

***This is an extraordinary (**PROFOUND**) statement by Peter Drucker. It should be studied carefully and its implications examined.***

**Observed closely: The use of**

**“I”**

**or**

**“we”**

**during a**

**job interview.**

**Source: Leonard Berry & Kent Seltman, chapter 6, “Hiring for Values,”  
*Management Lessons From Mayo Clinic***

**A variation on the theme: Such a “simple” idea—counting the “I’s” and “We-s” in a hiring interview. But how extraordinarily important. The practitioner in this instance, Mayo Clinic, has differentiated itself in general and in medicine in particular from the herd with its century old abiding emphasis on “team medicine.”**

**(FYI.1: This I/We “metric” includes interviews of prominent M.D.s seeking a position at Mayo.)**

**(FYI.2: For a wonderful and enlightening analysis thereof, I urge you—in the strongest possible words—to read Leonard Berry & Kent Seltman’s chapter 6, “Hiring for Values,” in *Management Lessons From Mayo Clinic*.)**

***Does/will the next  
presentation you give/  
review allot more  
time to the process/  
details/politics of  
“implementing” than  
to the “analysis of the  
problem/opportunity”?***

**Work on this.  
(Measure it?)**

**Sports:** ***YOU BEAT  
YOURSELF!***

**“WE HAVE  
MET THE  
ENEMY AND  
HE IS US.”**

**—Walt Kelly/“Pogo”**

***“The score  
takes care of  
itself”***  
*[if the prep is peerless] .*

**—Bill Walsh, NFL Hall of Fame coach, book title**

**San Francisco 49ers Hall of Fame National Football League Coach Bill Walsh began his epic turnaround of a troubled franchise by focusing not on grand strategy—but on the details of what it means to be and behave like a “professional” per se.**

**Walsh’s practices were orchestrated more tightly than a musical score. No details of preparation were left to chance. His last book, before he passed away, was titled *The Score Takes Care of Itself*.**

***That is, if the preparation is matchless and the attitude of professionalism predominates ... then the “points for” minus “points against” will more or less automatically “take care of itself” far more often than not.***

***“I don’t think I was a  
fine game coach.  
I think I was a  
good practice  
coach.”*** —John Wooden\*

\*Related: Check out Doug Lemov et al.’s  
WONDERFUL book, ***Practice Perfect***

**EXECUTION: Best prep wins!**  
**(Source: Many would say Wooden was the best college sports coach ... any sport/ever.)**

## When The “Enemy” Really Wins

**“Lose Your Nemesis”:** **“Obsessing about your competitors, trying to match or best their offerings, spending time each day wanting to know what they are doing, and/or measuring your company against them—these activities have no great or winning outcome.** Instead you are simply prohibiting your company from finding its own way to be truly meaningful to its clients, staff and prospects. You block your company from finding its own identity and engaging with the people who pay the bills. ... Your competitors have never paid your bills and they never will.” —Howard Mann, *Your Business Brickyard: Getting Back to the Basics to Make Your Business More Fun to Run*\*

\* Mr Mann also quotes Mike McCue, former VP/Technology at Netscape: **“At Netscape the competition with Microsoft was so severe, we’d wake up in the morning thinking about how we were going to deal with them instead of how we would build something great for our customers. What I realize now is that you can never, ever take your eye off the customer. Even in the face of massive competition, don’t think about the competition. Literally don’t think about them.”**

***“What I realize now is that you can never, ever take your eye off the customer. Even in the face of massive competition, don’t think about the competition. Literally don’t think about them.”***

**—Mike McCue, former VP/Technology at Netscape**

**In fact, obsessing on the “enemy” can be a killer distraction!**

**(*[VERY] Powerful idea.*)**

**(*Chew on it.*)**

**(*I buy it 100%.*)**

***“Amateurs talk  
about strategy.  
Professionals talk  
about logistics.”***

**—General Omar Bradley,  
commander of American troops/D-Day**

# **YES!**

**For want of a nail, the shoe was lost,  
For want of a shoe, the horse was lost,  
For want of a horse, the rider was lost,  
For want of a rider, the message was lost,  
For want of a message, the battle was lost,  
For want of a battle, the war was lost,  
For want of a war, the kingdom fell,**

**And all for the want of a nail.**

***(And how well General Bradley—and, among others, U.S. Grant—understood this!)***

**(FYI: This Bradley-ism is on my “Top 10 Favorite Quotes” list.)**

1.3

**SERVICE**

**> SALES**

**I'm "pro-sales" to a fault!  
(See the next slide.)**

**Still, I think "mere" service folks are traditionally under-loved/under-appreciated.\* And I think you should redress that imbalance.**

**ASAP.**

**(\* Among other things, it's service that drives "perception"—the overwhelming importance of which was previously touted. E.g., tuckin' that shower curtain in!)**

**SALES >**

**MARKETING**

**On the other hand ...**

**I'm a "hands on" guy, a "relationships" guy. And I think the sexy-cool marketers often get too much attention at the expense of "the shameless hucksters." As a huckster myself (a traveling salesman for ideas), I appreciate my hustling peers.**

***(Plus it pisses me off that business schools virtually ignore sales, while fawning over marketing. Of course, pretty much everything about business schools pisses me off.)***

**Marketing: Algorithmic/**  
**Helps them find the door (#3)\***

**Sales: Talk/Gets you in the**  
**door (#2)\*\***

**Service: Listen/Keeps 'em in**  
**the house (#1)\*\*\***

**\*Nerd**

**\*\*Aggressor**

**\*\*\*Pacifist**

**SERVICE**

**> SALES**

**> MARKETING**

**1.4 INTERNAL  
ORGANIZATIONAL  
EXCELLENCE +  
EXCELLENCE IN  
EXECUTION =  
DEEPEST  
“BLUE OCEAN”**

**OCCUPYING A “BLUE OCEAN” IS  
BY DEFINITION VERY  
PROFITABLE ... AND THENCE  
WILL BE QUICKLY COPIED.**

**“SUSTAINABLE BLUE”  
(HALLMARK: INTERNAL  
ORGANIZATIONAL EXCELLENCE)  
IS **FAR** MORE DIFFICULT TO  
COPY.**

**The “blue ocean” idea, grossly oversimplified, is to find unoccupied waters—or take a great leap with a product or service that redefines the game.**

**That’s a bit like “location location location”—it works to get a foot in the door. *But to keep ’em coming back and stay floating in the deep water when other ships enter, as they will with alacrity these days if you’re making a profit, is, in the end, about those tucked in shower curtains!* That is, your obsessive commitment to vigilant maintenance of ... Excellence in Execution.**

