



Low-Hanging Fruit

77 Eye-Opening Ways to Improve Productivity and Profits

THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

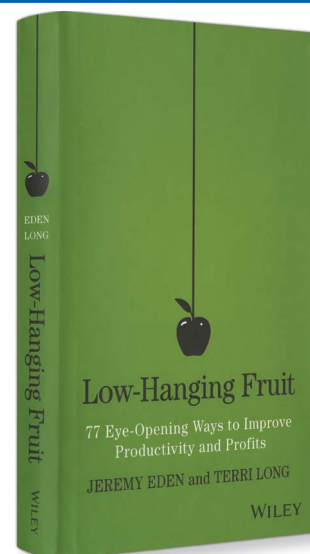
In just about every area of life, we tend to think there are only two possibilities: accept things the way they are, or put in a lot of effort, time and money to make things better. *Low-Hanging Fruit* is about a third possibility. What most people don't realize is that there are dozens of easy, affordable and quick ways to make things better. We can pluck this "low-hanging fruit" every day to save time and money right away.

Step inside any organization, even a very successful one, and chances are good that you'll find a lot of waste if you know where to look. From providing a feature that consumers don't care about to doing an outstanding job on daily tasks that only require "good enough" performance, there are countless areas where resources simply go down the drain. Jeremy Eden and Terri Long have distilled 77 of their most effective techniques for generating real performance improvements drawn from their success working with major companies.

If you think you don't have the resources to be faster, better and more profitable, think again. Whether you are a member of a small team or an executive of a multinational company, you will learn from *Low-Hanging Fruit* how to identify and solve hidden problems.

IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- How to uncover the low-hanging fruit in your organization.
- How to use a simplifying philosophy to identify the best problems to solve and not waste time on others.
- How to motivate your company to go after the most promising solutions.



by Jeremy Eden and
Terri Long

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THE COMPLETE SUMMARY: LOW-HANGING FRUIT

by Jeremy Eden and Terri Long

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Low-Hanging Fruit: 77 Eye-Opening Ways to Improve Productivity and Profits by Jeremy Eden and Terri Long. Copyright © 2014 by Jeremy Eden and Terri Long. Summarized by permission of the publisher, John Wiley & Sons. 224 pages, \$22.00, ISBN 978-1-118-85792-2. Summary copyright ©2015 by Soundview Executive Book Summaries www.summary.com, 1-800-SUMMARY. For more information on the authors, go to www.summary.com.

Introduction

Picture this: you are packing for a vacation. You carefully put everything you need into your luggage. You try to shut it, but the zipper has other ideas. It...will...not...budge! Maybe if you put all of your weight on it you can squeeze it shut.

The problem is that along with all your stuff, you were also packing air — a lot of it! That air takes up room and causes trouble. Sure, you tried to get rid of some of the air — you sat on your luggage. But you gave up quickly.

What makes air our worst enemy is that it is invisible. Because we can't see it, we don't try to get rid of it. Just imagine if your suitcase were filled with red sand instead of air! You would work hard to get rid of it.

Companies “pack air” in their processes. Managers and management practices give up way too quickly trying to squeeze it out. As your processes multiply over time, so do the pockets of air! We have helped thousands of business leaders by turning their invisible “packed air” into visible “red sand.”

Low-hanging fruit is supposed to be easy to pick. It represents the actions that will improve your earnings without risk and without much effort. Unfortunately, cost cutting often leaves the low-hanging fruit and instead just lops off branches without regard to what is left of the tree.

True low-hanging fruit *is* within your reach. Harvesting low-hanging fruit produces bigger results with much less risk than those big projects on which companies rely, like strategic transformations and enterprise-wide systems! Individual pieces of low-hanging fruit come in all sizes — from those worth millions of dollars to those worth just a few thousand dollars. Collectively, it is your growth engine! Here is your guide to harvest as much as possible.

Seeing the Problem Is Harder Than Solving the Problem

Solving problems starts with *acknowledging* those problems. If you truly believe that invisible problems surround you, you are far more likely to find ways to see them.

