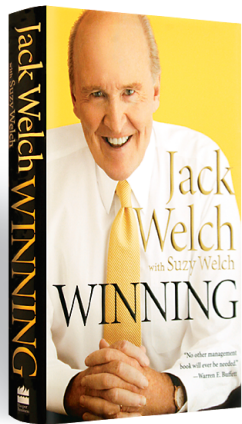


# SOUNDVIEW Executive Book Summaries®



By Jack Welch with Suzy Welch

Everyone Wants to Win, Not Everyone Knows How

## WINNING

### THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

*What does it take to win? According to Jack Welch, winning in business is great because when companies win, people thrive and grow. There are more jobs and more opportunities everywhere and for everyone.*

*People feel upbeat about the future, and winning affords them the opportunity to give back to society in hugely important ways beyond just paying more taxes — they can donate time and money to charities and mentor in inner-city schools, to name just two.*

*Winning companies and the people who work for them are the engine of a healthy economy, and, in providing the revenues for government, they are the foundation of a free and democratic society. Winning lifts everyone it touches — it makes the world a better place.*

*However, it goes without saying that you have to win the right way — cleanly and by the rules. That's a given. Companies and people that don't compete fairly don't deserve to win, and, thanks to well-honed internal company processes and government regulatory agencies, the bad guys are usually found and kicked out of the game.*

*Winning, however, isn't only important for top executives but for everyone — from the boardroom to the mailroom — who wants to get ahead and help his or her organization. The two are intertwined. For an individual, winning is personal. In the business world, winning is multidimensional. The successful salesperson, for example, helps not only himself but also his company and everyone connected with it.*

*Even the most talented businessperson with the best intentions will get nowhere unless he or she knows how to win in today's complex business world. Business is a game, and winning that game is a total blast!*

*In this summary you will learn:*

- ✓ *The importance of a mission statement and values for a company.*
- ✓ *How a lack of candor is bad for business.*
- ✓ *Differentiation isn't cruel and Darwinian, but fair and effective.*
- ✓ *How to manage crises under the guidance of a plan of action.*
- ✓ *The art of hiring winners, managing people and parting ways when the time comes.*
- ✓ *How to find a job that you will love, get a promotion and manage a work-life balance.*

### CONTENTS

#### Mission and Values

Pages 2, 3

#### Candor: The Biggest Dirty Secret in Business

Page 3

#### Differentiation: Cruel and Darwinian?

Page 3

#### Leadership: It's Not Just About You

Page 4

#### Hiring: What Winners Are Made Of

Page 4

#### People Management

Pages 4, 5

#### Strategy: It's All in the Sauce

Page 6

#### Six Sigma: Better than a Trip to the Dentist

Page 7

#### Work-Life Balance

Page 8

# WINNING

By Jack Welch with Suzy Welch

## — THE COMPLETE SPECIAL EDITION SUMMARY

### PART 1-UNDERNEATH IT ALL

## Mission and Values

Mission and values are two terms that are among the most abstract, overused and misunderstood words in business. By contrast, a good mission statement and a good set of values are real and concrete. The mission announces exactly where you are going, and the values describe the behaviors that will get you there.

### *First: About That Mission*

An effective mission statement basically answers one question: *How do we intend to win in this business?* It requires companies to make choices about people, investments and other resources and prevents companies from falling into the common mission trap of asserting they will be all things to all people at all times.

Effective mission statements balance the possible and the impossible. They give people a clear sense of the direction to profitability and the inspiration to feel they are part of something big and important. You can get input from anywhere. However, a mission cannot, and must not, be delegated to anyone except the people ultimately held accountable for it.

### *... And Now About Those Values*

In contrast to the creation of a mission, everyone in a company should have something to say about values. You can use company-wide meetings, training sessions and the like for immediate feedback and the intranet for broader input. The executive team has to go out of their way to be sure they've created an atmosphere where people feel it is their obligation to contribute.

### *It's in the Nitty Gritty Details*

Act in a boundaryless fashion: Always search for and apply the best ideas regardless of their source; be tolerant of the bureaucracy; and see change for the growth opportunity that it brings.