**B(I) > B(O).**

**INTERNAL**

**ORGANIZATION**

**EXCELLENCE =**

**“BRAND INSIDE”**

**Another way I like to state the same idea is that “Brand Inside”/B(I) is in fact *more important* than the traditional “Brand Outside”/B(O).**

***Effective “innards” are the real Brand ... and the key to Execution Excellence which in turn is the key to sustained superior performance.***

**1.5 EXECUTION: Me,  
“Captain Day,”  
“Captain Night,”  
AND U.S. Grant**

**Circa 1980**

**MP/B.Schools:** ***“Get the strategy right, the rest will take care of itself.”***

**TP/BW/ISOE:** ***“Get the people and execution right, the strategy will take care of itself.”***

**When, in 1978, I got the assignment to do the research that eventually led to *In Search of Excellence*, the “strategy priests” ruled the world of businesses and business schools and consultancies. And Michael Porter was the highest of high priests. I’m not quite being fair, but Holy Writ was more or less, “*Get the strategy right, the rest will take care of itself.*” Based on my academic biases reinforced by 36 months of wandering around the “excellent companies,” my co-author Bob Waterman and I pretty much came to the opposite conclusion, “*Get the people and execution right, and the strategy will take care of itself.*”**

**While you do, obviously, need both, I’ll gladly put my money on the side of the people-execution fanatics!**

**“DAY” (Dick/Build!)**

**vs.**

**“Night” (Dan/Report  
on what not built)**

**I sub-consciously learned “all this” as a 23-year-old U.S. Navy ensign and assistant operations officer attached to one of the Navy’s combat engineering battalions (“Seabees”) in Vietnam.**

**It was my first post-university “real job.” I made two deployments and had two commanding officers. I call them “Captain Day” and “Captain Night.”**

**Captain Day/Dick Anderson lived up to the Seabees fabled**

**“Can do”** spirit and creed. *“Just get the damn thing built”* was his de facto and de jure command—about everything. But Dan \_\_\_\_\_, Capt Night, was a demon for recordkeeping. I’d almost swear to you that he’d rather have a fat planning document and a letter-perfect report about an unfinished job than a sketchy plan and an untidy report of a job that was complete.

**For the next 40+ years (this was 1966-1968), I’ve religiously followed—and preached—Capt Day’s “Can do” dictum. You will of course see THAT in this “summing it all up” mega-presentation.**

***“One of my superstitions had always been when I started to go anywhere or to do anything,***

***NOT TO TURN***

***BACK, or stop, until the thing intended was***

***accomplished.” —U.S. Grant***

**“This [adolescent] incident [of getting from point A to point B on horseback in the face of incredible obstacles—to see a girlfriend] is notable not only because it underlines Grant’s fearless horsemanship and his determination, but also it is the first known example of a very important peculiarity of his character: Grant had an extreme, almost phobic dislike of turning back and retracing his steps. If he set out for somewhere, he would get there somehow, whatever the difficulties that lay in his way. This idiosyncrasy would turn out to be one the factors that made him such a formidable general.**

**Grant would always, always press on—turning back was not an option for him.”**

—Michael Korda, *Ulysses Grant*

## **U. S. Grant**

- \*No interest in grand strategy.**
- \*Do the thing until it is done.**
- \*Do not over complicate.**
- \*Do the next thing.**
- \*Pleasure in perseverance per se.**
- \*Do not complain of difficulties or ask for more time or resources**

**GEN McClellan (Grant's predecessor):** Delay delay delay; ceaselessly plead for more forces.

**GEN Grant:** "When do I start? What I will do is advance."

**Source:** Josiah Bunting, *Ulysses S. Grant*

**“ALMOST INHUMAN  
DISINTERESTEDNESS  
IN ... STRATEGY”**

**—Josiah Bunting on **U.S. Grant**  
(from *Ulysses S. Grant*)**

**I am an avid student of General Ulysses S. Grant, in my opinion America's most extraordinary and successful military commander. (Teddy Roosevelt called Grant one of the three greatest Americans, the other two being Washington and Lincoln.)**

***Grant was a man of action.  
Period.***

***“SUCCESS SEEMS TO  
BE LARGELY A MATTER  
OF HANGING ON  
AFTER OTHERS HAVE  
LET GO.”***

**—William Feather, author, entrepreneur**

**The vernacular version.**

***“If Richard [Holbrooke] calls and asks you for something, just say ‘Yes.’ If you say ‘No,’ you’ll eventually get to yes, but the journey will be very painful.”***

**—Henry Kissinger, on the late master diplomat-problemsolver Richard Holbrooke**

**Holbrooke had extraordinary successes during his distinguished diplomatic career. Kissinger, hardly a pushover, speaks to what was arguably Holbrooke's #1 success trait—bloody mindedness, an unyielding refusal to give up regardless of the odds and regardless of the personal cost. It was, effectively, impossible to wear him down—so, as Kissinger says, your best bet was not to waste inordinate time trying!**

# EXECUTION IS STRATEGY

**“Remember to  
tuck the shower  
curtain inside  
the bathtub.”**

**For a personal take on leading—and  
accomplishing—major organizational change,  
see the “GTD” section which  
immediately follows.**

**GTD!**

**Getting Things That  
Matter Done Against the  
Odds and in the Inky-  
black Shadow Cast By  
the Guardians of the  
Status Quo**

**A Personal Reflection:  
Getting Things (That Matter)  
Done (With **EXCELLENCE** &  
**WOW**) Against the Odds and  
in the Inky-black Shadow  
Cast By the Guardians of the  
Status Quo**

**Tom Peters/08 October 2015**

**This appendix is personal—though clearly informed by my formal training and research. It draws upon 50 years of experience in “getting things done” in a leadership role—from Vietnam in 1966 to, a full half-century later, my continuing effort to stir the pot seeking enterprise change circa 2016. *But in particular, this rant draws upon the “revolution” a few of my colleagues and I started at McKinsey & Co. in 1975—an absurdly tough place to change, especially from a junior position.* The “Organization Effectiveness Practice” we launched ended up birthing *In Search of Excellence*, “re-branding” McKinsey (and accounting for a substantial share of its revenue), according to *THE FIRM*, the definitive history of said firm.**

**Getting Things That Matter Done (With EXCELLENCE) Against the Odds and  
in the Inky-black Shadow Cast by the Guardians of the Status Quo**