Put a Price Tag on Everything to Stop the Waste. Imagine if everything your company did had a price tag, stamped on every section of every report, telling you how much it cost, and on every record of every transaction. Putting a mental price tag on everything helps to place the focus on solving problems that matter.

“Value Engineer” Your Products to Eliminate What Your Customers Won’t Pay For. Value engineering is a powerful process used to discover and eliminate all of the elements in a product or service that customers do not value but that cost the company money. For example, when applied to a food product, value engineering can result in changes to various ingredients or packaging that save the company money while maintaining or even improving customer satisfaction.

Ask “Why?” Five Times to See the Real Problem. To understand how the world works, scientists are willing to ask, relentlessly and repeatedly, “Why?” Force yourself to ask why until the person you’re asking says, “I don’t know.” This usually happens by the fifth why. Then find the answer. That is when you will make real progress toward finding the right problem to solve.

Ask “How Do We Know That Is True?” Much of what people believe they know just is not so. Ask this question even when you do not think it is necessary. Asking it will quickly go from being awkward to feeling



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very natural. Don't be satisfied with anything less than fact-based information.

Tag It to Bag It: Name a Problem to Help Everyone See It. Waste often masquerades as work. It takes practice to see this waste. A good way to help your team see it is to have them give names to different kinds of waste. Then ask your team to look routinely for those sources of waste by name.

Turn Metrics Upside Down. Try reversing your metrics, and start focusing everyone's attention on solving the problems that remain rather than success achieved: Focus on the 10% *dissatisfaction* rate, the 65% *unserved* market share, and the 7% of projects *not completed on or ahead of time and budget*. Accentuate the negative!

The 80/20 Rule. Undertake an 80/20 analysis to identify the small set of causes that lead to a large portion of the effect. You can dramatically reduce the number of problems you need to solve while still gaining large benefits.

Find Quick-and-Dirty Data to Get Refined Results. Many managers feel they are limited to the data their systems provide. Do not let that be an excuse. Know what you want to measure. Then find a way to get the information you need.

Benchmarking Is a Mistake. Benchmarking supposedly works by knocking down your resistance to change, by compelling you with hard facts that someone else is performing better, which then motivates you to find the specific actions someone else is doing that you should be adopting. Benchmarking is usually a complete waste of time, because invariably no one is doing exactly what you are doing. The measurements are not comparing apples to apples.

Use Brainstorming in a New Way to Find Problems, Not Solutions. Brainstorming is a powerful way to give everyone permission to raise problems without being viewed as just complaining. It also helps everyone get into the flow of seeing waste that has been masquerading as work. ●

Now That You See It, Solve It!

The average employee today has succeeded by embracing change. But most people do resist *bad* change, and in business there is a lot of bad change. Good change does not meet resistance. What you need is a carefully designed process that engages the talent you have.

Ask the People Closest to the Work for Their Ideas. Your employees are an extraordinarily rich source

of solutions. Invite those closest to the work and closest to the customer to specific problem-solving sessions with experts.

Get Out of Your Office and Go See for Yourself. Actually watch how the work gets done, or, even better, do some of it firsthand. Ask "why" a lot as you watch and work. Actively look for sources of wasted time and effort.

Stop Ignoring Your Introverts. Businesses nurture and reward extroverts without realizing that it is the introverts who are often critical to the problem solving that drives innovation, productivity and profits. Here are three practical steps to help nurture your introverts: 1) Solicit more input privately. 2) Train managers to use better meeting protocols. 3) Assign introverts to lead special project teams.

Turn Complaints into Collaboration: Interdepartmental Job Swap. Go to a unit that uses what you produce or a unit that produces something that you use. Ask the managers if they will swap one of your people for one of theirs for a few days or a few weeks. Then share observations.

