

## CHAPTER 5

# Creating Winning Personal Habits

If you have only a few minutes to skim over this chapter, this is what you should focus on:

- Treasure mapping
- The treasure map in Exhibit 5.1
- Recognition
- How to “Post-It” Reengineer

### Treasure Mapping

What is a *treasure map*? In using the *mind-mapping* technique, it is the combined pictures of the outcomes you are seeking (Exhibit 5.1). On a large piece of paper (fanfold 17 × 12 inches/A3 size), you set out all the areas in your life where you want to score goals, state the goals, and stick on pictures to help you visualize the outcomes you seek. The more pictures the better—magazines and journals are an excellent source. (For example, if you want to be more physically fit, then choose a picture of a person similar to you with the body shape you aspire to; if you want to practice yoga daily, then get a picture of a person like yourself doing yoga, etc.)

My first treasure map had a picture of a particular bike—a BMW R100RS—a reasonably rare bike. Two years later, I owned the exact replica of the bike in the photo, with even the same paint combination. Read any self-help book and ask any achiever, and they will tell you that *visualization* is the key.

The more you *picture* the precise goals you want to achieve, the more you will achieve. In his book, *To the Top*, Sir Edmund Hillary comments that he had visualized summiting Mount Everest in his own mind many times. The great golfer, Jack Nicklaus, commented that he always visualized the precise flight of the ball before he commenced his swing. His vision is of the ball traveling over the out-of-bounds fence and drifting back onto

