



## 10 Small Steps for BIG changes

**1. Create Strategic Clarification.** In order to change, you must have a clear vision of where you want to be in the future.

**2. Set written goals and objectives.**

List your top 10 goals for the next 90 days.

**3. Set "Next Action Steps."** List 5 specific actions or activities that will draw you closer to accomplishing those goals.

**4. Outline a daily plan of action.**

Write and prioritize the top four to seven tasks.

**5. Read ten pages of a non-fiction book every day.** According to the American Booksellers Association, 58% of American adults never read a book after high school.

**6. Network.** Make it a point to learn from your peers.

**7. Finish your unfinished tasks.** Stop letting procrastination slow you down.

**8. Eliminate any unresolved issues that you are tolerating.** Eliminating these types of distractions will pave the way for improved satisfaction.

**9. Increased knowledge.** Knowledge builds confidence and a renewed sense of passion.

**10. De-clutter your work environment.** Organize your office.

Allison Lewis is author of *The Seven Minute Difference: Small Steps to Big Changes* (Kaplan Publishing, 2006). She is a renowned motivational speaker and strategic business consultant. For more information: [www.TheSevenMinuteDifference.com](http://www.TheSevenMinuteDifference.com)

## Counter-Intuitive Thinking for Executives

One of the most crucial personal abilities of a successful leader is that of setting a vision and then selling the vision to a composite audience of stakeholders—this can include fellow leaders, employees across the globe, shareholders, custom-

ers, analysts, and the board of directors. According to Bill Byron Concevitch, author of the just-released *Counter-Intuitive Selling* and an accomplished visionary leader in his own right, a little counter-intuitive thinking can go a long way when it comes to leaders' most critical selling opportunity.

Concevitch shared in a recent interview, "As with mainstream sales professionals, executives can fall into the same 'behavioral traps' that spell failure. Sometimes, by taking a path that is unexpected by the audience—and counter-intuitive to what the leader might normally do to sell his or her vision—the individual can gain greater buy-in and acceptance of a new vision or a change in direction."

Concevitch suggests the following tips for applying counter-intuitive thinking to the selling of a vision, mission, or strategy.

■ Rather than jump right into preparing the new vision for sharing, he suggests that executives start by reviewing past vision-setting experiences. "What can you learn from what was successful and, more importantly, what can you learn from what did not go well in the past?" Concevitch advises: Look for patterns



that need improvement. "An executive may see a pattern of old, established behaviors that lead to lack of initial success, and avoiding these behaviors is crucial to his or her future success. Practice of behavioral change triggers can

help rid the executive of these ineffective, ingrained behavioral habits."

■ Rather than think that the executive needs to unveil the vision in a major "speech" or other event, Concevitch suggests that he test-drive the new vision with trusted advisors as well as "opposite thinkers" at all levels of the organization and at all levels of other constituent groups. When executed effectively, executives will see a new level of commitment to the

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## AMA Statistics

What are some ways of measuring corporate creativity and innovation? The AMA/HRI Study *The Quest for Innovation* identified these five as extremely important:

1. Customer satisfaction
2. Market share
3. New products/services/processes produced
4. Financial impact of ideas submitted by employees
5. Innovations as percent of revenues and profits

For more survey findings, visit [www.amanet.org/research](http://www.amanet.org/research)

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vision from this grassroots approach.

■ As you utilize the “all levels” approach to test-drive your vision, Concevitch suggests that you interject the thought “*I am not sure the organization is ready for this.*” By doing so, he tells business leaders, “you will turn the tables and find that people will now—if they buy into the vision—be reverse-selling you into believing that the direction is sound and achievable.

■ Rather than just share the positive aspects of the vision, clearly and pointedly articulate the risks and ask, “Can we really do this? Can we make this most critical transformation?” As with the “I am not sure we are ready” counter-intuitive approach, an executive will gather real-world examples of how constituents will need to act to get behind the vision.

According to Concevitch, by utilizing this counter-intuitive roadmap as executives embark on their next vision-setting journey, they will also gain a major side benefit. “During his first vision-setting speech to Wall Street shortly after he took over the helm at GE, Jack Welch quickly realized he was not delivering an on-target message. In hindsight, this roadmap may have helped Jack on that all-important day.”

Bill Byron Concevitch, author of *Counter-Intuitive Selling: Mastering the Art of the Unexpected* (2007 Kaplan Publishing, New York City), is the Chief Talent & Learning Officer of Witness Systems (NASDAQ: WITS). Over the past 25 years, he has trained thousands of sales pros and leaders to use counter-intuitive thinking to improve business results.

## AN OPPORTUNITY FOR BUSINESS Address Public Concerns

Consumers tend to be most worried about issues that personally affect them—like food, safety, and health—while businesses are more concerned about what they can do to apply new technology to their business models. So the first Burson-Marsteller Global Issues Index recently revealed. “As we look at these issues, we think the opportunity exists for companies to step up and take on some of the basic issues—world hunger, accessible healthcare, protecting personal privacy, and security—while also satisfying their core business objectives,” said Ame Wadler, chief strategic officer, Burson-Marsteller.

