

WHAT YOU CAN DO

**From the book: How to find opportunities and cash them in
by Jack Edward Olson**

1-Give your exiting employees a short course on making themselves valuable. Just being knowledgeable of the machinations of business and marketing can set them well ahead.

2-Help them to overcome the fear of the unknown and of failure,

3-Give them examples of successful career changes, of going beyond their resume.

4-Help them review their past, including family job, hobbies and interests. Most people do not understand their potential for success.

5-encourage them to explore other possibilities and become self reliant.

For starters, here is a short course on

"What's Holding You Back?"

ORGANIZATION

We gain experience and training in a highly organized and departmentalized society. We learn highly organized ways of doing things. We learn what can be done and what cannot. We learn who can accomplish specific tasks and who can't. We develop organized attitudes, methods and opinions about what we can and cannot do.

Of course, we'd be helpless to carry out our complex lives without organization, and you will always be subject to authority,

But:

Don't become a slave to organization. The ways we learn to do things may not be the only way, or the best way. Think about this: Your resume is not nearly as important as what you can do for your next employer! And while you're thinking, ask "why are pictures worth a thousand words?" Because they show. So, don't just show up with a resume. Bring excitement, information, knowledge and samples (or photographs), a new prospective, and perhaps a new resource. Arrive as if you were already a part of the company. And don't sweat the resume.

Wisdom will find unusual applications for common knowledge. Many mechanical products have been inspired by knowledge of biology. Organization is an indispensable tool as long as it remains a tool. A new welding technology was born by ignoring accepted science by someone who

was unqualified. The same person designed a state of the art testing device by copying a toy. A young man got a job by showing a contractor an easier way to clean a construction site. Another secured a sales management position in a company whose job specifications would have rejected his resume. Why? because someone overheard him using a telephone in a volunteer job.

COMPLACENCY

The person who has the edge on experience may over evaluate his or her own credentials. We fail to see the potential in problems when we become complacent about the ways we solve them and the routines we have found that work. Our methods become cookie cutters. When the cookie cutter fails, we pronounce, "It cannot be done," assured that no one else will be able to do it either.

Here's an example: We were given the task of designing a device to fit over a meter similar to a speedometer. This device had to turn on an alarm if the meter went above or below the limits set on the controls of our new device. We designed the first model using light detectors to keep track of the meter pointer. Then we found the light sensors we needed had become unavailable. My crew knew the project was dead. But sometimes when people think they know, it's a sign of a mind turned to cement.

I told my staff of experts that we would detect the needle the same way lightning was detected. Every member of my staff knew from experience that was impossible. Two hours later we had a working model. It was eventually patented and we manufactured thousands of them. Complacency could have cost my company hundreds of thousands of dollars without ever knowing it. And my engineers would have continued being academic blobs.

Watch for complacency in the workplace. It may be a signal for a great opportunity.

Experience is a tool to draw from. However, we must question its value. Experience, regardless of its length, falls short of possibilities because it makes us complacent. In fact, the greater the experience, often the greater the complacency. We should trust only the part of our experience which tells us, "someone is going to figure an easy way around this, regardless of how tough we think it is." Experience is excellent for giving us instant answers. But as soon as we think they are the only answers, or the best answers, our brains have gone to lunch.

TYPECASTING

Someone will hear, "You are a machinist, not a designer." I cannot count the number of times machinists have caught design errors or suggested better ways.

Consider this in the light of typecasting. I would have been disqualified as an engineering manager because I have no degree. The degrees of my people would have disqualified them for the project because they focused on traditions rather than principles. No resume could have predicted the outcome. If our team had been assembled by resumes, the project would have failed.

Businesses miss many opportunities because wisdom is replaced by traditions, procedures and expectations. And people who subject themselves to these strict traditions miss many opportunities.

Ask, "In what ways can this be done, sold, designed or improved?"

FEAR

I know several cases where people have began potentially profitable enterprises and failed to bring them to fruition. They spent years of their time preparing, but never decided "enough" – never began the "doing," and eventually gave up. They just froze up. Why? They saw danger of failure everywhere, afraid of the unknown, of embarrassment, and of failure.