Take the value "We treat customers the way we would want to be treated." That's pretty tangible, but Bank One had identified a number of behaviors that made that value come to life.

For a company's mission and values to truly work

## Bank One's Values

- ✓ Never let profit-center conflicts get in the way of doing what is right for the customer.
- ✓ Give customers a good, fair deal. Great customer relationships take time. Do not try to maximize short-term profits at the expense of building those enduring relationships.
- ✓ Always look for ways to make it easier to do business with us.
- ✓ Communicate daily with your customers. If they are talking to you, they can't be talking to a competitor.
- ✓ Don't forget to say thank you.

together as a winning proposition, they have to be mutually reinforcing. Examples of disconnections may appear minor or temporary, but, when left unattended, they can really hurt a company. In the worst-case scenario, they can literally destroy a business.

In its prior life, Enron was a simple, rather mundane pipeline and energy company. Then the company

*(continued on page 3)*

**The authors:** Jack Welch joined GE in 1960, and by 1981 he became the company's eighth chairman and CEO. Welch left GE in 2001, and is currently the head of Jack Welch LLC, where he is an advisor to Fortune 500 CEOs and holds public speaking engagements. He is also the author of *Jack: Straight from the Gut*, a *New York Times* best seller.

Suzy Welch, Jack's wife, is the former editor of the *Harvard Business Review*, as well as an author of a number of articles on creativity, change, leadership and organizational behavior.

*Winning* by Jack Welch with Suzy Welch. Copyright © 2005 by Jack Welch, LLC. Summarized by permission of the publisher, HarperBusiness. 372 pages. \$27.95. ISBN 0-06-075394-3.

Summary Copyright © 2006 by Soundview Executive Book Summaries, www.summary.com, 1-800-SUMMARY, 610-558-9495.

For additional information on the authors, go to: <http://my.summary.com>

### Soundview Executive Book Summaries®

CHRIS BACHLER – *Contributing Editor*  
DEBRA A. DEPRINZIO – *Senior Graphic Designer*  
MELISSA WARD – *Editor*  
LINDA GROSS – *Editor in Chief*  
REBECCA S. CLEMENT – *Publisher*

Published by Soundview Executive Book Summaries (ISSN 0747-2196), P.O. Box 1053, Concordville, PA 19331 USA, a division of Concentrated Knowledge Corp. Published monthly. Subscriptions: \$209 per year in the United States, Canada and Mexico, and \$295 to all other countries. Periodicals postage paid at Concordville, Pa., and additional offices.

**Postmaster:** Send address changes to Soundview, P.O. Box 1053, Concordville, PA 19331. Copyright © 2006 by Soundview Executive Book Summaries.

**Available formats:** Summaries are available in print, audio and electronic formats. To subscribe, call us at 1-800-SUMMARY (610-558-9495 outside the United States and Canada), or order on the Internet at [www.summary.com](http://www.summary.com). Multiple-subscription discounts and corporate site licenses are also available.

## Mission and Values

*(continued from page 2)*

changed missions. Someone got the idea to turn Enron into a trading company. The goal was faster growth. It was in that context — of no context — that Enron's collapse occurred.

Your company will not reach anywhere near its full potential if all that is guiding it is a list of pleasant platitudes hanging on the lobby wall. ■

---

## Candor: The Biggest Dirty Little Secret in Business

Lack of candor blocks smart ideas, fast action and good people contributing all the stuff they've got. It's a killer. When you've got candor, everything just operates faster and better.

### *The Candor Effect*

First, candor gets more people in the conversation. Second, candor generates speed. Third, candor cuts costs. Given the advantages of candor, you have to wonder why we don't have more of it in business.

The make-or-break importance of candor in U.S. business is relatively new. Up until the early 1980s, big companies like GE and thousands of others operated largely without it. They had virtually no global competition.

Even though candor is vital to winning, it is hard and time-consuming to instill in any group, no matter what size. But it can be done. To get candor, you reward it, praise it and talk about it. You make public heroes out of people who demonstrate it. Most of all, you yourself demonstrate it in an exuberant and even exaggerated way — even when you're not the boss. ■

---

## Differentiation: Cruel and Darwinian?

Companies win when their managers make a clear and meaningful distinction between top- and bottom-performing businesses and people. Companies suffer when every business and person is treated equally.