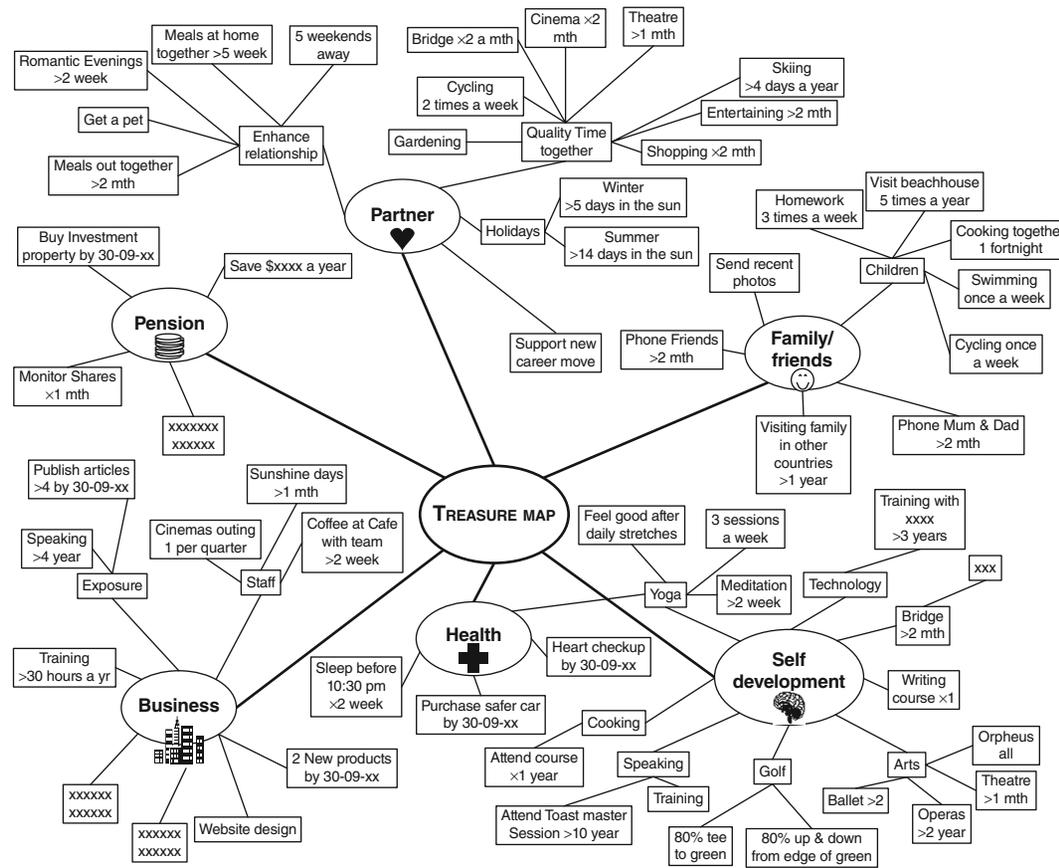


EXHIBIT 5.1 Treasure Map

**EXHIBIT 5.2** Treasure Mapping Checklist

Have you included a section on your partner?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Have you included a section on family and friends?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Have you included a section on living environment? (your house, the area where you want to live, etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Have you included a section on hobbies and interests?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Have you included a section on personal development? (in its wider context, including spiritual)	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Have you included a section on health and well-being?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Have you included a section on career?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Have you included a section on pension planning?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Does each section have clearly stated goals that are quantified (e.g., go away for six romantic weekends a year or play tennis twice a month)?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Does it fit on one page?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Have you stuck the map where you can see it each day?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No

the fairway, having taken the shortest route to the hole. Light years from our vision—the out-of-bounds fence!

A useful technique is to pick a special day each year to update and revise your treasure map (e.g., a public holiday, birthday, etc.). Initially, you may want to change and amend your treasure map two or three times in the first year; in subsequent years you may find that an annual update is sufficient.

The treasure map needs to be stuck on a door or a wall where you can see it each day. It is important to note that this treasure map is yours and thus it is put in a private place for your eyes only. I used to have mine on the inside of my closet door. While you will want to have things on it that your partner agrees with, it is not meant to be a treasure map for two, as this typically will delay the implementation.

Treasure mapping is so important that I am giving you tips on how to complete each section of your own treasure map. Exhibit 5.2 provides a treasure-mapping checklist. You can access a help-list to build a treasure map on the website [www.davidparmenter.com](http://www.davidparmenter.com).

**Self-Recognition**

One of the most important traits to have is an inner recognition of what you have, what you are, and what you are capable of achieving. You see it in people you meet who say, “Look at this great job I have done,” “I had a great round of golf today,” “The report I wrote was received very

well,” and so forth. These individuals might sound overconfident and full of themselves, and we think that we would *never* say such things about ourselves.

Yet these confident individuals have developed a valuable trait, that of inner recognition. Every day we need to combat the negative thoughts we have and the negative environment we live in by developing our self-recognition.

Every day you can celebrate the following:

- If you have made an effort to look nice, then celebrate that you look like a million dollars.
- If you have a beautiful and therapeutic home, then celebrate the achievement before you leave for work.
- Celebrate your achievements at work.
- Talk to your colleagues and ask them about the things you do well and the things you can improve on.
- Every time you tackle a difficult issue and succeed, celebrate the achievement.
- At least three times a day recognize the things you are doing well.
- As an exercise, practice telling a close friend what you are doing well. At first it will feel uncomfortable; yet you will feel the power of *bearing* as well as thinking these recognition statements. (Your friend will also enjoy the experience.)
- When you start having those negative thoughts about your performance, those “*should-have* thoughts,” listen, and stop yourself. Say to yourself, “I am not a *should-have* person.” Simply treat these events as learning experiences. Look to change the behaviors that have created the problem.

One of the most influential people in my life was my grandmother, a very positive woman. She encouraged me to say, “Every day, in every way, I am getting better and better.” Try this saying yourself. You will soon feel a sense of belief in yourself that you are moving forward.

## Recognition of Others

I have for a long time been aware of the significance of recognition, but only recently have I been aware that it is fundamental to all our relationships, both personal and business. The ability to appreciate and recognize all those we come in contact with defines us as a person and defines how successful, in the broadest terms, we can be.



**EXHIBIT 5.3** Weekly Recognition Checklist

	Suggested frequency	4 weeks ago	3 weeks ago	2 weeks ago	Last Week	Date if not in last 4 weeks
Our partner	Daily/weekly					
Our children	Daily/weekly					
Our staff	weekly					
Our work colleagues	weekly					
Our boss	weekly					
Our friends & relatives	monthly					
Our key suppliers	quarterly					
Our mentor	quarterly					
Our key customers	quarterly					

Many of us will need to *count* the recognitions until it becomes a natural part of our makeup. I suggest you count them for the next 12 weeks as a starting point (see Exhibit 5.3).