This is without question the greatest inhibitor of all. Fear takes many forms. It is often so deeply ingrained that we can scarcely recognize it. It limits our tastes. It makes us think we don't know when we do. Fear prevents us from trying. It even prevents us from knowing there may be something to try. Fear is where opportunity stops, even when it is moving forward.

Many good opportunities, and I mean real world-beaters stop, not because they are unfeasible, but because they are uncomfortable.

Many successful businessmen will tell you that if they had known what they were getting into, they wouldn't have done it. But, asked afterward, if they are glad they did it, most will respond, "Yes." After they have become successful, they can clearly see that the fear would have been unreasonable, while resolve and boldness is not only a reasonable attitude, it is pivotal for success. When the pressure was on and the resolve is in place, the insurmountable got conquered. Minute-by-minute, hour-by hour, resolve kills fear. You will find parts of resolve in many of the following chapters.

John W. saw a need for a computerized project costing system. He spent his personal fortune developing the program. But he knew he would not have what the market needed without a better method of getting information into the computer than the usual keyboard. John went looking with no assurance that he would find something and with no clear idea of what he was looking for. He knew only that technology was constantly being advanced.

He went out with the determination of finding a way to make it work. You guessed right. He found the perfect solution for getting information into his system. It was so good that it gave his company instant leadership. Seven

years later no competitor has matched his product. Determination conquered fear.

EXPECTATIONS

People often hear their expectations. If we think we are talking to a fool, regardless of what that person says, it will sound foolish. When we listen to a highly paid consultant, we expect to hear great things and impart credibility to everything that person says. It is therefore imperative to practice speaking without pause. Memorizing quotations to illustrate points give you high marks in perceived intelligence. This is an inhibition that we will need to deal with both within ourselves and in others.

When you are working with new ideas, it is always smart to write them down. Explain their value and implementation plan on paper.

And don't dress in unusual attire. Regardless of how loud you talk you will not outshout your appearance.

LAZINESS

The most common form of laziness, the one we are most familiar with, is our unwillingness to get out of bed when we're relaxed, warm and snuggly. Moreover, rising early is twice as difficult when one is discouraged, frustrated or worried.

But, have you ever risen at 4:00 A.M. to go fishing or start a vacation? Have you ever worked past midnight on something you were enjoying or stayed with a good book until you felt your eyes turn inside-out? So, what happened to the snuggies?

The word is "motivation." As worked and worn as the word has become, it still embraces the meanings of anticipation, interest, desire, promise and plan. (Forget the dark side of fear, etc.) We're talking happiness here—unadulterated, double-distilled joy. You had a plan. You were captivated by the possibilities of the day, the awaiting adventure, winning a game or finishing something worthwhile. You awoke with a goal. With a goal? ...a goal and a plan!

Especially when discourage, It is necessary to establish daily objectives. These must be realistically framed in the amount time you may realistically devote to them. Accomplishing goals is encouraging and uplifting.

INDUCED LAZINESS

When we do things in traditional ways, without ever questioning the value of those ways, we are guilty of another form of laziness induced by external sources. Laziness itself is a habit. For instance, discouragement and past illnesses can lead to mental patterns that stifle all effort. Long after the

illness or problem has passed, we continue to take the effortless route.

Sonny hated production work, but he had to do it. So, he made an opportunity of boredom, by questioning the habitual ways and applied himself to the boring part of his work. Through a clever change, he drove his production time way down. With his extra time he improved the company's products so that sales increased. As a result he hired a production person and the boring portion of his work was eliminated. Additionally, what he learned about production became the entering point into another opportunity and a challenging new profession.

Laziness is tricky. Most of society is lazy. Almost everyone could be doing better. But they don't even bother to read a second book on a topic. They don't carefully study to gain the authors experience, nor do they follow through with application.

For that reason, laziness can harbor opportunity. You just need to be less lazy than your peers. Add a bit more to preparation for your next job Think about this; let it sink into your mind and take root in your heart: If you will spend just fifteen minutes every day, reading and taking notes on one topic for a period of five years, you will make yourself a leading expert on that topic. Each step is only fifteen minutes long. That's all it takes to rise above the norm! Think what you could accomplish if you spent more time investing in yourself and in your job!