Differentiation is the most efficient and most effective way to run your company, and also happens to be the fairest and the kindest. Ultimately, it makes winners out of everyone. However, differentiation cannot — and must not — be implemented quickly. At GE, it took about a decade to install the kind of candor and trust that makes differentiation possible.

Every company has strong businesses or product lines and weak ones and some in between. Differentiation requires managers to know which is which and to invest accordingly. At GE, "strong" meant a business was No.

1 or No. 2 in its market. If it wasn't, the managers had to fix it, sell it or, as a last resort, close it.

Differentiation among your businesses or product lines requires a transparent framework that everyone in the company understands.

### *Differentiation and People*

This process requires managers to assess their employees and separate them into three categories in terms of performance: top 20 percent, middle 70, and bottom 10. Then — and this is key — it requires managers to act on that distinction.

When people differentiation is real, the top 20 percent of employees are showered with bonuses, stock options, praise and a variety of rewards to their pocketbooks and souls.

The middle 70 percent are managed differently. This group is enormously valuable to any company; you simply cannot function without their skills, energy and commitment. After all, they are the majority of your employees. And that's the major challenge and risk in 20-70-10 — keeping the middle 70 engaged and motivated.

Managing the middle 70 is not about keeping people out of the bottom 10. It is not about saving poor performers. Rather, differentiation is about managers looking at the middle 70, identifying people with potential to move up and cultivating them.

As for the bottom 10 percent in differentiation, they have to go. If you have a candid organization with clear performance expectations and a performance evaluation process, then people in the bottom 10 percent generally know who they are. When you tell them, they usually leave before you ask them to. ■

---

## Voice and Dignity

Every person in the world wants voice and dignity, and every person deserves them. When you run a unit or division, you rarely think that people aren't speaking up or that they're not respected. It feels like the people around you certainly are, and your days are filled with visits, calls and notes from people with strong opinions. But the majority of people in most organizations don't say anything because they feel they can't — and because they haven't been asked.

In an effort to create an environment where people could feel comfortable expressing opinions and asking questions, the Work-Out process was born and held at GE sites around the world. Patterned after New England town meetings, groups of 30 to 100 employees would come together with an outside facilitator to discuss better ways of doing things and how to eliminate some of the bureaucracy and roadblocks that were hindering

*(continued on page 4)*

### Voice and Dignity

(continued from page 3)

them. The boss would be present at the beginning of each session, laying out the rationale for the Work-Out. He or she would also commit to two things: to give an on-the-spot yes or no to 75 percent of the recommendations that came out of the session and to resolve the remaining 25 percent within 30 days.

The boss would then disappear until the end of the session, so as not to stifle open discussion and return only at the end of the Work-Out to make good on his or her promise.

Tens of thousands of these sessions took place over several years, until they became a way of life in the company. They are no longer big events but part of how GE goes about solving problems. ■

## PART TWO: YOUR COMPANY

### Leadership: It's Not Just About You

When you become a leader, success is all about growing others. Without question, there are a variety of ways to be a leader.

#### What Leaders Do

**1. Leaders relentlessly upgrade their team, using every encounter as an opportunity to evaluate, coach and build self-confidence.** You need to invest the vast majority of your time and energy as a leader in three activities: evaluating, coaching and building the team's self-confidence. Too often, managers think that people development occurs once a year in performance reviews.

**2. Leaders make sure people not only see the vision, they live and breathe it.** As a leader, you have to make the vision come alive. Goals cannot sound noble yet be vague. One of the most common problems in organizations is that leaders communicate the vision to their closest colleagues and its implications never filter down to people in frontline positions.

**3. Leaders get into everyone's skin, exuding positive energy and optimism.** An upbeat manager ends up running a team or organization filled with upbeat people. A pessimistic sourpuss somehow ends up with an unhappy tribe all his own

**4. Leaders establish trust with candor, transparency and credit.** Trust happens when leaders are transparent, candid and keep their word.