Other People Have Great Ideas. Ask new hires to point out things your area is doing that other companies seem to do better. Arrange brown-bag lunches, conference calls or one-on-one interviews. Vendors know your company, they know your industry, and they see what other companies like yours are doing. They also want to make you happy. Ask them nicely, and they can tell you lots of places where they see waste masquerading as work.

Does Your Customers' Journey Take Them on a Road Full of Potholes? Imagine being a customer. Now list every interaction you have, from becoming aware of the company, to making a purchase, to using the product, to paying the bill, to making another purchase. Write down three pieces of information for each item on the list:

- Which departments directly or indirectly affect how that item is carried out?
- How painful is the step for the customer?
- How important is the step to the customer's buying decision?

The Unintentional Squelch. Here is one power that never goes away: the power to kill ideas. The only sure-fire response from a manager who wants an idea to move forward is to say, "I want you to analyze this idea and get back to me on [fill in date] with a progress report." Then that follow-up must be scheduled.

Stop Brainstorming to Find New Ideas That Move the Profit Needle. Brainstorming is great for finding problems but not for solving them. Engage from

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three to seven experts who follow a well-structured meeting guide to focus very specifically on developing a few good ideas to solve a specific problem.

Making Problems Harder Can Make Finding Solutions Easier. “Think outside the box” and “draw outside the lines” actually inhibit creativity and innovation. Give the brain restrictions, and it will do a better job finding solutions. It is much easier to come up with realistic, practical solutions to a narrow problem than a broad one.

Use a Checklist. Use this checklist to follow the right order to find good solutions. Start at the top.

- Eliminate work
- Simplify processes
- Match task to skill
- Reorganize
- Automate
- Outsource

Turn the checklist into a corporate mantra.

Actually...Just Don't Do It. “Zombie projects” that should be killed but live on use up valuable time, while the better projects are delayed. Institute a regular “sunset” review that poses the question, “With what we know today, will we make more money by stopping this project rather than by completing it, so we can use the time and money on a better one?”

Give People What They Need, Not What They Want. When people higher up the food chain ask you for a special report, a new analysis or some other time waster, do you roll your eyes? You might be able to suggest alternatives that are not only easier for you but also more helpful to them. When asked for help, make sure you understand what problem needs to be solved.

Simplify. Steve Jobs offered a vastly simpler product line than his competitors and offered far simpler products. Systematically identify the biggest causes of complexity in your business. Then simplify your process, products or services by eliminating as much complexity as you can.

Push Work Down to the Lowest-Paid Person Capable of Doing It. Right now, there are highly skilled people in your company who are doing low-skill tasks as part of their job. Ask your team to list the tasks they do that they think someone junior (and less expensive!) could do just as well. Reassign the tasks down to the junior people, and free up time of the more senior people. Now the hard part: Either find a way to use the freed-up time to actually add hard dollars to the bottom line, or eliminate some of those senior positions.

Take Simple and Low Tech Over Sexy and High Tech. “Think outside the box” is supposed to be the secret of innovation. But thinking outside the box often leads to unnecessary risk taking. That is why we say, “Think inside the box.”

Go No Tech Over Low Tech. Before asking for or approving new technology (even low tech), ask yourself how much of your goal you could achieve without any technology by changing a policy, adding low-cost head count, redesigning your product or service, reorganizing or eliminating the work, learning that customers don't value the higher quality that you would get from new technology.

Borrow Good Ideas. Take facts you already know, and figure out how to combine them in new ways or apply them to new problems.

Force People to Get Help. Some managers just “don't know what they don't know.” Some know they need help but fear asking. Others think there is no budget for help. Is there a problem that has been festering in your company for months or years? Are your managers or your continuous improvement department getting the job done? If not, they probably need help. ●

Motivate Your Team to Harvest Low-Hanging Fruit

Good ideas come as the result of many people throughout the company trying hard to see and solve problems. Motivating managers is the single most important element to growing earnings. The good news is that it is also the easiest to get right.