### Top 10 Global Consumer Issues

1. Ability to pay for healthcare for myself or family
2. Identity theft
3. Cost of foods
4. Alternative fuel sources for home and car
5. Ability of hackers to break into a personal computer
6. Identifying new automotive technologies to reduce dependence on foreign oil and preserve environment
7. Ability of the government or employer to provide adequate health benefits
8. Ability to access advanced medical care and technology
9. Ability of countries to provide clean water
10. Practicing a healthy lifestyle

### Top 10 Global Business Leader Issues

1. The cost of technology
2. Affordability of staying ahead of competitors using the latest technology
3. Ability of hackers to break into company computer systems
4. Cost of energy and impact on profit
5. Ability to use technology to reach customers in a fruitful manner
6. Improved solutions to backing up and storing company data
7. Leveraging technology effectively to enable a more satisfying productive work environment for employees
8. Leveraging technology to enhance reputation and innovation
9. Ensuring appropriate employee behavior
10. Increasing healthcare costs, requiring the government or employers to pass on a greater share of the costs to employees



## Study Identifies HR Priority

Finding, developing, and keeping talent are among the top concerns for HR executives for 2007, according to the ORC Worldwide HR Priorities Survey. The global HR executives represented a range of industries, and 6 out of 10 respondents (61.7%) said the most pressing strategic HR issues companies will face in 2007 fall into the realm of “talent management.”

“The driver for this focus on talent management is that companies have not only recognized the value of tal-

ent as a competitive advantage but are developing the tools and processes that help optimize organization capacity and performance,” said ORC Worldwide President Robert Freedman.

After talent management, the study identified transforming and leading the HR function (23.1%) as a key focus. Rounding out the top three HR priorities for the year are activities related to cultural transformation (7.7% of respondents).

Asked also to identify the most significant HR activities, the respondents ranked the following in importance: leadership development and succession planning, HR technology, workforce planning, executive compensation, and diversity.

ORC Worldwide, headquartered in New York City, provides HR management consulting and data services to large and mid-sized organizations around the globe.

# Dismal Meetings, Surprisingly Useful Coffee Breaks

BY KEVAN HALL

Traditional approaches to improving meetings have focused on the skills of the leaders or facilitator and on driving the meeting process. Let's focus here, instead, on making best use of participants' time—after all, there are more of them.

Managers and professional staff spend about 2 days per week on average in meetings and conference calls, and they tell us that over 50% of this time is wasted on topics that are not relevant to them.

In training over 40,000 people working in complex international teams, where it is often difficult and expensive to meet, we have learned to prioritize face-to-face time around the following three principles:

**1. Collective meeting time is too valuable to use for every discussion.** Too many of the subjects discussed at meet-



ings are only relevant to one or two individuals or a subset of the attendees. Run the discussions that involve everyone at the beginning of meetings. Thereafter, break into sub-groups or one-to-one sessions. If people are not involved, let them leave.

**2. If you don't need participation,**

**you don't need a meeting.** If all you want to do is present information or inform people about the latest development, then a meeting is the wrong means of communication. Send an e-mail instead.

**3. If you don't have compelling content, don't hold the meeting.**

Need to talk to a colleague or customer? Invite him or her for a coffee break or lunch? Actually, some meetings are pretty useless, but the discussions during coffee breaks and over lunch make the time spent worthwhile. Plan accordingly for an interactive discussion, networking, or problem solving session.

Kevan Hall is CEO of Global Integration and author of *Speed Lead™: Faster, Simpler, Ways to Manage People, Projects and Teams in Complex Companies*. For more information: [www.speedleading.com](http://www.speedleading.com)

For more on team meetings, check AMA's seminars on group meetings.

## Calming "Customonsters" and Other High-Maintenance Clients

BY KATE ZABRISKIE

Women and men throughout the nation have become more demanding of businesses and what they expect in terms of service.

To endure demanding customers and give your employees the tools they need to successfully manage that audience, there are several actions you should take when planning your service strategy and tactics.

**1.** Determine what you will and won't do to satisfy customers. You must have rules in place—otherwise, you are headed for a path of inconsistency and dissatisfaction. Start by answering the following questions:

■ Are there some customers we would rather not have? If so, who are they?

■ How much abuse do I expect to take or expect my employees to take from difficult customers?

■ What special accommodations will I make to satisfy those justifiably unhappy and those not?

**2.** Train your employees on the rules you have put in place. Be prepared to

visit and revisit this step several times. Effectively dealing with "customonsters" is not always an intuitive process. Practice makes for better service.

■ Teach your employees to explain your processes to your customers to align their expectations with what you can realistically deliver.

■ Remember to remind employees to stay calm and not to yell, no matter how angry the other person gets.