For some of us the simple task of recognizing all the types of support we receive will be unnatural. If you are having difficulty trying to recognize contributions, think of:

- The **home**-building activities of your partner that give you a safe and secure place to return to
- The **actions** done by others that make your life easier at work and at home
- The **love** from family and friends that nourishes you
- The **support and commitment** from those at work and at home

We all appreciate recognition especially when we do not have to wait for it. Some managers have found some clever ways, such as handing out film tickets, vouchers for two at a good restaurant, and so forth, to reward staff who have gone the extra mile.

## Making Decisions

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The inability to make decisions is a very damaging trait that needs to be tackled head-on. Why is it that one person does her Christmas shopping

all in one afternoon while another takes weeks if not months agonizing as to what to buy? Let us analyze decision making:

- No matter how much you pour over the decision, you will never know whether it is the right or wrong one until later.
- By not making a decision you have made a decision.
- There is a huge cost to not making a decision (in the Christmas shopping example, some of the costs could include multiple parking charges and cost of transportation there and back).
- Many successful people say that a quick wrong decision is better than a slowly drawn-out one that may be right.
- Very few of our decisions are life-or-death decisions when it comes to ourselves, our loved ones, or the public at large—just get on with it!
- Celebrate every quick decision you make.

For all major decisions and all those decisions you are having difficulties with, it is a good idea to **FRAME** them:

- F** **Financial:** Ensure that you can afford any potential downside.
- R** **Research:** Look back on your own experiences or those of people you know who have made the same decision in the past, and learn from them (history has a habit of repeating itself!).
- A** **Avoid:** looking back after the decision is made; just move on and modify your course as needed, just as an ocean liner modifies its course during its journey. It is important to avoid being a should-have person.
- M** **Mentor:** Always discuss major decisions with your mentor.
- E** **Evaluate:** Study the pros and cons of the decision (see Exhibit 5.4).

### Sleep on It Rather Than Sending It Out

When you have finished a major report, are about to make a major decision, or are about to send that terse email, sleep on it. This is especially important when you do not have a mentor or are unable to bounce the problem off someone. While you are asleep your subconscious will be thinking about the issues and you will find that you have a clearer view the next day.

### Pros-and-Cons Schedule

A useful technique is to list the pros and cons of the decision. Exhibit 5.4 separates the major issues from the minor ones. I would advise against

 **EXHIBIT 5.4** Pros-and-Cons Schedule

<b>Major</b>	<b>Pros</b>	<b>Cons</b>
	1.	1.
	2.	2.
	3.	3.
	4.	4.
	5.	5.
	6.	6.
	7.	7.
	8.	8.
	9.	9.

<b>Minor</b>	<b>Pros</b>	<b>Cons</b>
	1.	1.
	2.	2.
	3.	3.
	4.	4.
	5.	5.
	6.	6.
	7.	7.
	8.	8.
	9.	9.

scoring them as this is trying to create precision in a *subjective* area. This list, if completed properly, should help you make the right decision most of the time. Remember: You will never make the right decision all of the time.

### Do Not Run Out of Fuel

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Stop your wheels from falling off by maintaining your fluids and nutrition. I can hear you thinking, “the author has lost the plot.” But if you skip this section you may as well skip the rest of the book, because you will never have the mental horsepower or the energy to do half the things I am going to introduce to you.

How many times have you worked all day on an empty stomach, not having time to eat, and in fact never noticing it? The task was so important that there was not enough time for breakfast or a sandwich for lunch!

With our many deadlines, and long, 14-hour days during the critical times, many of us fall into this trap all the time. Have you examined the times when you tend to lose your marbles? I'll wager they tend to occur after three hours without food and or fluids. Let me explain.

First look at one of the most productive managers in your organization, the one who has bountiful energy and makes great decisions, and I will show you someone who is on top of one of the secrets of successful management. She is managing her nutrition, hydration intake, and regular exercise during the working day! Yes, you have to look at the working day as if you were an athlete in the Olympics doing a marathon. You have to be as focused on these issues as these top athletes are.

If you lose 2% of body weight through dehydration, your brain cannot function. This has been proved in studies. Thus for an 85 kilo (13.5 stones) person this is 1.7 kilos or 1.7 liters (3.5 pints ) of water. By working in an air-conditioned office you will lose this amount quicker than you think. Without adequate water intake your brain and muscles will cease to operate effectively and thus your energy and concentration will falter.