**Key words:**

***Passion***

***Enthusiasm***

***Knowledge***

***Positive/NEVER Negative***

***ALLIES!/ALLIES!/ALLIES!***

***Credit Sharing/Self Effacement***

***Presentation Excellence***

***Listening Skills/Listening “Professional”***

***Network Obsession***

***Show up/Keep Showin’ Up***

***Political Mastery***

***“Suck DOWN for Success.”***

***Execution Fanaticism***

***Indirection/Invisibility/“End runs”***

***Demos/Small Wins/Speed***

***Impatience/Patience***

***Tenacity/Tireless***

***Civility***

***EXCELLENCE***

***WOW!***

1. **“Gotta do it” vs. “Wanna do it.”** Warren Bennis says leaders don’t “want to be a leader;” instead there is something they are determined to *do, and becoming a leader is the only route to getting done that merciless aspiration that hovers over you “24/7/forever.*
2. **Um, know what you’re talking about before you open your mouth!** Don’t “go public” until you “know your stuff” cold and have tested it a gazillion times, out of the public eye, with supportive colleagues.
3. **You need a straight-shooter who will tell you if you are off the mark, stylistically as well as substantively.** *You also need a longtime buddy who will hum lullabies in your ear when you’ve just had the shit beaten out of you—which will regularly occur if you’re on to something big.*

4. **Stay positive even if (especially when) the pain is killing you. Never ever ever ever ever “go negative”—no matter how stupid you think the other guy’s argument is and no matter how many shots you’ve taken. (Maybe “affable amidst shitstorms” is a more appropriate term than “positive”?)**
5. **Never ever sell “up” the chain until you have your compelling demos in place and your “base” of “real people” rooting for you—i.e., you have the bastids surrounded. “Selling up” is a stupid idea for a project or program champion. At least not until you have so well paved the road forward with successful trials and allies and outside supporters that you are almost guaranteed to prevail. Even then, there are two more rules: First, sell up in private if you’ve got an ironclad case; this gives Madam Director the chance to jump aboard, co-opt you, and act around her colleagues as if it’d been her brilliant idea from the get go. Second, get out of the spotlight and stay out of the spotlight and let field supporters who’ve done successful trials do the selling—and let them take 100.00% of the credit.**

***“Nothing is so  
contagious as  
enthusiasm.”***

**—Samuel Taylor Coleridge**

**NEVER sell “up” the chain until you have your compelling demos in place and your “base” of “real people” rooting for you —i.e., until you have the bastids surrounded.**

6. **Always let others take the lion's share of the credit—while you take *all the heat!*** Want to turn an “interested” ally into a “frothing supporter”? Let her take the credit for successes while you take the bullet for foul-ups!
7. **Encourage others to achieve real “ownership” by visibly influencing the core design.** Allies, to be resilient allies (and your allies will take shots, too), must have ownership. Co-design supporting projects in which they take the lead. Make sure they get their 25-cents worth in on all key design issues—and get at least a little bit of what they want, so the design becomes their very own.
8. **Always be open to alterations no matter how complete you may think this or that item is.** Folks are put off by “finished products”—even if they are in a flat out rush for that finished product. “Theys” always want to feel that you *welcome another tweak or piece of advice from them.*

9. **Am I being clear: Your goal is invisibility!** *You are a human lightning rod! You will be as successful as your invisibility cloak is impermeable.*
10. **It's all politics all the time: Live with it! Master it!** *Politics is not “a necessary evil.” Politics is life if you want to fight the status quo. FYI: There are no innocents among the winners. There is no such thing as a “successful change agent” with spotless hands.*
11. **You need a “pulling guard.”** *I dislike using football analogies, but I'll make a rare exception here. As you may have learned from Michael Lewis' book *Blind Side* (there was also the movie with Sandra Bullock), the lineman who protects the star quarterback, labeled the “pulling guard,” is frequently the highest paid player on the team: That is, the protector is seen as more valuable in monetary terms than the principal he's protecting. Translation here: While I advised you not to “sell up” prematurely, I do advise you to move heaven and earth to land a well-placed senior to cover your back.*

**If you dislike politics, then you dislike implementation. PERIOD.**

***If you dislike politics, then it is a dreadful mistake to be in charge of anything.***

**To hate all politics is to hate the fact that you were born into the human race.**

12. **When people start stealing stuff from you, you are making enormous progress.** After all the whole point is to be stolen from—i.e. have “them” leading the way on implementation.
13. **Spend 80% of your time on allies—finding and developing and nurturing allies of every size and shape is the name of the winning game.** *Taking allies for granted, assuming they are on board because of an initial show of support for example, is the kiss of death—and is as common as dirt. You must find the time and make the time all the time for those allies—with little touches as well as big ones. (This item is perhaps the #1 reason I am writing—that is, this the essay stems from a discussion with a harried big-change agent about the importance of fired up allies, and the amount of effort that must necessarily go into keeping them fired up*
14. **Lunch! Relationship construction and maintenance is the key to success at, well, pretty much everything.** And the best and most readily available setting for relationship building over the long haul, and regardless of the value of the new “social media,” is ... LUNCH. Hence, it is axiomatic: Never (I’m almost serious) waste a lunch. There are 200 to 250 “at bats” (Schedulable lunches) per year. Waste not!

**ALLIES: Spend**

**80% of your time**

**on allies—finding and  
developing and nurturing allies  
of every size and shape in  
every nook and cranny is the  
name of the winning game.**

15. **Your power does not come primarily from the number of Big Dudes you've convinced.** That is, it comes from the demonstrated commitment of your growing Band of Sisters and Brothers. Allocate your time accordingly.
16. **Ideas suck! Demos rule!** A great idea is obviously essential but will only get you (a small) part of the way down the field. It is increasingly compelling and sophisticated demos-prototypes- *“small wins” that do the heavy lifting. And the lifters are the allies who invest their time and energy into launching and nurturing those demos. Start the demo/partial-demo process immediately—long before you are “ready.”*
17. **Demos are cool. Stories are cooler.** The research is clear. Even when the idea is incredibly sophisticated, in pursuing funding or implementation ... **BEST STORY WINS.** That is, you must take the next step, and turn the successful demo in Podunk into a “compelling yarn” about the goal and the process and the impact and the people affected.