**5. Leaders have the courage to make unpopular decisions and gut calls.** Some people long to be loved by everyone. Those behaviors can get you in the soup if you are a leader because there are times you have to make hard decisions — let people go, cut funding to a project or close a plant. A lot has been written about the mystery of gut, but it's really just pattern recognition. Leaders are faced with gut calls all the time, and sometimes the hardest gut calls involve hiring people. However, if you're left with that uh-oh feeling in your stomach, don't hire the guy.

**6. Leaders probe and push with a curiosity that borders on skepticism, making sure their questions are**

**answered with action.** When you're a leader, your job is to have all the questions. You have to be incredibly comfortable looking like the dumbest person in the room.

**7. Leaders inspire risk-taking and learning by setting the example.** Winning companies embrace risk-taking and learning. But in reality, these two concepts often get little else than lip service. If you want your people to experiment and expand their minds, set the example yourself. Consider risk-taking.

**8. Leaders celebrate.** There is not enough celebrating at work — anywhere. Celebrating makes people feel like winners and creates an atmosphere of recognition and positive energy. ■

### Hiring: What Winners Are Made Of

Hiring good people is hard. Hiring great people is brutally hard. Nothing matters more in winning than getting the right people on the field. However, before you think about assessing people for a job, they have to pass through three screens. The first test is for integrity. People with integrity tell the truth, and they keep their word. They take responsibility for past actions, admit mistakes and fix them.

The second test is for intelligence. The candidate has a strong dose of intellectual curiosity, with a breadth of knowledge to work with or lead other smart people in today's complex world.

The third ticket to the game is maturity. Mature individuals can withstand heat, handle stress and setbacks and alternatively — when those moments arise — enjoy success with equal parts of joy and humility. ■

### People Management

Once you have the right players for the field, they need to be managed. People management comes down to six fundamental practices:

**1. Elevate HR to a position of power and primacy in the organization and make sure HR people have**

(continued on page 5)

## People Management

*(continued from page 4)*

the special qualities to help managers build leaders and career.

**2. Use a rigorous, nonbureaucratic evaluation system and intensely monitor its integrity.**

**3. Create effective mechanisms — such as money, recognition and training — to motivate and retain.**

**4. Face straight into charged relationships with unions, stars, sliders and disrupters.** You can fight about issues, but your fighting will be more productive if you are always clear about what issues are negotiable and which are untouchable.

**5. Fight gravity. Instead of taking the middle 70 percent for granted, treat them like the heart and soul of the organization.**

**6. Design the organizational chart to be as flat as possible, with clear reporting relationships and responsibilities.** If you want to manage people effectively, help your people by making sure the organizational chart leaves as little as possible to the imagination. The trick is to have fewer rungs. Make your company 50 percent flatter than you'd normally feel comfortable with; managers should have 10 direct reports at the minimum, and 30 to 50 percent more if they're experienced. ■

## Parting Ways

Sometimes people have to be let go due to integrity violations, layoffs due to economic downturns and firings for nonperformance. For integrity violations, you don't need to hesitate. Just do it and make sure the organization knows why, so the consequences of breaking the rules are not lost on anyone.

Layoffs due to the economy are more complicated. Every employee should know how the company is doing. That way, if layoffs occur, at least people will have some level of preparation.

The most complex and delicate firing is when an individual has to be let go because of poor performance. Usually, firings for nonperformance aren't black and white. Because of that, there are three main ways that managers get firing wrong — moving too fast, not using enough candor and taking too long.

How can you get it right? First, no surprises. A good performance evaluation process informs and prepares people in a fair and open way. Second, minimize humiliation; build up a person's self-confidence. Let the individual know there is a good job for him or her out there. Your goal for the fired employee is a soft landing wherever he or she goes. ■

## Change: Mountains Do Move

Change is a critical part of business. You need to change, preferably before you have to. Most people hate it; they love familiarity and patterns and cling to them. But attributing a behavior to human nature doesn't mean you have to be controlled by it. Instead, it comes down to embracing four practices:

**1. Attach every change initiative to a clear purpose or goal. Change for change's sake is stupid and enervating.**

**2. Hire and promote only true believers and get-on-with-it types.**

**3. Remove the resisters, even if their performance is satisfactory.**

**4. Look at car wrecks.**

Most companies capitalize on obvious opportunities. But to be a real change organization, you also need the guts to look at bolder, scarier, more unpredictable events and to make the most of the opportunities.