Understanding nutrition and its impact on your productivity is very important and I would recommend that you attend a short course on it. Start studying about the importance of balancing protein, carbohydrates, and natural oils together. It will make a profound impact on your physical condition, sense of well-being, and lifestyle. For more information see [www.prozone.co.nz](http://www.prozone.co.nz).

I once had a job as a corporate accountant for a radio network. They should never have appointed me, because my direct report, while not yet qualified, was very capable of doing the job. I had no experience in running the complex general ledger. I started working 14-hour days, drinking so much coffee that my hands began to shake. Every month something went wrong and the month-end was a disaster. I was asked to leave after three months of torture. Through joining the union I was able to negotiate a staggered departure, as the company had been ultimately at fault because there was no disclosure of the job skill requirements.

I am now sure that if I had managed my nutrition and hydration I would have been able to think more clearly and operate past the obstacles instead of chasing my tail.

## Continuous Innovation

This is the lifeblood of an organization and one where new recruits have an advantage because they are full of new ideas and are not yet paralyzed by the company's red tape.

For one high-performance team, innovation is discussed at the end of every day in a *debriefing*. But in many organizations that I have worked in and visited, this is not the case. Innovation needs to be on every agenda; it needs to be pushed so that staff members know what is expected—otherwise, we are simply standing still. I get the impression that in many organizations staff members have the perception that innovation is not required. The same person who is “building his yacht in his backyard” after work is also performing the same unproductive tasks day after day like a laboratory rat hunting for its cheese. How is it that organizations can take an individual who is innovative at home and turn him into an automaton at work? There are many aspects of the culture that need to change. There should be more delegation, more risk taking, less witch-hunting, and more celebration of success. Then, you truly can have continuous innovation.

In his book, *Screw It, Let's Do It*<sup>1</sup> Sir Richard Branson points out that his style is to *not* second-guess all ideas that come up to him. If the downside is less than the upside, and there is no obvious reason not to do it, he will go ahead. Staff thus are exposed more frequently to the possibility of making mistakes, but at the same time they are responsible for initiatives that really make a difference.

Some suggestions where you can score goals are given in Exhibit 5.5.

### EXHIBIT 5.5 Innovation Checklist

Investigate the three main processes that your team spends the most time on	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Attend courses/continuous improvement on total quality management	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Reduce the number spreadsheets used by replacing them by more robust applications	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Clarifying the myriad spreadsheets	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Eliminate inefficient customer or supplier interfaces	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Establish a national supplier arrangement that includes some transfer of the processing activities	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Month-end processes (management and board reports)	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Annual budget process	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No

Worldwide Toyota is credited with implementing over 90,000 employee initiatives a year. That is nearly 300 for every day of the year. How many staff-generated initiatives have you implemented in the finance team in the past 12 months?

## Learn How to “Post-It” Reengineer

“Post-It” reengineering will revolutionize the finance team’s effectiveness and efficiency. Replace detailed process mapping with a “Post-It” solution (see Exhibit 5.6). A demonstration can be seen on [www.davidparmenter.com](http://www.davidparmenter.com).

Obtain different-colored Post-It pads, one for each team involved in the process, and ask the staff to write down on separate Post-Its each action they undertake. Hold a workshop of all teams and stick all the Post-Its on one wall in time bands. Then ask the team members to brainstorm to look at removing various activities. The questions that need to be asked are:

- Do we need to do this action?
- Can it be done earlier?
- Can it be done differently?



**EXHIBIT 5.6** “Post-It” Reengineering in Action

All procedures that are deemed surplus to requirements are removed and stuck on another wall, and each such action should be celebrated as it represents a substantial saving.

## Mind Mapping

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Far too frequently we go around in circles trying to solve problems, in both our personal and working lives. We visit the same place time and time again, have the same thoughts, and end up doing nothing useful.

The technique of *mind mapping* was developed by Tony Buzan<sup>2</sup> to help tackle these problems in a number of ways:

- Mind mapping encourages you to see the structure of the problem or issue as you ask yourself: What are the main issues here?
- It encourages more original thought as new ideas can be entered on the map immediately and require less editing.
- As the mind map develops, headings can be easily moved across to more appropriate groups.
- It puts everything down on one page—sometimes a fan fold size of paper (11 × 17 inches) is necessary.
- It creates a diagram that is easily remembered and thus is an ideal tool for good exam technique.
- It gets you started on the report without having to worry about writer's block.
- It ensures that you always see the big picture.