***Ideas suck!***

***Demos rule!***

**18. WTTMSW. WTTMSTFW.**

**WTTMSASTMSUTFW.** I call it “the only thing I’ve learned for sure in 46 years.” Namely:

**WTTMSW/Whoever Tries The Most Stuff Wins.**

**WTTMSTFW/Whoever Tries The Most Stuff The Fastest Wins.**

**WTTMSASTMSUTFW/Whoever Tries The Most Stuff And Screws The Most Stuff Up The Fastest Wins.**

**19. Stay away from “headquarters”—even if you, personally, are domiciled there. “Headquarters” is by definition the home of the defenders of the status quo—and the home of the dirtiest inside politics. You want to build your army of allies from the outside in: “Away” is the best place to do that. And “far away” beats “away”—at least in the early days.**

**WTTMSW:** *Whoever*  
*Tries The Most*  
*Stuff Wins.*  
*(Q.E.D.)*

20. **Outside In.** Establishing an outside power base can significantly increase your immunity to the determined attacks by powerful inside forces. This outsider base can be clients, vendors, industry experts—their credibility becomes your credibility.
21. **You must not let your enemies absorb your time—or, especially, your emotional energy!** Smile at ‘em. Sidestep ‘em. Never confront ‘em. Remember, our strategy is 100% positive: to build and cultivate a mostly invisible army of allies who are busily collecting data (those demos-prototypes-“small wins”) and in turn recruiting their own allies. Don’t give in to anger, internal or external. Your ability to control your enemies is ... **ZERO** ... on a scale of zero to infinity. (Plus, enemies wear you out. And turn you sour, where “sour” is the ultimate demotivating no-no.)
22. **ONLY positive sells: Don’t sell against. Demo for. No: “I am here to tell you how f%^&\*+ our purchasing procedures are ...” Yes: “You wouldn’t believe the new type of information services purchasing agreement we tried in the Albuquerque field office—results buggered our mind. Here’s the deal ...”**

**You must not let your  
enemies absorb your  
time—or, especially,  
your emotional  
energy! (And never  
EVER “go negative.”)**

23. **It's not about "beating" "the other guys;" it's about your vision supplanting (occupying more space than) their vision.** In your mind "all this" is or becomes a competitive struggle with the forces of right confronting the forces of might. Well, leave that "model" in the cupboard. We win when our project is up and purring and has become the new (EXCELLENT) way of doing things. Moreover, it's never over until never—you want those "enemies" to find a gazillion ways to win in their own minds: E.g. as you proceed, invite them to make changes in "your baby;" they are smart cookies—and doubtless have a great deal to contribute, and, experience suggests, if the project pans out big time, they'll pretend they were among the earliest adopters.
24. **Be civil at all times!** I cannot concoct powerful enough phrases to explain how important this is! *When you are civil and mannerly and thoughtful—you are, effectively, invincible. Civil is good—for a host of life asserting reasons. But civil is also "practical" and a "tool" which provides bedrock for the longhaul struggle for your "baby" to prevail.*

***It is not about  
“beating” “the other  
guys.” It is about  
your vision  
supplanting  
(occupying more  
space than)  
their vision.***

25. **Send “Thank you” notes!** Send 'em by the truckload! Make that trainload! Send 'em every day. Make this an ironclad ... *daily ... ritual: Thank anybody and everybody who gives you a big hand or a small hand or any hand at all. Especially thank those in the “bowels of the organization”—that is, the unsung heroes who, if turned on, will move heaven and earth for you.* I believe a candidate for most powerful word in the English language is ... Acknowledgment. People crave acknowledgement. If you become Acknowledger-in-Chief/Thanker-in-Chief, you will have taken a giant step toward implementation of your baby.
26. **Read/Ingest/Apply Dale Carnegie's *How to Win Friends and Influence People*.** Then re-read it every six months. It is, in short, the implementer's bible.
27. **Work harder than the next guy.** You may be the “radical” trying to upset the applecart, but it will help—a lot—if you are seen as a ... Very Serious Person. That is, I (imagine me as one of the bad guys) may disagree with what you're doing, but I can't fault you for not being an outrageously committed, outrageously hardworking player.

***CEO Doug Conant***

***sent 30,000***

***handwritten***

***‘Thank you’ notes to  
employees during the 10  
years [approx 10/day] he ran  
Campbell Soup.***

**Source: Bloomberg BusinessWeek**

***“There is absolutely nothing that beats hard work. You hoped when you were coming out of college that you were the smartest. It turned out none of us are. But I could sure outwork a lot of folks.”***

**—Sallie Krawcheck, called the most powerful woman on Wall Street**

28. **Show up on time for every meeting.** A supportive boss once gave me a lecture: “Show up for meetings early. Dress conservatively. Modulate your voice. Don’t give those who oppose you on substance any chance whatsoever to discount you based on ‘the little things.’”

29. **Show up!** *The too-oft-repeated Woody Allen line about showing up being 80% of success will here be re-re-repeated because it turns out to be true. (1) Showing up is the best way to offer support. (2) Showing up is the best way to schmooze. (3) Showing up is the best way to become a presence. (4) Showing up fosters serendipity—which is always the #1 cause of success (no kidding).*

30. **Show up anywhere and everywhere!** There is no such thing as a “minor opportunity.” Any opportunity to talk about your stuff or demo your stuff is a golden opportunity. Many of the great entertainers spent years in nightclubs the size of a thimble trotting out their stuff. Take heed.

31. **Keep showing up!** When the consummate diplomat Richard Holbrooke died, the consummate diplomat Henry Kissinger said, “*If Richard calls and asks you for something, just say ‘Yes.’ If you say ‘No,’ you’ll eventually get to yes, but the journey will be very painful.*”

**Glib But TRUE**

***“Decisions  
are made by  
those who  
show up.”***

**—Aaron Sorkin**

**32. All sales all the time!** We've all heard the famous Gandhi line: "You are the change you wish to see in the world." Or another I like, "It's always showtime." Everything you do, wee or grand, should be a de facto sales pitch for your project. Follow the advice of one extremely successful Hollywood producer: Become a "Ph.D." student of the sales process! (This fellow hit a wall; his creative work was not making it through the door; he then spent a year reading sales texts, attending sales seminars, etc. He became via brute force a master salesperson—the rest, as 'tis said, is history.)

***All sales all***

***the time!***

33. **Suck down for success!** Your goal is selfish—get the whole damn organization working for you! Garner an “unfair share” of attention, even though you may be a relatively junior person. Well, it can be done! *If you ... suck down.* In the saga reported in *Charlie Wilson’s War*, CIA mid-level staffer *Gust Avrakotos made miracles happen—far above his paygrade. Author George Crile put it this way, “He had become something of a legend with these people who manned the underbelly of the Agency.” Avrakotos knew every “top floor” CIA executive secretary by name—and had helped many of them sort out personal or professional problems. The folks in the mailroom and in the bowels of computer operations were also the subject of Gust’s intense and affectionate attentions. In effect, you could say that Gust was Commander-in-Chief of the “Invisible 95%” of the Agency—which allowed him to make extraordinary things happen despite furious resistance from his bosses and bosses’ bosses sitting atop a very rigid organization. Take heed! Work the “underbelly” as if your life/success depended on it; to a large extent, it does—or could.*