Bankruptcies, for example, are a calamity that provide all kinds of opportunities.

Most companies take advantage of obvious opportunities. But some also have the ability to make the most of regrettable circumstances — those “car wrecks” — and they should. These companies will benefit from realizing that change means seizing opportunity, even the ones wrought by adversity. ■

## Crisis Management

As long as companies are made up of human beings, there will be mistakes, controversies and blowups. The cold truth is that some degree of unwanted and unacceptable behavior is inevitable. Crises demand from leaders a daunting balancing act. On one hand, you've got to throw everything you've got into understanding and solving the crisis. At the same time, you have to put that activity into a compartment and carry on as if nothing is actually wrong. That's what leaders usually neglect — to their regret.

You can be proactive in preventing some crises in three main ways. First, tight controls, such as disciplined financial and accounting systems with tough internal and external auditing processes, should be used; an organization's line managers should be required to review and act on every audit's findings.

Second, try to prevent crises with good internal processes, such as rigorous hiring procedures, candid performance reviews and comprehensive training programs, that make the company's policies crystal clear. Third, have a culture of integrity, meaning a culture of honesty, transparency, fairness and strict adherence to rules.

*(continued on page 6)*

### Crisis Management

(continued from page 5)

Most of the time, crises blindside you because they don't detonate like bombs — they emerge in fits and starts.

#### Plan of Action

The following assumptions aren't a formula for managing a crisis, but hopefully they'll provide directional guidance while dealing with a crisis:

- **Assume the problem is worse than it appears.**

Few crises start small and stay that way, so adjust your mind-set early on.

- **Assume there are no secrets in the world, and everyone will eventually find out everything.** The more openly you speak about the problem, the more trust you earn from everyone watching.

- **Assume you and your organization's handling of the crisis will be portrayed in the worst possible light.** Reporters are not in the business of telling your side of the story. Along with disclosing the full extent of your problem, you've got to stand up and define your position before someone else does.

- **Assume there will be changes in processes and people.** Crises require change. Sometimes a process fix is enough. That's because the people affected by the crisis — or sometimes those watching it — demand that someone be held responsible.

- **Assume the organization will survive, ultimately stronger for what happened.** After a crisis is over, there is always the tendency to want to put it away in a drawer. Don't — teach its lessons every chance you get. In doing so, you'll spread the immunity. ■

## PART THREE: YOUR COMPETITION

### Strategy: It's All in the Sauce

In real life, strategy is actually very straightforward. You pick a general direction and implement like hell.

The steps are:

- First, come up with a big idea for your business —

#### Welch's Questions to Making Strategy Real

##### 1. What does the playing field look like now?

- ✓ Who are the competitors?
- ✓ Who has what share in each market?

##### 2. What has the competition been up to?

- ✓ What has each competitor done in the past year to change the playing field?
- ✓ Are there any new entrants, and what have they been up to in the past year?

##### 3. What have you been up to?

- ✓ Have you bought another company, introduced a new product, stolen a competitor's key salesperson or licensed a new technology from a start-up?
- ✓ Have you lost any competitive advantages that you once had — a great salesperson, special product, a proprietary technology?

##### 4. What's around the corner?

- ✓ What scares you the most in the year ahead?
- ✓ What new products or technologies could your competitors launch that might change the game?

##### 5. What's your winning move?

- ✓ What can you do to change the playing field?
- ✓ What can you do to make customers stick to you more than ever before and more than to anyone else?

a smart, realistic, relatively fast way to gain sustainable competitive advantage.

- Second, put the right people in the right jobs to drive the big idea forward.

- Third, relentlessly seek out the best practices to achieve your big idea, whether inside or out, adapt them and continually improve them.