After 30 years' experience with mind maps (see Exhibit 5.7), I offer this advice:

**Step one:** Place the issue in the forefront and think carefully about the title (e.g., “Best Location for Factory,” is better than simply “Factory”).

**Step two:** Think of the main issues and write them in as headings around the central point and connect them via arrows (e.g., for a factory it could be the history (or background), resource availability, labor issues, transportation issues, closeness to market, cost to build, cost to operate, proximity to key suppliers, etc.).

**Step three:** Brainstorm each issue in turn. If a point is suggested that is better in another section, write it in that section. Occasionally you get an entirely new issue raised; with these you simply add another arrow from the center.

**Step four:** Make sure you have enough facts, examples, references, and so forth; these will be in the third or fourth tiers of arrows.



**EXHIBIT 5.7** Mind Map from a Key Performance Indicator Workshop

## Business Etiquette

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This is an area that often holds back the accountant. In the desire to be a more efficient processing machine, we forget that most of what we are doing is not the really important stuff. In fact, *managing relationships* should be right at the top of the list.

## Managing Relationships

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One's career can be reviewed from a series of standpoints. How open was I in taking up opportunities as they presented themselves to me? How equipped was I to succeed? How well did I nurture the relationships around me? I believe the "nurturing of relationships" is often undervalued by the corporate accountant. We are working so hard that we have little or no time to grow a network of supporters. In fact we do the opposite—we often alienate ourselves from the senior management team through undertaking tasks they hate, such as the annual planning process!

I had been working in London on a consultancy assignment for three months as a contract worker for an investment bank that had grandiose plans with little idea how to achieve them. I was conscientious, as were all the employees, struggling to see the forest for the trees. One Friday I had decided to leave early to avoid the traffic en route to Liverpool. I had asked my manager if it was okay a few days earlier. The manager, as you can imagine, was under a lot of stress because nobody in the team was getting very far with their project work. She stormed in at 4:00 P.M. trying to locate me, only to find that I had already left work. She chose to forget the earlier conversation we had had and complained to my firm.

On the following Monday I was taken off the job. Six months later she was laid off and applied to join the firm I was working for. I was consulted. While I tried to remain positive I explained that there was always a risk with her interpersonal skills. She lost out. It goes to show how small the world really is and how making unwise moves has a tendency to come back and haunt you.

## Cell Phone Etiquette

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How many times have you been in a meeting when someone has taken a call or answered a text that was not very important? How many times have

you heard every word of someone's conversation on public transportation? In one case I nearly went up to the person and said "Count me in on the deal!"

In some countries it is common practice to cover your mouth when speaking on a cell phone, thus not allowing the sound waves to travel. Otherwise, you will, like the rest of us, simply raise your voice on the misguided belief that the mobile microphone needs a bit of help.

Have you ever taken someone out on what you thought was going to be a hot date, having gone to a lot of trouble in organizing what you thought was going to be a memorable night, and found the person spending the whole time answering one call after another? The trouble is, you could be like this at work!

I believe running one's life via mobile phone indicates a flaw in one's personality. I have seen it in many people. By responding to a call or text coming in while in another's presence, you are telling the person that you are with that she is less important than the message you are about to respond to. While we all can justify having our cell phones on all the time (e.g., I could get a call from my sick parents), in reality it is an addiction. Few of us are brain surgeons; few of us have people depending on us for their lives to justify being in contact 24/7. Try turning it off. You might get to like it. To warn your callers you could leave something like the following message:

*I am on a behavioral change program, freeing my life for success, and my cell phone will be off more than it is on. Please do not take offense—leave a message or send a text or an email. I will get back to you within 24 hours.*

## Greeting the Guest

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I have met many managers over the years and none have greeted me in the way I was treated by a CEO.

I will never forget the day I visited the CEO of Pilkington Automotive Glass in New Zealand. On arrival, the security man at the gate was expecting me. Once I was at the ground-floor reception area, instead of going up to the executive floor the CEO came down and greeted me. This was the first and only time this has happened. During the discussion I asked about the total quality management (TQM) practices that they were famous for, such as the way any worker on the factory

floor has the right and obligation to stop a production batch if he thinks there is something wrong.

I ended up asking the CEO why he came downstairs to meet me, to which he replied, "I take great care vetting meetings. Once I have agreed to a meeting, I will personally greet my guests at reception and return them there after the meeting. It is a sign of respect." Yes, it is, and one that I have never forgotten.