$$S = f(\#PK \text{ “W” } P)$$

$$S = f(\#PK \text{ “L” } P)$$

# of people you know in the “wrong” places  
# of people you know in “low” places  
(Where “S” is success)

- 34. *Sweat the details.*** And sweat and sweat and sweat ...  
Asked, at a gala honoring his career, to reveal the secrets to his monumental successes, Conrad Hilton replied, in full: *“Remember to tuck the shower curtain into the bathtub.”*  
*“Location, location, location”* is important to the hotelier—but it’s the tucked in shower curtains that keep the guests coming back—which is the source of all profit.
- 35. *“We.” “We.” “We.” We.”*** It may be pap, but it’s the whole truth—and all too often honored in the breach: Execution is a team sport. One small manifestation of that: Always and without fail use the word “We” per se—and hold the “I.” Mayo Clinic’s greatest point of differentiation is not medical genius, but, in fact, team medicine—a clinic staple since its founding over 100 years ago. One high-powered doc said that Mayo’s approach made her ... *100 times ... more effective than she had been in her prior professional positions. Mayo starts at the start: When interviewing candidates, the interviewer actually counts the number of times the applicant uses the word “We” vs. the number of times she or he uses the word “I.”*

**Observed closely: The use of**

**“|”**

**or**

**“We”**

**during a**

**job interview.**

**Source: Leonard Berry & Kent Seltman, chapter 6, “Hiring for Values,”  
*Management Lessons From Mayo Clinic***

- 36. Party time!** Celebrate the “small wins.” Celebrate the tiniest milestones achieved. Celebrate our newest friend signing up. Celebrate the fact of the journey per se. Our “it” is, after all ... A Full-fledged Adventure in Wow! In the best sense, make those who haven’t joined up jealous of the quest we’re engaged in. Induce them to join the parade. This ... right here, right now ... is where the coolest of the cool roost.
- 37. Sweat the details II: Maximize TGRs.** The magic of Apple products are the scads and scads and more scads of little touches—we Apple users are the beneficiaries of Mr. Jobs’ advanced case of OCD. Likewise, I began my last book, *The Little BIG Things (the title gives away the strategy contained therein), with a story about squeaky clean restrooms with voluptuous fresh flowers at a roadside restaurant which has won my enduring custom. I also call this idea “TGWs vs. TGRs.” That is, as we should we worry ceaselessly about quality—minimizing TGWs, or Things Gone Wrong. (The term originated in the auto industry.) The other side of the coin, of equal importance, are TGRs, or ... Things Gone Right. It’s those sparkling, flower-festooned restrooms; or the bank that measures (true!) the number of dog biscuits it gives away each year—it wants customers in the branches rather than using the ATMs. Bottom line: In developing your project (an internal system, not just a customer-facing product or process), focus obsessively and explicitly on maximizing those TGRs.!*

- 38. Take breaks.** You'll doubtless give little or no heed to this. And you will pay a terrible price—personally and probably professionally. It's elementary—you must recharge your batteries, and in a full-arsed, not half-arsed, fashion. You are fighting city hall, and it is grueling even though it is a labor of love. Problem: We are rarely aware of our degree of burnout. That is, until we take a break or break down—upon return we are astonished, as are our colleagues, at how refreshed we are, and how obvious it is in retrospect that the tank had been 90% empty. Bottom line: Fresh matters!
- 39. Form an Advisory Board in pretty short order.** I urged you not to “sell up”—at least not until you've recruited a sizeable base of allies and done a significant set of demos. This suggestion doesn't contradict that idea, because we're talking here about proven “friendlies.” Call upon some of your prior supporters (e.g., past bosses) and a couple of rather well-credentialed outsiders and cobble together an official or semi-official Advisory Board of a half dozen—which may subsequently grow to twice that size. There is, to be sure, “PR value” here. But the longterm key is to take the Board very seriously—de facto appoint them as your coaches. Along the way, you are also trying to convert them into vigorous semi-public salespeople for the project—moreover, each of them doubtless has an invaluable network which could be of direct or indirect use to your venture.

40. **Talk!** *You will rise or fall on your presentation skills. Meaning presentations of every flavor—from the 90-second elevator spiel to the formal 2-hour presentation, presentations to your team and to the Board. How do you become a notably good presenter? By presenting! Then studying the output. Then presenting some more and analyzing some more. To pursue your dream effectively is to pursue sales fulltime is to work your way toward presentation excellence.*

41. **Listen!** I have argued elsewhere that listening is anyone's or any organization's potential *"#1 strategic differentiator."* I mean it! The good news, a la presenting as just discussed: One can literally become what I call a "professional listener." That is, one can study and practice and improve. This is particularly important to project champions. You are dying to tell everyone you meet about your fantastic project that's going to turn the world upside down. Hence you collar them and ... TALK.

**No!**

**No!**

**No!**

**(An obsession with) Listening is ... the ultimate mark of RESPECT.**

**Listening is ... the heart and soul of *Engagement*.**

**Listening is ... the heart and soul of *Kindness*.**

**Listening is ... the heart and soul of *Thoughtfulness*.**

**Listening is ... the basis for true *Collaboration*.**

**Listening is ... the basis for true *Partnership*.**

**Listening is ... a *Team Sport*.**

**Listening is ... a *Developable Individual Skill*.**

**Listening is ... the basis for *Community*.**

**Listening is ... the bedrock of *Joint Ventures that work*.**

**Listening is ... the bedrock of *Joint Ventures that grow*.**

**Listening is ... the core of *effective Cross-functional Communication*\***

**(*\*Which is in turn Attribute #1 of organization effectiveness.*)**

**Listening is ... the engine of superior EXECUTION.**

**Listening is ... the key to *making the Sale*.**

**Listening is ... the key to *Keeping the Customer's Business*.**

**Listening is ... *Service*.**

**Listening is ... the engine of *Network development*.**

**Listening is ... the engine of *Network maintenance*.**

**Listening is ... the engine of *Network expansion*.**

**Listening is ... *Social Networking's "secret weapon."***

**Listening is ... *Learning*.**

**Listening is ... the *sine qua non of Renewal*.**

**Listening is ... the *sine qua non of Creativity*.**

**Listening is ... the *sine qua non of Innovation*.**

**Listening is ... the core of *taking diverse opinions aboard*.**

**Listening is ... *Strategy*.**

**Listening is ... *Source #1 of "Value-added."***

**Listening is ... *Differentiator #1*.**

**Listening is ... *Profitable*.\***

**(*\*The "R.O.I." from listening is higher than from any other single activity.*)**

**Listening is ... the bedrock which underpins a *Commitment to EXCELLENCE!***

***“I always write  
‘LISTEN’ on  
the back of my hand  
before a meeting.”***

**Source: Tweet viewed @tom\_peters**

42. **EXCELLENCE!** If not, what the hell is the point of all the agro that comes your way?

