

MAKE A BETTER USE OF YOUR TIME!

Getting Out of Crisis Management



In this newsletter we publish an excerpt from the sixth chapter of the book "The New Leaders", where Paolo Ruggeri explains, in order to achieve good results in the management and motivation of their staff, how managers have to learn to manage their time in a different and more effective manner.

THE IDEAS WE HAVE TO CHANGE IF WE WISH TO HAVE TIME!

"It is our use of time, not time itself that is the enemy."

Richard Koch

There are cases, where thanks to a whole series of corporate patterns we end up being almost "prisoners of our own company" and are prevented from being creative and from devoting ourselves to those activities that a) will make a great difference to our company's future, and b) we enjoy and find motivating.

Take the following example: you realize that your new sales manager is not managing the sales force well. Some of your best salesmen have pointed this out to you personally. As you are traveling in the car with him to visit an important customer, you realize from what he is saying that although he had been a good salesman in the past, he has a lot of doubts and uncertainties about how his current job should be managed. You sense that unless you provide help and support to him as quickly as possible, there are going to be problems ahead. With this idea in mind, you run through your schedule of engagements mentally but realize that the earliest date when you could devote some time to him is in three weeks.

How many times during the course of a day do we think about things we should do and which it would be useful to do in order to strengthen our company, but then, though full of good intentions, we end up being swallowed up by emergencies?

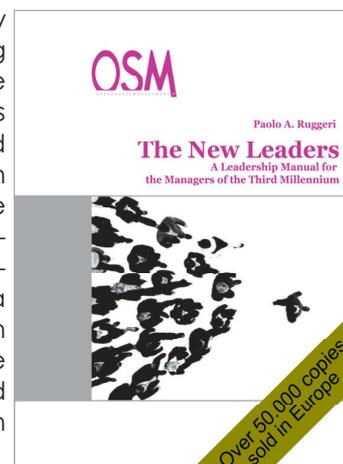
THE BOOK

The New Leaders

A Leadership Manual for the Managers of the Third Millennium

Paolo A. Ruggeri is a leading authority on leadership, people management and training of personnel. He has been training business owners and professionals in Europe and the United States for over twenty years.

In his book *The New Leaders* he is making available to readers the successful techniques and actions developed in the course of fifteen years' work, which have helped numerous small-to-medium sized companies to achieve a leadership position in their own markets. *The New Leaders* has sold over 50.000 copies in Europe alone.



The New Leaders, a Leadership Manual for the Third Millennium Manager, is available on I-Tunes, at leading bookstores in the United States and directly from the author by writing to info@paoloruggeri.net.

For more information about Paolo Ruggeri's books and services visit www.paoloruggeri.net

Don't miss the opportunity to read Paolo Ruggeri's first and most famous book: *The New Leaders*. The book will help you improve your leadership skills. It contains practical advice and smart tips you can apply immediately to increase your staff's effectiveness.

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How many times have we thought that we ought to have paid more attention to our staff, have motivated them, trained them, but then, pressured by the crises at hand, we have had to reconsider our priorities?

I would ask you to consider the following questions. Imagine you had all the time in the world. Identify two activities that if you were to devote yourself to them would make a great deal of difference to your company. What would you devote yourself to? If you had all the time in the world, what would be the two activities that you would devote your time to?

The majority of managers, when I ask them this question, answer that they would devote themselves to the development (training and motivation) of their human resources. Others tell me they would devote themselves to marketing, R&D, planning; and others again would set up a more accurate financial control system. The answer varies according to the situation of the individual company.

When I ask this question and listen to the managers' answers, I realize that many of them actually have brilliant ideas and objectives. When they talk to me about their ideas, their eyes sparkle. They realize that if they could deal with the activities they have identified they would be able to **RADICALLY CHANGE** their companies.

At this point, I ask the managers **WHAT PERCENTAGE OF THEIR TIME** they devote on average to the activities they identified when I asked them the initial question. Forty percent of them reply that it varies from 0 to 5%, another forty percent from 5 to 10%. The majority of the remaining twenty percent say they devote about 10% of their time to these activities.

It seems a paradox. These activities would make a **GREAT DEAL** of difference to the company. In spite of this, business owners and managers confess that they only devote very little of their time to them. If I draw their attention to this fact, they reply, "Ah, I have to be able to find the time", "I have so many things to do that at the moment I really wouldn't have time to do them", "I'll do them when I have time".