Strategy means making clear-cut choices about how to compete. You cannot be everything to everybody. Corner stores have learned that survival depends on finding a strategic position where no one can beat them. Big companies have the same challenge. ■

### Budgeting

The budgeting process at most companies has to be the most ineffective practice in management. It sucks the energy, time, fun and big dreams out of an organization. It also brings out the most unproductive behaviors in an organization, from sandbagging to settling for mediocrity.

In all their assumptions, the people in the field are operating with one simple goal, albeit unstated: to minimize their risk and maximize their bonus.

Senior managers are also preparing for the big budget meeting. Their agenda is the opposite of the field. They're rewarded for increased earnings, and so what they want from the budget review at every business is significant growth in sales and profits.

#### A Better Way

The problem is that companies often deliver only a fraction of what they could, and they take all the fun out of setting financial goals.

(continued on page 7)

### Budgeting

(continued from page 6)

Imagine a budgeting system where both the field and headquarters have a shared goal: to use the budgeting process to ferret out every possible opportunity for growth, identify real obstacles in the environment and come up with a plan for stretching dreams to the sky. That system is linked to the strategic planning process in that it is focused on two questions:

- How can we beat last year's performance?
- What is our competition doing and how can we beat them?

If you focus on these two questions, the budgeting process becomes a wide-ranging, anything-goes dialogue between the field and headquarters about opportunities and obstacles in the real world.

Through these discussions, both sides of the table jointly come up with a growth scenario that is not negotiated or imposed and cannot really be called a budget at all. It is an operating plan for the next year, filled with aspiration, primarily directional and containing numbers that are mutually understood to be targets, or numbers that could be called "best efforts." ■

### Organic Growth

Starting something new from within an established company requires managers to act against many of their reasonable instincts. But to give any new venture a fighting chance to succeed, you have to set it free and spend more money on it.

Managing a \$50,000 new product line in its first year is harder than managing a \$500 million business in its 20<sup>th</sup> year. That's why they need special treatment. Too often they don't get it.

There are three common mistakes companies make in launching something. First, they don't flood start-up ventures with adequate resources, especially on the people front. Second, they make too little fanfare about the promise and importance of the new venture. Instead of cheering about its potential, they tend to hide it under a bushel. Third, they limit the new venture's autonomy. ■

### Mergers and Acquisitions: Deal Heat and Other Deadly Sins

Mergers and acquisitions give you a faster route to profitable growth. They quickly add geographical and technological scope and bring on board new products and customers.

Merging right is ultimately about avoiding seven pitfalls, meaning mistakes or errors in judgment. These are:

● **Believing** that a merger of equals can actually occur.

● **Focusing** so intently on strategic fit that you fail to assess cultural fit, which is just as important to a merger's success.

● **Entering into a "reverse hostage situation,"** in which the acquirer ends up making so many concessions during negotiations that the acquired ends up calling all the shots afterward.

● **Integrating too timidly.** With good leadership, a merger should be complete within 90 days.

● **The conqueror syndrome,** in which the acquiring company marches in and installs its own managers everywhere, undermining one of the reasons for any merger.

● **Paying too much** — so much that the premium can never be recouped in the integration.

● **Resistance.** In a merger, new owners will always select people with buy-in over resisters with brains. If you want to survive, get over your angst and learn to love the deal as much as they do. ■

### Six Sigma: Better than a Trip to the Dentist

Nothing compares to the effectiveness of Six Sigma when it comes to improving a company's operational efficiency, raising its productivity and lowering its costs. It improves design processes, gets products to the market faster with fewer defects and builds customer loyalty. Perhaps the biggest benefit of Six Sigma is its capacity to develop a cadre of leaders.

#### *Simple, Complex or Not at All*

Six Sigma has two primary applications. First, it can be used to remove the variation in routine, relatively simple, repetitive tasks. And second, it can be used to make sure large, complex projects go right the first time.

For the first application, the level of training and education is certainly manageable. In order to discover the root causes of inconsistencies, people need to know what kind of information to gather and how to analyze it. The rigor of this type of training has a terrific side effect. It builds critical thinking and discipline. The second application involves a sophisticated level of training and statistical analysis.

