



IT'S NOT THAT HARD TO WORK SMART

Here's the story. In my very early thirties, I was blessed to be hired by a large, regional commercial GC to create and manage their Business Development and Marketing program, basically, from scratch. A couple of weeks into the gig, I attended one of their quarterly, day long, offsite divisional financial/operational meetings attended by more than twenty company executives where I was confronted by one divisional VP. In front of the entire group, he asked me why I thought I had the talents and experience to be handed such a critical job with the company considering the fact that I was so young and inexperienced.

Being new to the company and not knowing the dynamics of the organization, I scanned the group and then looked him in the eye and answered, "Well, the owners of the company are both very intelligent and successful men and have confidence in my skills and talents, and since they hired me, ask them."

Boy, it really got quiet in that big boardroom and, after what seemed like forever, the CEO simply reintroduced me as their VP of Business Development and asked if there were any further questions or comments. There were none.

I left that meeting determined that I would succeed at this job and, within the next couple of years, I became one of the two Senior VPs of the company. And for the record, our company became known as one of the largest and most successful contractors in the sector we served and rewrote the book on how construction companies marketed their services.

As far as my success, I owe it to my maker, by casting a vision; I owe it to working Smart and Hard, to surrounding myself with a fantastic group of smart team members and to getting out of the way – oh, and to [Peter Drucker](#).

You see- -by being confronted in the presence of my peers in such a condescending manner, somehow I felt unprepared and was determined to read every book on management, leadership, marketing, and finance, and to attend every seminar, to listen to every tape (yes, that was back in the tape days) I could and to learn, learn, learn.

During my journey, I developed an incurable hunger for knowledge. I have a library of hundreds of books and a great respect and heart of gratitude for the businessmen, mentors and authors who have changed my life so that I can help others. But – It really all started with Peter Drucker.

After leaving that confrontational management meeting back in the early 80s, I went to the nearest bookstore and looked through the business section, and, I have to admit, I picked a book by Peter Drucker because it was a name that I recognized from *Forbes* magazine--and it was thin!

Anyway, I went home and started reading and what jumped off the pages at me was the following simplistic, but sophisticated, thoughts he shared that changed my thinking and my life.

"First, do not start with the task. Start with your time. Determine where your time is going. Then, attempt to manage that time and cut back unproductive demands on your time. Consolidate your 'discretionary' time into the largest possible continuing time units."

He refers to the second step as time management. After listing the activities to which we devote our time, he suggests that we ask three questions about each of these activities to help us minimize the amount of time we waste: *"What would happen if this were not done at all? And if the answer is, 'Nothing would happen,' then obviously the conclusion is to stop doing it. Next, which of the activities on my time log could be done by somebody else just as well, if not better? What do I do that wastes my time without contributing to my effectiveness?"*

And finally closed by saying, "'Know Thyself,' this old prescription for wisdom is impossibly difficult for mortal men. But everyone can follow the injunction 'Know Thy Time' if you want to, and be well on the road toward contribution and effectiveness."

So why is this even more important today? Mainly because we are stretched and distracted by the seemingly endless interruptions coming from the e-world that is supposed to help us communicate faster, more clearly and make us all more efficient, only to find exactly the opposite is happening.

And now that the construction economy and business is picking up, we find ourselves with even less time to manage and produce the work product we are responsible for. If we are not careful, we will slip into the “real men work harder” mode and forget about that whole “work smart” concept. With that in mind – I challenge you to stop, make some quiet time and honestly evaluate every activity that goes on in your life and business daily.

But here’s the rub, the catch, so to speak. Most people are not capable of doing this by themselves. They are so close and so involved in the issues, they can’t honestly identify the problems, or they are so overconfident in their abilities that their egos block solutions that are clearly visible to everyone around them.

The take away from my message is that if you can’t develop prudent time management skills, no amount of hard work will make you successful. You will fail to make the most of both your business and your personal life, so work hard--and--smart.

I also challenge you to never stop learning. My hope for you is that by continuing to learn and develop new skills and interest, you will live a full, successful and bountiful life. You owe that to yourself. You owe that to your family and friends, and you owe it to your coworkers and employees.

If you find yourself wanting to move your business or life from where you are today to where you want to be tomorrow, or you simply need a friend who will listen, help and never judge -- contact us. Our goal is to equip businesses and lives with the tools to flourish in the future.

To Success in All Your Endeavors,

Kent

Kent Leighton kent@flatrockgroup.com 830-201-0678

WWW.FLATROCKGROUP.COM

© 2015 The FlatRock Group All Rights Reserved