Create an Idea-Based Budget. Create an idea-based budget, which starts with today's run rate and gives every specific idea that will be implemented — not in big broad strokes but in specific solutions to specific problems. The result is a budget that can be trusted.

Five Surprising Words. The five surprising words that stop good executives from being great leaders are, “I want everyone on board.” If the team has compelling facts, those facts should be used to make the decision. What leaders should not do is allow *opinions without facts* to substitute for their own good judgment. When you hear these non-fact-based opinions, it is time to make the decision, even if some of your team members are not on board!

If You Want the Money, Spend the Time. According to research, for every additional 1 percent of time a CEO spends with employees, productivity goes up 2.12 percent. When you walk the walk, you are doing so on a two-way

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street. In one direction, you motivate managers through inspiration, passion and expertise. In the other direction, your teams will teach you about what is really going on in the company.

Execute Motivators That Demotivate Everyone Else. Do not hold a fancy off-site management retreat where managers fly off to some resort, while you're preaching the importance of getting more from how the company spends its time and money!

The Corporate Imposter Syndrome. Fear and pride ruin earnings. The company asks you to unveil all the ways in which your area could perform better. Do you welcome this opportunity to show how much more you can do? Or does your pride in what you have done in the past make you defensive? Acknowledge this fear before you ask everyone to find new problems to solve.

Improving the Company Should Be Everyone's "Job One." Give your managers new job titles and job descriptions in addition to the ones they have now. The second title job description clarifies the specific role for which that person has authority and accountability. Give your direct reports responsibility for leading problem resolutions in their areas.

Sweat the Small Stuff. Details are both extremely important and very hard to get right. You need to really pay attention to detail. Start a new habit of asking people about a detail of your processes or products. Then ask for ideas on how to improve that detail.

Rally the Troops. A powerful call to arms must paint a clear picture of why you want everyone to join in your fight. Motivate your employees by telling them what you will buy with the money they find to make the company bigger, stronger, more important and, yes, more profitable.

Catch the Vision or Catch the Bus. Grade all your direct reports on their commitment to your goals. To get an A, they need to support all the goals publicly and proactively take actions to achieve the goals. Do not tolerate team members who are not committed. Even a strong head of sales who consistently undermines your goals to improve the company cannot be tolerated.

Eliminate Corporate Whac-A-Mole. Go to the corporate cafeteria and sit with a few of your managers. Ask them to tell you what hurdles they face trying to get good ideas approved. You want a flavor of what analysis they must do, with whom they must meet, who must sign off, how long it takes and so on.

Beat the Competition by First Beating Your Teammates. A very powerful way to motivate your peers and subordinates is to set up a friendly competition, all in

the service of acting as one cohesive and focused group. Let everyone know that they are competing against each other to show who has the best problem solvers.

"Blame the Other Guy" Syndrome. "Blame the other guy" syndrome is a silent killer of motivation. It is important to have everyone acknowledge that they believe *someone else* is the problem. Then give everyone a high target to hit.

Why Paying Attention Pays Staggering Dividends. When someone new starts paying attention to our work, we work harder and better. When it is someone in power, the effect can be truly dramatic. Create a steering committee to pay attention to all of the teams working on ideas to improve productivity and profits.

Firings Can Boost Motivation. The bottom 5 to 10 percent of most organizations is filled with people who are just not very good at their jobs. Others begin to say, "Why should I bother? The boss doesn't seem to care how well we perform." Work with your team to determine how to eliminate and streamline your work so that you no longer need the positions filled by low performers. ●

One Company — It's Not an Impossible Dream

We recognize that blazingly fast and immensely powerful digital information systems are necessary to run large enterprises. However, our dependence on them has distracted us from realizing that there is a vastly larger human information system composed of your employees. Learning to use that human system *even slightly better* than your competitors provides you with an extraordinary advantage.

Collaboration is required to share information fast and accurately so that hidden truths can be revealed and false assumptions eliminated. Many good ideas are stuck in the pipeline because even motivated and skilled problem solvers are stuck when they cannot get the information from someone else.