43. **WOW!** Redux: If not, why bother?

\*\*\*\*\*

***“Be the best. It’s the only market that’s not crowded.”***

***—George Whalin, Retail Superstars: Inside the 25 Best Independent Stores in America\****  
***(\*Regardless of your business or functional specialty—read this!)***

\*\*\*\*\*

44. **PERSIST!** If it’s important and contrarian, there will be reversal after reversal after reversal. (If it’s not important things will go smoothly—hence if things are going smoothly, then what you are doing is unimportant.. No kidding.) You must hang in. (Some wag said, “Success comes to those who are best at ‘Plan B.’” Indeed.) The stupidest statement I know is “Know when to hold ‘em, know when to fold ‘em.” There’s some truth in it regarding tactics. But as to the main event, let me put it succinctly: No one makes it into a history book who ‘knows when to fold ‘em.” **PERIOD.**

## **CHANGE. CHANGE AGENTS. 140 CHARACTERS.**

**Change agency: Forget the word “enemies.” Focus on/obsess on ... ALLIES.**

**Big change is not about fighting the bad guys. It's about surrounding them with your continuously recruited allies.**

**Success at change: Building a stable of allies. Failure: Pissing and moaning and picking fights.**

**Change Agent time distribution: 50% recruiting Allies. 40% tending Allies. 10% other. 0% fighting enemies.**

**Change: Allies do not automatically remain allies. Tend them and do NOT NOT NOT neglect them—the latter is a common sin.**

**Change the 4F Way: Find a Fellow Freak Faraway. (Change agents need playmates and distant playpens.)**

**Change you want: It's already happening somewhere. Find it!**

**Change is about end runs—not smash-mouth plunge down the middle.**

**Allies: Recruit the quiet ones as much or more than the noisy ones.**

**Change: Making loud noises is usually a loser's strategy.**

**Change: Recruit allies 2 or 3 levels “down” ... where the real work is done and from which the system can be indirectly manipulated.**

**Change: “Suck down” for success.**

**Change: ALLIES. ALLIES. ALLIES. ALLIES. ALLIES. ALLIES. (Then more ALLIES.)**

**Change Agents: Commit no minor sins. Don't let the bad guys find a narrow opening and bring you down for trivial reasons.**

**Change Agents: Keep a civil tongue at all costs.**

**Change Agents: LISTEN more than the talk.**

**Change Agents: Speak not ill of thine enemies. Even to pals in private. All the walls have ears.**

**Change Agents: No: Charts and graphs. Instead: Demos. Demos. Then more demos.**

**Change: Success is more about momentum around small wins than it is about big wins.**

**Change: Engage your allies in the design process—even if it introduces impurities. They must FEEL true ownership.**

**100% of change-that-works is NON-linear.**

**Change: Joyfully let/encourage your allies to take 100% credit for the small wins they're involved in.**

**Serious change includes bad days, bad weeks, bad months, perhaps bad years.**

**Change Agents: Re-read all emails 3 times before sending.**

**SM is a marvel. Do NOT shortchange face-to-face with Allies.**

**Change Agents: Successful small wins with outsiders provide enormous street cred.**

**Change Agents: Preaching to the choir is just fine. If the members of the choir preach to their choirs it becomes a ... MOVEMENT!**

# **Appendix ONE/GTD**

**Tom Peters'**

# **The Project Leadership EXCELLENCE 42**

**PMI Leadership Institute Meeting 2014  
Phoenix/23 October 2014**

**This speech was a dream come true. Long ago I received a Civil Engineering master's degree from Cornell in "Construction Management." Though I only practiced very briefly (in Vietnam as a U.S. Navy Seabee), the topic has always been near and dear to my heart. In particular—no surprise—I like to emphasize the "soft stuff" that drives implementation; and which is invariably missing in "hard science/engineering" study.**

# The Project Leadership EXCELLENCE 42

1. Politics as nuisance-distraction vs.

**“Politics Is Life. RELISH It.”**

2. IQ > EQ vs. **EQ > IQ.**

3. Buttoned down to a fault vs.

**“I am a dispenser of enthusiasm.”** —Ben Zander

4. “We don’t have time for niceties” vs.

**CIVILITY. ALWAYS.**

5. “There’s always some damn thing” vs.

**Live for the madness per se. (*Antifragile* —N.N. Taleb)**

6. “This is a time of enormous change, which must be reflected in our work” vs. ***The greatest***

***shortcoming of the human race is our inability to understand the exponential function.***

—Albert Bartlett

**75%+** of  
**effective project  
management is  
political mastery!**

**Believe it!**

# The Project Leadership EXCELLENCE 42

7. Linearity/“waterfall” vs. **Non-linearity/circularity/  
high tempo-lightning fast “O.O.D.A. Loops”/AGILE.**
8. Step-at-a-time vs. **“Demo or die”/“Serious Play”/  
“READY. FIRE. AIM.”**
9. Optimistic-or-bust vs. **UNDER-promise or bust.**
10. In the office vs. **Out of the Office/No office.**
11. Nose to the grindstone vs.  
**“This is a blast—as cool as it gets.”**
12. Meetings as pain-in-the-butt vs.  
**Meeting = Leadership OPPORTUNITY #1.**
13. Small leadership circle vs. **Inclusive leadership circle.**
14. Formal customer-vendor relationships vs.  
**“No barriers”-fully integrated partnership with  
customers-vendors.**
15. No distractions, please vs.  
**Welcome to the Age of SOCIAL BUSINESS.**

# The Project Leadership EXCELLENCE 42

16. Information as needed vs.

**WILDLY “over”-communicate with EVERYONE.**

17. Confidentiality often necessary vs.

**Confidentiality 99% nonsense/Inform everyone of everything.**

18. Email/IM vs. **FACE-TO-FACE**,

**frequent-flyer miles/ “Global Services” mainstay.**

19. Over-scheduled vs. **50% unscheduled time.**

20. Latest tech vs. **Paper checklist.**

21. Lunch with colleagues/Lunch as respite vs.

**LUNCH as #1 Networking Opportunity.** 22. Suck UP for Success vs.

Suck **DOWN** for Success.