Six Sigma is meant for and has its most meaningful impact on repetitive internal processes and complex product designs. Once you understand the simple maxim "variation is evil," you're 60 percent of the way to becoming an expert. The other 40 percent is getting the evil out. ■

PART FOUR: YOUR CAREER

RECOMMENDED  
READING LIST

If you liked *Winning*, you'll also like:

1. *The One Thing You Need to Know* by Marcus Buckingham. According to Buckingham, there is one key concept that is necessary for managing, leading and individual performance.
2. *Jack: Straight from the Gut* by Jack Welch with John Byrne. Welch's successful career with GE and his management style that led the company to greatness are recounted in this business profile.
3. *The Five Dysfunctions of a Team* by Patrick Lencioni. This fictional tale unambiguously but painlessly delivers some hard truths about critical business procedures.
4. *Execution* by Larry Bossidy and Ram Charan. Learn how "making it happen" is one of the most important aspects of a leader's job.
5. *How Full is Your Bucket?* by Tom Rath and Donald O. Clifton. According to Rath and Clifton, we all have a bucket within us that needs to be filled with positive experiences, such as recognition or praise.

## The Right Job

How do you find the right job? You take one job, discover what you like and don't like about it and what you're good and bad at, and then you change jobs to get something closer to the right fit.

If you join a company where your sensibilities don't fit in, you'll find yourself putting on a persona just to get along. What a career killer — to fake who you are every day. You need to find "your people," and the earlier in your career you can do this the better. Even if a job seems ideal in every other way, without the presence of shared sensibilities, it's not ideal for you. In the best job scenario, you love the work. Sometimes it is the sheer challenge of the job that turns your crank. If a job doesn't excite you on some level, don't settle. Never be afraid to ask, "Just give me a chance." Someone will. ■

## Getting Promoted

Basically, getting promoted takes one "do" and one "don't." Do deliver sensational performance and at every opportunity expand your job beyond its official boundaries. Don't make your boss use political capital in order to champion you.

An even more effective way to get promoted is to expand your job's horizons to include bold and unexpected activities. Come up with a new concept or process that doesn't improve just your results, but your unit's results and the company's overall performance.

Change your job in a way that makes the people around you work better and your boss look smarter. Don't just do the predictable. To get ahead, you have to want to get ahead. ■

## Hard Spots: The Boss

Bad bosses come in every variety but, in any business situation, seeing yourself as a victim is completely self-defeating. And when it comes to your career, it's an attitude that kills all your options.

If your boss is being negative to you — and mainly you — you can feel pretty confident that he has his version of events, and his version concerns your attitude or performance.

You've got to find out what's going on. Start with a self-assessment. Then move on to a meeting with your boss. You have to talk. There is no way around it. Just remember, before you go into that meeting, be prepared and have options in the event that you come out of it unemployed. ■

## Work-Life Balance

Without question, work-life balance as a concept has grown and expanded. It isn't just about how mothers can make time for all the demands in their lives. It's about how all of us manage our lives and allocate our time — it's about priorities and values.

But no matter what balance you choose, you'll have to make trade-offs. To make the choices and take the actions that ultimately make sense for you, you need to understand that:

1. Your boss's top priority is competitiveness.
2. Most bosses are willing to accommodate work-life balance challenges if you have earned it with performance.
3. Bosses know that the work-life policies in the company brochure are mainly for recruiting purposes and that real work-life arrangements are negotiated one-on-one.
4. People who publicly struggle with work-life balance problems and continually turn to the company for help get pigeonholed as ambivalent, entitled, uncommitted or incompetent — or all of the above.
5. Even the most accommodating bosses believe that work-life balance is your problem to solve.

Along the way you can help yourself with the following work-life balance techniques:

**Best Practice 1:** Be focused on where you are and whom you are with. No one wins when you routinely run your family's carpool logistics from your office phone or e-mail customers from the soccer field.

**Best Practice 2:** Have the mettle to say no to requests and demands outside your chosen work-life balance plan.

**Best Practice 3:** Make sure your work-life balance plan doesn't leave you out. Outside of work, clarify what you want from life. At work, clarify what your boss wants, and understand that, if you want to get ahead, what he or she wants comes first. ■