Form a Steering Committee to Make Sure the Left Hand Knows What the Right Hand Is Doing. Successful companies actually need strong functional units that have *competing* needs. The real problem of improving collaboration is finding projects and ideas where there are only winners! These comprise the low-hanging fruit that teams across units like working on and that produce a stronger company. A steering committee should collectively review and approve all ideas as a team. There is absolutely nothing more powerful than having the heads of

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two functions sitting together and telling their teams how to work together to solve a problem.

“Pocket Fisherman,” Yes, “Pocket Veto,” No! In most corporate environments, the advocates of change bear the entire burden to prove the case for their idea. Those opposed to the idea can usually kill it just by doing nothing. We call this the pocket veto. Shift the burden of proof by changing the decision-making process. If advocates can show how their idea will add to earnings, the opponents must bear the burden of explaining why the idea should not be approved, by using facts — not power, politics or position.

Hold Collaboration Workshops. Collaboration workshops deliver new revenue and/or cost savings. They are highly structured to share information that will lead to low-risk ideas that generate earnings. The planning and design ensure that these meetings are extraordinarily productive.

The One Monthly Meeting You Must Hold. Most of the time, priorities are actually set subconsciously by watching how leaders behave rather than by listening to what they say. If leaders personally engage to support implementation, then it will be clear to everyone that implementation is a priority. It only takes a little bit to go a long way. Even just one hour every month or two is plenty to create the accountability that will close the gap between the promises of approved ideas and the actual delivery.

Celebrate Good Times, Come On. Celebrating success is essential to building a culture of “one company” and of innovation. Nothing says, “I know who you are, and I appreciate what you’ve done” quite like *saying*, “I know who you are, and I appreciate what you’ve done.” Include as many contributors as possible — don’t forget the junior people. ●

Decide and Deliver

The worst chokepoint in an idea pipeline is the decision-making stage. Few companies have designed a specific process to make it easy and fast to approve good ideas. And when it comes to implementing change, studies confirm that what is promised is not delivered! Track and hold people accountable to their promises. Also, stop the obsessive emphasis on developing a few big, transformational, sexy, multiyear, multimillion-dollar, strategic-imperative projects. Instead, start focusing on harvesting large numbers of good ideas. These projects usually deliver as promised — or even a little better.

The Three Essential Parts of a GOOD Idea. They deliver hard-dollar financial benefits, net of any investments. They deliver benefits that clearly outweigh any risks (typically because there is little or no risk). They have the consensus of all relevant areas of the company that the idea should be approved. GOOD ideas are those for which facts are available, and those facts are used to build consensus.

The Miracle of Deadlines. Short deadlines squeeze out procrastination time. Establish an aggressive date for a decision as one of the early steps in developing the idea. A date creates a deadline that prevents ideas from dying a slow death.

For Big Results, Focus on Small Ideas. Small ideas are usually a lot easier to implement on time and on budget than large ideas. A focus on creating big, transformational plans distracts from the far more rewarding effort of finding many smaller ideas.

Fight the War With the Army You Have, Not the One You Want. Employees will develop ideas within their current skills and strengths. Focus on the great ideas that play to your strengths before worrying about the ideas that play to your weaknesses!

Add to Your Army Only When Necessary. Sometimes you need to implement ideas that take skills that you don’t have. Or sometimes the payoff is big enough to warrant buying new skills.

Create an “Idea” Flight Plan that Coordinates Implementation. Create a master plan for the company whereby all of the different initiatives are coordinated so that the overall plan delivers the highest earnings with the least disruption. The plan becomes the promise that everyone is on board to deliver it.

Make Sure the Buy-In Is Built In. Those who plan the battle rarely battle the plan: Engage employees closest to the work and closest to the customer to develop ideas. It is natural human behavior that we must invest our own effort to feel ownership and pride. ●

Accountability: The Holy Grail!

People must face consequences that matter to them if they fail to deliver on their promises. Too often, managers talk a good game, but in reality they let their people off the hook. Without real accountability, all is lost!