23. Fend off enemies vs. **recruit and nurture ...**

**ALLIES ALLIES MORE ALLIES.**

## The Project Leadership EXCELLENCE 42

24. Silos are inevitable vs. **INTENSIVELY MANAGED “XFX”/ Cross-Functional eXcellence.**
25. Not our fault vs. **WILDLY over-respond to screw-ups/ Apology as Relationship Building Mainstay.**
26. Recognition-as-deserved vs. **Constant RECOGNITION, especially for “little stuff”/Celebrate-every-damn-milestone-imaginable, make ’em up if need be/ “Big Mo” rules.**
27. Talk vs. **LISTEN/Listening-as-Strategic Tool #1**
28. “Here’s the deal” vs. **“WHAT DO YOU THINK?”**
29. “We want people who know what they are doing” vs. **“We want people with an insatiable thirst for growth.”**
30. If hire good folks, little need for training vs. **TRAINING = INVESTMENT #1**
31. Noisy vs. **Quiet (Introverts are probably under-represented on your team—fix it).**

# The Project Leadership EXCELLENCE 42

32. “Millennials are different” vs. **Millennials want stuff smart “people 1st companies” (e.g., Virgin, Southwest) have been giving non-millennials for decades.**
33. Supervisors are 1st and foremost paid to “keep on top of things” vs.  
**Supervisors are in the “people development business.”**
34. Bosses aim to “help people be successful” vs.  
**BOSSES HELP PEOPLE GROW**  
**(2014: “Grow or die.”/Holds on even BRIEF projects)**
35. Lieutenants & captains & majors vs.  
**Sergeants, sergeants, sergeants.**
36. “Gender balance” an important goal vs.  
**WOMEN ARE THE BEST LEADERS.**  
**(And usually primary end-users.)**

# The Project Leadership EXCELLENCE 42

37. Concentration/“no nonsense” vs. **Daydreaming/READING/“Freak Fridays.”**
38. Kaizen vs. **WOW-ification**
39. Design is “important” vs. **“You know a design is good when you want to lick it.” —Steve Jobs**  
**(Apple > Exxon)**
40. Minimize “TGWs” vs. **Maximize TGRs.**
41. Make a damn good product vs. **Good product PLUS greatly enhance the “INTEGRATED SERVICES ENVELOPE.”**
42. “Good work” vs. **EXCELLENCE!**

**Appendix TWO/GTD**

**Getting Things Done: Commentary on David O. Stewart's**

***THE SUMMER OF  
1787: THE MEN  
WHO INVENTED  
THE CONSTITUTION***

**Tom Peters/0409.08**

**What does the U.S. Constitutional Convention of 1787 have to teach you and me, in the Age of the Internet, about implementing our wee pet project? A lot, I'll argue. Whether the topic is mundane or grand, and whether the date is 1787 or 2016, the "essential human basics of implementation" are exactly the same—and overlooking them is the universal cause of failure. So lets look at the "little" "human lessons" that underpinned the creation of this monumental document ...**

**Drafting the U.S. Constitution in Philadelphia in the muggy summer of 1787, was, literally, America's defining moment. The war against the British had officially ended with the Treaty of Paris. But pirates still plied the seas, sanctioned by the British, harassing American commerce. The loose nature of our founding Articles of Confederation made any coherent response impossible. Chaos and clashing self-interest had advanced to the point that several states were independently pursuing alliances and treaties with a variety of European Great Powers. Pragmatic leaders from various states, meeting informally, decided that the time had come to "do something, damn near anything," about the growing anarchy, that also included the rise of violent local militias. Hence, the Convention staggered to order, with some enthusiasm, a lot of frustration, with various parties taking it seriously—or not; and, as always in human affairs, animated primarily by narrow, irreconcilable geographic-commercial-personal interests.**

**That is, as useful and enduring and "inspiring" and "earth-shaking" as the "product" (U.S. Constitution) turned out to be, in hindsight, the process of its birth, and the players involved, not all Washingtons and Franklins by a long shot, was as messy and slapdash as is the case in the commonplace history of human affairs. All of this is described with novelistic intensity in *The Summer of 1787: The Men Who Invented the Constitution*, by David O. Stewart. What so captivated me about this "fast-paced narrative," given my professional interests, was that so grand a result (in retrospect—no attendee, beset by Philadelphia's black flies and, in many cases, worrying about personal finances deteriorating "back home," would have imagined the Holy Aura that was later attributed to the gathering) had emerged from such garden variety human wheeling and dealing, with chance paramount, the role of Black Flies not to be under-estimated, and the low and loathsome playing almost as big a role as the best and brightest in the nation's history.**

**Truth is, this book has changed my professional life. That is, it has reminded me of the "true basics" of human achievement—grand and mundane alike. We may talk ceaselessly about "globalization" and "blue oceans" and "disruptive innovation" and "brand you," but we err—I err!—when these high falutin' terms distract us from assessing and sharpening the tools that are the true bedrock of the true byproduct of organizational and individual life—i.e., ... getting things done, or "GTD" as one of my pragmatic Stanford professors called it. For it is invariably the failures on the "GTD Dimension," not the failures of "vision" or "strategy," that lead to their quagmire in Iraq or the screwed-up implementation of a business-process project. In the end, "it"—management, life—is all about human foibles, all about GTD, all about you and me "muddling through" to inch the personal or organizational world along another millimeter or two.**

**So, in this instance, the drafting of the Constitution, America's most important hour-summer, we see, through an electron microscope (*The Summer of 1787*), an act of GTD driven by the factors—"stuff" that really matter in the ever-elusive "real world"—which should be the fodder for "management gurus" attempting to be of some help to those going about their day to day affairs, so much more often mundane than grand.**

**A sampling of my notes on the book, and my translation into "lessons learned," follow:**

**\*\*\*Horse trading and deals struck in the shadowy corners of pubs was (mostly) the order of the day.**

**\*\*\*The pursuit of practical, “unfair” regional economic advantage, not abstract “theories of government,” was the determining factor in most deliberations; for instance, deals struck between small states, seeking clout and economic success, and South Carolina kept slavery alive. (See also, for example, *An Economic Interpretation of the Constitution of the United States*, by Charles Beard.)**

**\*\*\*There were gaping holes in the document, such as the continuation of slavery (it took the Civil War, 74 years later, to sort things out) and the glossing over of issues of citizens’ rights. (To be sure, subsequently dealt with by the first 10 amendments.)**

\*\*\* **“Muddling through,”** or “satisficing,” was very much the constant state of affairs. (“Muddling through”—a term coined by Yale political scientist Charles Lindblom. “Satisficing,” doing a satisfactory job, based on real world complications which cause sub-optimal results, was a word coined by Herbert Simon, for which he won a Nobel Prize in economics.)

\*\*\* **Luck** was here, as everywhere, essential. At one point, as deliberations on the most important and contentious topic of proportional representation completely bogged down, July 4 popped up on the calendar through sheer luck. Many of the delegates were Revolutionary War veterans, and the Technicolor memory of the intensity and duration and passions of the struggle was an extraordinary motivator; pettiness was pushed slightly and briefly aside and the logjam was broken up in fairly short order.