## Remember You/Remember Me

They say that the most important word to us all is our own name. Great CEOs have the ability to remember names and even any small incidents relating to the last meeting to show that they remember you. This skill makes a lasting impression and is one of the reasons why President Clinton is still so popular.

There are a number of tricks to remembering names. One is to look at the person and consider whether they remind you of another person with the same name; another is to ensure that you use the person's name as much as you can while in conversation with the individual. Finally never *say* you are bad at remembering names, as you are effectively telling your subconscious to wipe this information out of your memory banks!

## Disengaging Swiftly and Politely

Many of us can be seen as a little too abrupt. As thinking people, we want to move on as soon as we have discussed the issues we wanted covered. We have other things to do. The skill to learn is how to disengage swiftly and politely.

I was in discussion with a health club manager, and a new client arrived. She had a marvelous way of touching me on the arm and saying "excuse me." I, however, am appalled at some of the ways I disengage. It is an art to disengage swiftly yet politely. Develop some catch phrases, such as:

- "I am scheduled to make a call to Pat; I've so enjoyed . . ."
- "Thank you for your card. I will call you next week to discuss this issue further. I look forward to continuing our discussion then."
- "My apologies [touching the person on the arm]. I need to catch up with a few acquaintances here today; could we meet up in the near future? I will send you an email."

## Full Attention at Meetings

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Many times, pressing issues will mean that your attention will be elsewhere. It might be a family issue, a work issue, or a worrying quirk in your golf swing (just kidding). Attending a meeting with your mind wandering is in fact worse than *not* attending. The attendee's perception of you will be negative and that impression unfortunately will remain weeks after the meeting. Do the wise thing. If you cannot give full attention at a meeting, do not go.

I once met a person who had a shocking habit at meetings—he would fall asleep! The pinnacle was reached when he fell asleep in a one-on-one with his manager. I was brought in to be his mentor. I soon discovered that this individual had a rocket scientist's brain capacity and thus the thinking speed of those around him seemed so slow to him that he could listen to the conversation while day dreaming with his eyes closed.

His behavior was turned around by ensuring that he attended only essential meetings; his contribution was handled first on the agenda, after which he was excused, and while at the meetings he was encouraged to take notes. The interesting point was that the notes were not for his benefit; he did not need them for he had total recall. The notes were to keep him busy and at the same time say to all those who were there, "What you are saying is important."

After the meeting he would dispose of the notes (out of sight of the attendees).

It never ceases to amaze me when people answer their phone while they are having a meeting in their office. How long does it take to shut off the phone or put it on vibrate? What is the good of saying "I am in a meeting, please call me back?" Let them leave a message and call them back later, thus avoiding one conversation that cannot go anywhere.

## Returning Phone Calls

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Probably the easiest way to lose credibility at home and at work is not to return calls. How does one return calls and yet be efficient at work? My suggestion is to set aside specific times in the day to do this, such as right after lunch and in the last hour of the day, and book these times in your schedule. Naturally, there will be those return calls to the CEO or your partner that are done immediately. The rest, however, can wait.

## Golden Rules with Email

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If you are receiving over 50 emails a day here are some golden rules to save you time.

**Rule #1: Never open emails before 10.30am.**

In the good old days, we would handle mail at 10:30 A.M. when the mail finally arrived from the mailroom. We thus started the day with scoring a goal—undertaking a service delivery activity. Now the first thing we do is open up the email and suddenly one hour has evaporated. Some of us even get interrupted every time a new email arrives.

As a therapy I suggest not opening your email until after your morning coffee and then only looking at emails at one or two more intervals during the day. If something is very important you will get a phone call. This technique will help you get more 1.5-hour blocks of concentrated time in your day. See Exhibit 5.8.

**Rule #2: You are not Barrack Obama so do not live and sleep with your Blackberry!**

Most of us (fortunately or unfortunately) are not heart or brain surgeons. Our work is not critical to life. Many emails we handle have little or no relevance to where we or our organizations want to go. The silliest thing is surely to handle an email twice, once on the Blackberry “Will get back to you when in the office” and once in our computer.