Track Every Idea, Every Dollar, Every Month. A good tracking system must answer four questions: Who is accountable for delivering financial benefits on time and

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on budget? What are the specific actions and financial benefits that must be delivered? When will the actions be completed, and when will the benefits begin? Why are specific benefits different than promised? You must have someone who is in charge of tracking, and that person must have the authority to determine whether ideas are, in fact, delivering the promised financial value.

The Golden Rule — Withdraw and Replace. If an idea is going to fail, then the owner of the idea needs to get approval to withdraw it. To get that approval, the owner also needs to *replace* the withdrawn idea with a *new* idea that will deliver the promised hard dollars.

Follow the Money All the Way to the Budget. Remember “Put a price tag on everything”? If you follow the money all the way to the end, it takes the form of valuing each idea by line item. This level of budgeting precision does more than ensure that you can incorporate the value of ideas into your budgets and track them. It also creates the rigor needed to promise hard dollars.

Don’t Let Someone Else Dictate the Value of the Ideas You Implement. No one would think of getting approval for using outside vendors without getting a price. Similarly, no one should get approval for using internal support without getting a price. Do not let anyone make financial commitments that someone else has to deliver.

Want to Actually See the Earnings? Lock the Vault. Many companies complain of the “water balloon” effect — costs get pushed down in one place only to rise in another. There is a simple reason that this happens. The improvement process provides discipline to a source of new funds, but there is not sufficient discipline applied to the use of funds. Lock the new earnings in a vault that can be opened only by submitting new ideas through the same rigorous idea process described above.

Track Your Position Plan. Position tracking shows the variance, by position title and job grade, between the exact number of positions one should have and the number actually in the payroll system. It is very helpful to ensuring that the costs pushed down in one place don’t bulge out, water balloon style, somewhere they shouldn’t. Variances occur only when managers are not willing to promise benefits, but they still want to hire.

It’s Not What You Start; It’s What You Finish. There are more worthwhile projects than there is time to accomplish them all. Change the focus from the common projects in process to the important projects finished.

Make Sure You Get the Return. You likely know how much you have invested in technology in the past three years. Do you know the actual benefits that have

been delivered to the bottom line? Do you know how the actual results compare to the original promises? Is someone tracking it? If not, then no one is being held accountable ... and that is a problem.

Learn From Your Mistakes. An after-action report tracks promises versus delivery and provides the reasons why projects fall behind or deliver less than expected. You may find it unpleasant to rehash failure, but the rigor and discipline are important parts of transparency. ●

Need More Time? It’s Easier to Find Than You Think!

Eisenhower said, “What is important is seldom urgent, and what is urgent is seldom important.” Only when you strengthen the connection between making money and your activities can you clearly distinguish between the important and unimportant.

Everyone Is Entitled to Their Own Opinion but Not Their Own Facts. When you meet, make sure that all conflicting points of view — based on a single set of facts — are in the room. Require all factions to work together to establish facts. Then have a short meeting with all factions present to decide which position these facts support.

Replace Agendas with Game Plans that dictate the critical preparation required before the meeting, the specific actions required during the meeting and the follow-up required after the meeting.

Ban Meeting Tourists. A business meeting is not a date, but you should treat it just as seriously. Who should be there, and why? Bring exactly the right people — no more and no less. If the right people can’t make it, cancel until everyone with a crucial role can attend.

Don’t Have a 60-Minute Meeting to Do 22 Minutes of Work. Start scheduling meetings just for the time you absolutely need — maybe that is only 10 minutes, or maybe it is 40 minutes. Watch the clock. Use a countdown clock displayed on a laptop, and assign a timekeeper.

Use Hard Starts, Not Just Hard Stops, for Your Meetings. Starting on time must become part of corporate culture to be effective. Have the most senior person attending the meeting show up on time and start the meeting on time.