\*\*\* **Philly’s famous summer *black flies*** played a role, leading to dispirited attitudes, sessions cut short and the like.

**\*\*\* “Showing up” was the #1 “rule of success.”** Only 11 of 13 states bothered to attend the Convention—Rhode Island never sent delegates, New Hampshire’s arrived two months late, and New York’s folks never showed up in numbers enough to amount to a quorum. Overall, only 30 of 60 official delegates were normally in attendance—hence one soul, of whatever description, saint or scoundrel, could and did make a helluva difference time and time again.

**\*\*\* Despite the hardships, George Washington was almost singular for “showing up,” not missing a day, though as presiding officer he seldom spoke. His magisterial presence per se was a far more important contribution than his ideas—and his astounding demonstration, by his consistent presence, of the importance of turning out *something* saved the day on several critical occasions.**

**\*\*\* Money in the bank, or the absence thereof. Many of the delegates were in less than robust financial shape; hence they were continually distracted by having to hurry home (no small thing in 1787), and influenced by their perceived need to “get this damn thing over with.” Many an important clause was retained or excised because members were motivated to cut deliberations short, and “get on with it, before my creditors foreclose.”**

**\*\*\* Raw numbers of delegates greatly influenced the outcome. Wee Delaware had five delegates, only four states had more; hence (wee) Delaware provided an “unfair share” of warm bodies on the committees that controlled the outcome in most instances.**

**\*\*\* “Hanging in”** in per se, as usual, counted big time: “Lesser known figures stepped forward and carried the banner for the small states. What they lacked in reputation or talent, they made up with tenacity.” (“Success seems to be largely a matter of hanging on after others have let go.” —William Feather, author)

**\*\*\*Working up early “first drafts,”** brought to the conclave, had great impact; that is, others were automatically in a responsive mode, and initiative went to the drafters.

**\*\*\*Annoying personality traits were of the utmost importance.** For example, Maryland’s Luther Martin was left off all the important committees because he had a reputation for “bombast” and being “windy”—and who wants a windy guy in a tiny committee room, with the windows closed for security reasons, in Philadelphia, in August with the damn black flies causing their painful bites with lingering aftereffects. (We have “black fly season” in Vermont—trust me, they are awful beasts.)

**\*\*\*Presentation skills, good and bad and mediocre, also had startling impact.**

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TENACITY.”**

I neither contend that Convention's animating ideas-ideals per se were of scant importance, nor that the presence of Washington, Madison, Franklin et al. was of no import. ***But I do vociferously contend that mundane variables, such as those enumerated above, shaped the great document far more than most realize—they were in fact determining more often than not.*** Face it, “people will be people,” ego and frailties and self-interest always lurking or on stage, no matter how grand the occasion subsequently proves to have been. In fact, old-fashioned **hangovers** were probably of more than passing importance to our glorious document. Stewart reports that at one evening gathering of most of the delegates, about 50 in this rare instance, alcoholic consumption consisted of “seven large bowls of rum punch, over 100 bottles of wine, and almost fifty bottles of beer.” (My translation, to save you from doing the math, is four or five hard-liquor drinks, two bottles of wine and one beer per man, doubtless followed by a discussion of the interstate commerce clause—no wonder our modern day Justices of the Supreme Court have so much trouble interpreting “original intent.”)

**GETTING THINGS DONE:**

**LESSONS FROM THE  
SUMMER OF 1787 ...**

**\*\*\* Show up!!!!!!!!!!!!!!**

**\*\*\* Keep showing up!!**

**\*\*\* Control the process through indirect actions, like doing first drafts, writing Minutes.**

**\*\*\* Remember the social graces—your emotional “presentation of self” is more important than even “all important”!!!**

**\*\*\* Hang in! Tenacity-relentlessness rules! (Wear the bastards down. No kidding, this is a matchless “success tool.”)**

**\*\*\* There’s no such thing as a “dull meeting.” (No kidding!) Every get together is an opportunity to press your agenda, directly or indirectly, to perform a small favor with the expectation of “return on investment” at some point in the future.**

- \*\*\* Bite your tongue and listen, listen, listen—even to bores. Nothing wins support like effective listening; it's the greatest gift you can give anyone!! (This is triply important when you are desperate to correct something someone has to say, even an “enemy” of your cause—attentive listening is a peerless “win ‘em over” “strategic” “tool.”)**
- \*\*\* “Sub-committees rule!” It's the little chances to become Master of Something and perform-influence in a small group setting that lead to the accumulation of power and the ability to control the flow in an area important to you.**
- \*\*\* Continually “illustrate” your ability to perform well at almost any task and build a towering reputation for reliability.**

- \*\*\* Cool off! No passion, no success! Too much abrasiveness in pursuit of a cause that inflames you kills opportunity to succeed like nothing else. (Folks love to put an abrasive person in his place, even if they agree with him.)**
- \*\*\* Take a punch and keep on trucking. Losses are common—live with ‘em, take ‘em with good grace, and then persevere through out-persevering the other guy/s.**
- (\*\*\* Speaking of “punch,” out-drinking the other guy sure worked in the summer of 1787. Reach your own conclusions here ...)**
- \*\*\* Grow up, accept life. Life, effectiveness is indeed about horse trading as often as not—and at times consorting with one’s enemies. (“The enemy of my enemy is my friend.” Keep your passion, stay above the waterline on issues of deep principal—but accept, and embrace, the messy-as-hell “real world”!**

- \*\*\* Remember the black flies! “Little” distractions can change the whole game.**
- \*\*\* Be ready with “Plan B.” Repeat: Nothing in the real world follows the script.**
- \*\*\* Nobody, even George Washington, gets more than about 60% of what they want!**
- \*\*\* Keep your word. A reputation for integrity is priceless.**
- \*\*\* Don’t bite off more than you can chew, even when “can’t miss” opportunities to further your cause arise—overloading and thence compromising effectiveness is a big black eye.**
- \*\*\* Do something! “Small wins,” accumulated regularly, build momentum!**
- \*\*\* Work assiduously on your public presentation skills!**

**Lesson of Lessons: REGARDLESS OF  
THE TOPIC—MUNDANE OR GRAND—  
IT IS ATTENDING TO THE SAME  
“MUNDANE” “HUMAN” “TIMELESS”  
“BASICS” THAT SHAPE THE OUTCOME  
AND DETERMINE THE DEGREE OF  
IMPLEMENTATION. THE MASTER  
OF GTD\* IS THE TRUE MASTER OF  
THE UNIVERSE.**

**\*GTD/Getting Things Done**