■ Keep the focus on the problem, not the person. If the customer is unhappy that you don't have a service or product available today, keep the conversation about what services or products are available.

■ Give employees a Plan B. If the customer is not happy with an employee's efforts, have someone else, such as a manager or supervisor, who the employee can direct the customer toward.

**3.** Recognize and reward employees who handle difficult and demanding customers well. It's impossible to expect employees to make the right decision one

hundred percent of the time. However, if they know you are watching and that you treat every mistake as a learning opportunity, you are more likely to get the best out of your staff.

**4.** Never embarrass your employees in front of customers, never yell at them in front of customers, and don't immediately assume that the customer is giving you the full picture. "Customonsters" feed on negativity. The last thing you want to do is reinforce bad behavior by communicating through your actions that abuse is okay.

**5.** If all else fails, you may consider freeing your "customonsters" by suggesting other businesses that they might find more suitable. But remember, most of the time you should be able to satisfy your customers if you have solid processes in place, act professionally, and follow up on any promises you make.

Kate Zabriskie is founder of Business Training Works, Inc., a company that specializes in down-to-earth soft skills training in the workplace. For more information, visit: [www.businesstrainingworks.com](http://www.businesstrainingworks.com)



Here's what you'll find on the  
**AMA Members-only Website** [www.amamember.org](http://www.amamember.org)

**MANAGEMENT**

**Create More Effective Teams Through "Co-opetition."** Here's a new buzzword: "co-opetition"—a combination of competition and cooperation. It's when competing companies, departments, or teams learn how to work together to achieve common goals.

**PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

**Reach Your Goals Through the Art of Persuasion.** Call it buy-in, agreement, or cooperation, most of us have to convince others to see our point of view every day. Once you learn a few simple techniques you'll become a master of the art.

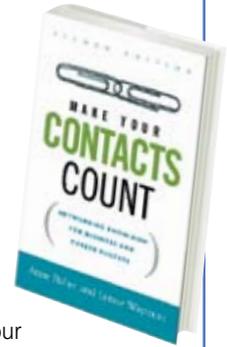
**SALES & MARKETING**

**How to Identify the "Golden Prospect."** How can you identify the prospect who will buy sooner than the others? Easy, says marketing guru Brian Tracy. Simply find the person who has the most pressing need for your product or service.

**LEADERSHIP**

**Advice to New Leaders: Get "On Board" to an Early Win.** Forty percent of newly appointed corporate leaders fail in their first 18 months. To increase their odds of success, leaders must make an impact as soon as they arrive—there's no time to "wait and see."

*Make Your Contacts Count: Networking Know-How for Business and Career Success* by Anne Baber and Lynne Waymon (AMACOM, 2007). Everyone has contacts, but few people truly know how to network effectively. Learn the secrets to furthering your career and growing your business.



For more information about this book and AMACOM's extensive catalog of business titles, visit [www.amanet.org/books](http://www.amanet.org/books)

**AMA Conferences/Special Events Calendar**

**APRIL 10 FREE WEBCAST • Optimize Your Learning Investment with Blended Learning.**

It's a new era for learning and studies document it—technology is playing an increasingly vital role in corporate training and development. In this webcast noted authorities Dr. Allison Rossett and Nicholas Igneri, will show how Blended Learning taps into and capitalizes on the resident smarts in the organization—pressing people and organizations to find, store, stir and share what they know in class and across the enterprise.

**APRIL 24 FREE WEBCAST • How to Say No at Work and Still Keep Your Job.**

Learning to say "no" effectively is a critical skill that can move your career forward and build your professional credibility. This Webcast provides tips and techniques to deliver your negative

message clearly, succinctly, and calmly (inside and out!) with and without using the actual word "no."

**May 2 FREE Webcast • Whoever Tells the Best Story Wins.**

Whether you know it or not, stories are fundamental to the way we communicate, learn and think. Many times our stories go unheard because of the constant noise surrounding us. This Webcast will touch on a few techniques for embedding the use of stories into your communications for impact, so you are heard "above the noise."

**May 9 FREE Webcast • Harnessing the Power of Your Emotional Intelligence.**

Incorporating the world's #1 EQ testing and development method—TalentSmart's EQ Learning—this Webcast examines ways to boost your performance, increase your effective-

ness in difficult situations, deal successfully with problem people and improve your interpersonal relationships.

**May 23 FREE Webcast • Do You Know Your Competitive Advantage?**

Jaynie Smith teaches companies how to differentiate themselves from their competitors. In this Webcast she presents valuable tips for uncovering your organizations' competitive advantages and ability to communicate a compelling reason to choose your product or service!

**June 6 FREE Webcast • 7 Secrets of Analyzing Financial Statements.**

Financial statements provide key information for running a company. In this Webcast, revealing scenarios and practical rules-of-thumb will give you insight into analyzing income statements, balance sheets, and cash flows.

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