**Rule #3: The five sentence rule.**

Treat all email responses like SMS text messages and limit them to something you can count easily—five sentences. A campaign has been started see [www.five.sentenc.es](http://www.five.sentenc.es). Ensure all terms, conditions, papers are attached to the email. This has the added benefit of ensuring that your email will not be a critical company document. This way you have a full record filed in your document management system.

**Rule #4: Have an attention grabbing header.**

Make the header the main message of the email. If you cannot think of a good email header maybe you should not send the email

**Rule #5: Actively terminate email exchanges.**

Manage your email exchanges. If you needed feedback in order to get to a closure, often a phone call is better. Ping pong emails on the same topic are screaming out “Lets speak tomorrow!” Think about your desired outcome and promote a course of action to avoid the table tennis. If necessary use the “No more emails on this one thank you.”

**Rule #6: Promote yourself by your endeavors not by your use of broadcast emails, reply all, or copy correspondence (cc).**

Avoid sending broadcast emails unless you are prepared to call up each person to advise them that there is a key document that they need to read. Ensure that you do not add to the “spam” in your organization. Forwarding business material may be well meaning but it is creating havoc in many organizations, where frequently managers are receiving up to 240 emails a day. Ask yourself is it necessary to copy the CEO—just for visibility?

**Rule #7: If you would not put your words in a letter do not put them in an email.**

Far too often the content of emails, while amusing, is not appropriate. Be careful about being the bearer of silly jokes. Today many people seem to want to be remembered by their joke telling. Now, don't get me wrong, I love a joke, but when you are sent a couple a week by the same person you do wonder what they do all day. Remember, perception rules everything. You do not want to be perceived as a person whose prime focus is to entertain. You want to be thought of in more positive terms.

**Rule #8: Master your email application's tools.**

The boffins have been busy improving the ways we can handle emails. The applications you use for emails will have many features you have never opened! Many readers have mastered word and spreadsheet applications yet the one application you use the most is in reality least known about. Master the new features, it will take a 30 minute session with a techo. You need to know and master:

- How to turn off auto-notifiers
- How to use filters to sort and prioritize
- Getting newsletters to automatically go straight to a folder which you access twice weekly
- Setting up auto responders to acknowledge and advise response time
- filters, flags, colors, sorting tools

**Rule #9: Your Inbox is not a storage area.**

The inbox should be for collection only, just like your in-tray! Messages should be deleted, auctioned, or filed. Do you keep all your texts and phone messages. NO! be ruthless with deletions. You have only gone far enough when you start having to ask people to resend their message.

**Rule #10: Have a night's sleep before you send a complaint/rebuff email.**

For complex responses, complaints, rebuffs, etcetera draft the email and file in the draft section, of your email application, over-

night, as you may well have second thoughts. It is a good idea to discuss these emails with your mentor. Many a career has been dented by a poorly thought through email written in anger.



### EXHIBIT 5.8 Checklist for Making Your Email Usage More Efficient

#### Making your Email usage more efficient checklist



Are you applying the golden rules of email		
Rule #1 Never open emails before 10.30am	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Rule #2 You are not Barrack Obama so do not live and sleep with your Blackberry!	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Rule #3 The five sentence rule	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Rule #4 Have an attention grabbing header	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Rule #5 Actively terminate email exchanges	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Rule #6 Promote yourself by your endeavors not by your use of reply—all or cc	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Rule #7 If you would not put your words in a letter do not put them in an email	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Rule #8 Master email application's tool section	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Rule #9 Your Inbox is not a storage area	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Rule #10 Have a night's sleep before you send a complaint/rebuff email	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No

#### Other useful email habits

Always use the spell check (ensure that the appropriate dictionary is set up)	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Just because emails are an instant communication it does not mean the issue is urgent, prioritize your time responding in relation to the importance of all your priorities	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Set up a folder in your inbox called "I do not need this information" for all those emails you do not need to receive and send a standard reply to them when you have time (see suggestion below)	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Ask yourself if it is better to respond in person or over the phone, e.g. Delicate issues are obviously better handled "eyeball to eyeball"	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Monitor how many emails are not furthering your goals, your team goals, or your organization's goals	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No

## Notes

1. Sir Richard Branson, *Screw it, Let's Do it: Lessons in Life*, Virgin Books, 2006.
2. Tony Buzan, *The Mind Map Book: Unlock Your Creativity, Boost Your Memory, Change Your Life*, BBC Active, 2009.