Which brings us back to human resource management. During my seminars, when I explain the factors that we have to provide our staff in order to make them motivated and productive, the majority of business owners and managers attending acknowledge that expressing appreciation and praise to their staff, making them feel involved and taking a real interest in them as individuals would make a considerable difference to their motivation and performance. But... "Where are we going to find the time to do all this?"

"We are overwhelmed by pressing problems", "I have customers who call me directly on my mobile phone and I have to provide answers", "If I don't manage manufacturing myself, quality drops", "When I get to the office I have so many things to do that I don't even have time to listen to my staff." These are just a few of the things I frequently hear managers saying.

Motivating staff, just like the other activities you identified when I asked you the question at the beginning of the chapter, is a **STRATEGIC** activity. The activities we identified can make the difference between winning the war and losing it.

THE EVIDENCE

"WE'LL DO THESE THINGS WHEN WE HAVE THE TIME"

When I speak to managers and business owners about personnel motivation and training and show them the great results that can be achieved by working on our staff, many of them say to me, "Okay Paolo, you've convinced me. This is a very busy period for me, though, I have so many things to do. I'll get to work on these things as soon as I have time to." Many managers already have an idea about the things which, if they did them today, would make a great difference for their companies tomorrow. They often think about them but keep saying to themselves, "I'll do these things as soon as I have time to".

But let's debunk this myth of "doing things as soon as I have a little more time". In other words, let's debunk this problem of the manager who "HAS TO FIND THE TIME", because it is a false problem. Years of studying managers and business owners have led me to conclude that they only have time in two specific circumstances:

- a) When their company has just started up**
- or**
- b) When the company is about to go bankrupt**

I am not saying that a manager or a business owner is condemned to living like a kind of "recluse", thinking that he has to be permanently overloaded with work or else his company will go bankrupt. And I am not even saying that since the manager will always be overloaded anyway there is no point in working to bring stability to one's company.

Business owners rarely, if ever, have any spare time because **IF THEY HAVE ANY SPARE TIME, THEIR VERY ENTREPRENEURSHIP WILL LEAD THEM TO FIND THINGS TO DO.**

Real entrepreneurs are bursting with projects and ideas. They often throw themselves headlong into things and work incessantly. If they have any spare time, they **OCCUPY IT WITH THINGS TO DO.**

The real problem, therefore, is not "finding the time", since we are so busy, so enterprising, so bubbling with ideas that **WE WILL NEVER HAVE ANY SPARE TIME.**

Ken Blanchard argues that "This is the first time in the history of business that you can be great at what you're doing today and be out of business tomorrow." Blanchard holds that in today's business world, the rate of change is so fast that leaders cannot afford to manage the present without at the same time planning the future as well. This is clearly visible: the average life-cycle of products is much shorter than it was in the past. The globalization of markets makes it much easier for multinational companies to put us out of business. The spread of technologies also enables small start-ups to become competitive and take market shares away from us.

Until a few years ago R.I.M. (the company that makes Blackberry) was flourishing on the market. That changed very fast with the advent of the new generation of smartphones. Same could be said about Nokia now supplanted by Apple and Samsung in the handset industry. Fifteen years ago Pontiac was a strong car brand in the USA (how can anyone forget the Firebird?). In 2010 however it was shut down by GM.

We have to get used to a working environment where change happens very quickly. And our companies can either promote change or be at the receiving end of it. To be a promoter of change, as Blanchard states, leaders must have the ability to manage the present as well as to plan the future. Taking care of the future means **BEING ABLE TO PERFORM THOSE ACTIVITIES WE IDENTIFIED EARLIER**. What are the activities which, if performed today, would make a great difference to our company tomorrow?

TIME PERSPECTIVE

Dr. Edward Banfield from Harvard University conducted a study on what he calls "upward financial mobility" (briefly, a study of individuals who started out with nothing and managed to achieve enviable financial situations). After analyzing many of the factors that contribute to individual financial success, Banfield concluded that one factor was more important than all the others. He called it "time perspective".

Banfield discovered that in any society people attain great personal success and grow in direct proportion to the time perspective from which they see things, or the time horizon they adopt. Those who achieve the highest social and economic levels take decisions and make sacrifices that may not yield any returns for years, but in the long term produce stunning results. Those at the lowest levels of society, by contrast, are individuals who take decisions with very short time perspectives. They often focus on activities that bring immediate gratification and neglect those that would make a great difference to their future.