The Obligation to Dissent. Conflict is critical to progress. Unfortunately, most people and organizations are wired to avoid conflict. Remind everyone, including yourself, that they have an obligation to dissent if they

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disagree with an action being taken, or even if they are simply unsure.

Talk More, Email Less. Email is a very efficient way to distribute information but a very inefficient way to resolve some issues. It takes far less time to have a short conversation that gets to the heart of an issue than to write a series of emails.

PowerPoint Kills. Replace PowerPoint presentations with simple, standard formats that focus on the key information necessary to make decisions.

Schedule a Little “Me” Time. Every few days, schedule 30 or 45 minutes of quiet time — no phone calls, no drop-in meetings and no emails. Pick an important task from your to-do list that requires you to think carefully. Spend quiet time focusing on that task. You will save time and do a better job than if you try to do the same task while constantly being interrupted.

If You Feel Busy, Take on Even More Important Work. When you take on critical tasks with urgent deadlines, you will naturally begin to squeeze out the time wasters. The old maxim says, “If you want something done, give it to a busy person.”

Increase Your Return on Time. Few people analyze their return on time with anywhere near the care that they analyze how they invest the company’s money. Start keeping a simplified timesheet. Capture all of your meetings, calls and inbox/outbox activity to determine what percentage of your time is spent on unproductive or low-priority activities.

In Order to Shine, Have Other People Do Your Work! Delegating more of your work to members of your team is one of the smartest ways to free up your time. You develop members of your team by giving them a chance to step up to bigger challenges — while at the same time giving yourself time to take on work that only you can do.

Don’t Always Do Your Best. Some decisions do not require as much analysis as you are capable of dreaming up, and some activities do not require as much care as you are capable of providing. While you are doing the best job unnecessarily, an important task needs you! ●

For Our C-Suite Readers

If you are a senior executive of a company that employs thousands of people, then you have a big problem: It is extremely difficult to get thousands of people to act as one company when those people have different skills

and agendas and are spread across many functions and locations. But you have the resources of the C-suite, so leverage these ideas to build a culture of continuous mon-eymaking innovation.

Create an Aide-de-Camp Position. Typically, this is a rotating position used as a high-profile opportunity to develop a young executive with high potential. This person attends most of your meetings, undertakes special projects and becomes the keeper of a list of commitments. This is a high-level project management role requiring great organizational and management skills.

Create a Resource Team to Build Bridges. Draft a strong, centralized group of skilled problem solvers, and you can dramatically improve information sharing. They can make sure that the left hand does know what the right hand is doing. The group builds bridges among units so that good information is shared and bad information is corrected.

Rotate High-Potential Employees Through Your Resource Team. Staff the team on a rotating basis with high-potential managers from a wide variety of functions. Such a team can huddle around someone’s desk and, in minutes, make connections that might never have been made at all. When their rotation is over, they have even greater potential to take on leadership roles.

Fight Decision Fatigue. Your brain gets fatigued from use, and as the supply of glucose dwindles, your brain finds it harder to make decisions. Decision fatigue has been demonstrated in the lab and in the real world. You can try to schedule important decision making around your eating schedule. A better answer is to find the easy decisions that can replace the hard ones. Easy decisions are ones where you are asked to approve ideas that meet the definition of GOOD ideas mentioned earlier.

There are countless ways to start taking action, but as Yoda said, “Do or do not, there is no try.” Start getting the sand out of your suitcase today! ●

RECOMMENDED READING LIST

If you liked *Low-Hanging Fruit*, you’ll also like:

1. ***The 80/20 Manager* by Richard Koch.** Koch shows how managers can be more efficient and effective by applying the 80/20 Principle: just 20 percent of our time, effort and key decisions generate 80 percent of our success.
2. ***No More Pointless Meetings* by Martin Murphy.** Murphy reframes the concept of collaboration and introduces four “Work Sessions” that replace meetings to get more done, faster than ever before.
3. ***Extreme Productivity* by Robert C. Pozen.** Pozen explains how to determine your highest priorities and match them with how you actually spend your time.