

Are You Managing

YOU?

Is managing yourself your top priority? It should be if you want to continue to grow and be successful.

By Mark Richardson

Everyone wants to grow and be successful in their personal lives and careers. Most people believe this growth is going to come from a business with great products, great service and a great team. In the 21st century, leadership skills are more important than ever to achieve those types of goals. What I find most interesting, however, is that there is more attention being paid to managing others and other things than taking a good look in the mirror and working on better management of you.

Managing yourself is about not being overwhelmed. Managing yourself is about thinking clearly to make the right decisions. Managing yourself is about setting an example for the people you lead. Managing yourself should be a priority, and you should recognize why it is more difficult today if you want to improve.

Avoiding Information Overload

The level of information we are exposed to is greater than ever. It is not only tough with all the choices and complexity but the pace at which information is delivered is also faster than ever. While things are moving fast, this does not mean the decisions from prospects are simple or expedited. This dynamic makes managing you tougher than ever.

I have studied this subject for the last 30 years. I have watched successful people and observed the differences in their personal management from others who are less successful.

Most of the more successful people experience success in both the good and tough times. Most of the difference in these individuals is not in intelligence. The difference generally lies in the habits and techniques they use to manage themselves first before leading others. These people have a much

higher percentage of proactive time in their day than reactive activities (that others control).

Personal Management

The following are a few tips and ideas you might consider to improve your personal management. If you can begin to implement these ideas and master them, you will not only be more successful but also enjoy the journey a little more.

1 If you fail to plan then plan to fail. This theme is especially important to understand with managing yourself. Many think a daily To-Do list is a plan. It is not! It is just a To-Do list. Is “buy a car” a plan or blueprint to purchase a vehicle? No. It’s just a line item on a To-Do list. A plan takes into account the time available, the resources or expense and a timeline for its completion. With the pace and the stress many people are experiencing, I recommend you spend 30 to 60 minutes each day just planning your day. As Norman Vincent Peale said, “Plan your work for today and EVERY DAY, then work your plan.” Don’t just dive into the day, or you will just go deeper into the quicksand.

2 Know where you are heading. The challenges in the business environment have forced many to focus almost all of their time on the short-term activities and not on the longer-term direction. This is not as effective because you tend to react rather than act with purpose. Think of driving a car and only looking right in front of the hood while driving. You not only would find it difficult and stressful, but also you may not even be heading to the right destination. If you want to more properly manage

yourself, you need to invest at least 10 percent of your time in the long-term ideas and strategies. You need to begin to dream again and fantasize what the future might hold. This exercise does not suggest you stop paying attention to the here and now. It only puts long and short term in balance.

3 Monitor, monitor, monitor. Many people have a tendency to create plans, but then they don’t follow through. Not following through is more than just conviction and commitment. It is also a more basic process of monitoring. Think about the pilot flying from Washington, D.C., to San Diego. He would never get to the destination if he did not monitor the progress. This monitoring involves watching weather conditions, air traffic and ground speed. If he finds the flight is a little off-track then he can make simple adjustments to get back on track. This is also true when it comes to managing yourself.

If you have a direction and a vision of where you are heading, then by monitoring your progress you can make small, less stressful adjustments to stay on track.

Many people look at the more successful with admiration and think these gifts of success come from their DNA or being in the right place at the right time. While a little luck always helps, real and sustainable success is a choice. This choice can only happen after you look in the mirror and master the management of you. ■

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