We can apply this concept to managers' time management. If managers fail to take actions today that would make a great deal of difference to their medium- or even long-term success, they will not be very successful. The launch of a new product or the opening of a new market are examples of this. How long do these actions take if we consider all the required studies, surveys, market research, design, prototypes and customer research and development?

But we can also apply it to people management. How long does it require? A long time, and often it has no short-term returns but only long-term ones. Creating a sales force frequently requires months, if not years. It will have a sweeping impact on the market. But how much time has to be spent on research, recruitment interviews, training, work shadowing and meetings before you see any tangible results? Months, if not years.

MAKING BETTER USE OF OUR TIME

In his book *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*, Stephen Covey illustrates a time management method that in my view is highly innovative. By studying it and putting it into practice I was able to greatly improve my own effectiveness.

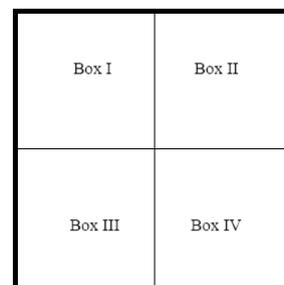
The method developed by Covey actually provides a solution to what we identified earlier as the real problem:

"How can I make better use of my time?" After studying and trying out Covey's method, I made various adjustments to it in order to adapt it to the structure of the small and mid size enterprises. From that, I worked out a practical model, which I have found to be very useful in helping managers and business owners to improve their time management.

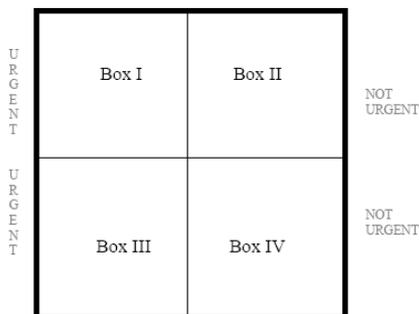
Let's imagine that the square below represents the manager's total available time.



For practical purposes, we will divide the manager's time into four well-defined boxes, Box I, Box II, Box III and Box IV:



We will put URGENT activities in the boxes on the left (Box I and Box III). We will define as URGENT all those activities that cannot be delayed, i.e. all those jobs, whether important or not, that need to be done IMMEDIATELY. We will put all the NON-URGENT activities in the boxes on the right (Box II and Box IV). We will define as NON-URGENT all those activities that can be postponed:



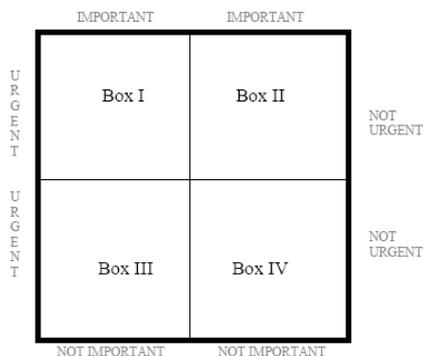
We will place IMPORTANT activities in the boxes at the top, where IMPORTANT activities are defined as all those activities that make a considerable difference to the company's future. As can be seen, we will thereby have four highly specific boxes:

Box I, with activities that are important as well as urgent.

Box II, with important but non-urgent activities, that is to say, activities which can be postponed despite the fact that they make a considerable difference to company objectives.

Box III, with activities that are not important, i.e. they don't make a difference to the company, but they are urgent, i.e. they need to be done immediately and usually cannot be postponed.

Box IV, which includes activities that are neither important nor urgent.



Let's now take a look at what activities are classified as belonging to the individual boxes.

Continue...

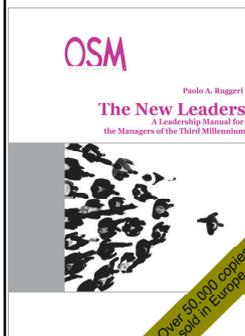
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Paolo Ruggeri

For more information about Paolo Ruggeri's books or to inquire about booking Paolo for a speech visit www.paoloruggeri.net or write to info@paoloruggeri.net

THE BOOK

BECOME A LEADER



Do you have any troubles managing your employees? Do you want to learn how to motivate and make them more productive? Do you want to find out what factors can increase their engagement and motivation? ?

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