MENTAL CLUTTER # 1, OVERLOAD

Similarly, if you were to spend two hours per day developing an opportunity you have observed, you would be on your way to an enjoyable income in one eighth of the five years, or 7-1/2 months, possibly much less. I've seen it done in six weeks.

You get to a point at times in your life, especially if you have children where you have so much to do that you get nothing done. You get started on a task and something else becomes suddenly more important,. So you drop the first and go to the second. And so it goes all day or all week long. Your priorities change by the quarter hour. It is especially frustrating if you are unemployed, and you want to work a plan. Your mind gets so cluttered by urgent needs that You can see no path through.

There are two ways to quickly get around this type of mental clutter. First is to start two hours before the phone rings. Take one of the most hateful tasks and get it done. As the load lightens, so does your mind. Next, declare a day of vacation from everything and get another out of the way. Another method is to list all the important tasks and set adequate goals for the completion of all of them. Then dedicate a specific amount of time per day to their accomplishment.

When you do this, you realize that all of the tasks will be done by this time

next week and you don't care what order they get done. The other hours of the day and a couple of overtime hours should keep you current with the new stuff.

MENTAL CLUTTER # 2, HABITUAL EXPECTATIONS

"The minute you say that a thing cannot be done, you are through with that thing. And no matter how much you know—even if you are an expert—if you say it can't be done, you are all through. And someone knowing nothing about it, but thinking it can be done, now is a better man for the job than you." -Harry Myers.

People become experts by staying with a challenge, they just keep at it through trial and error until it's done or they get good at it. It may be something deemed impossible or it may be as skill or topic of study. They have replaced the expectation that it can't be done with "this is what I will do!" They become expert at it and eventually have a beautiful career. We did it by joining steel and copper wires end to end when the metallurgists said it was impossible. We did it using an impossible technique. Michelin has done it with their new airless tire.

Gates did it with vulcanization of rubber. Ordinary expectations were cast aside when I made a pen that didn't have to touch the paper and tinkerers knew that water could be burned and proved it in garages all over this country and have been applying it to their automobiles.

When I was in school, everyone knew that going to the moon would be impossible because it would take a rocket the size of the Empire State Building to lift just one man out of Earth's gravity, and he'd have no way home. Erecting buildings twenty stories high could never be done in Denver. As of this day, we've sent people to the moon, and Denver's tallest building is over fifty stories high. A hundred years ago, almost everyone was sure that the human body couldn't stand speeds over thirty miles an hour. Now, those who drive that slow cause accidents. Those brainless old expectations dissolved before people of vision. Visions are often born from "what if."

Are you expecting too little? Have you tried "what if" lately?

DISTRACTIONS

Distractions include radio, television, children, telephone, visitors and previous engagements.

I mention this because you should immediately begin to insulate yourself from distractions. I suggest, you select a time of day for planning or information gathering, to work when you will be alone and can think clearly. Find a corner of the house where you can be free from distractions. It needs to be your sanctuary for thinking and reading. Whatever it is, wherever it is, make it pleasant. If it's the spot behind the furnace, add some paint and a

couple of pictures.

LACK OF UNDERSTANDING

The need for wisdom and understanding is actually fourfold. (1) You need to be able to discover opportunities. (2) Make the opportunity fit you, (3) Then, as also illustrated, you will need to have the understanding and wisdom to make the opportunity work for you and to multiply its benefits, and (4) you will need to understand who your competitors are and how to avoid or rise above competition.

So, part of the need is to include persistence in our plan or be able to "side-step" modify and adapt quickly when something goes wrong. Because, as we all know things can fizzle. Our plans get interrupted or some unforeseen new event makes our ideas unworkable. So, you need to be able keep moving forward, to understand your situation, the reality of personalities, to fold them into your plan. Much of this book will help you guide your ideas and plans—to understand your position and work past the constraints of the needs of other people.

ANGER AND HASTE

Anger and haste are joined at the hip. Besides being responsible for some horrific accidents they can ruin great opportunities and relationships. If you separate haste from anger, you can often gain insight into situations that actually can be quite beneficial.

OVERLOOKING THE NEEDS OF OTHERS

Most of us are guilty of this one. The outcome is similar to "haste and Anger" By overlooking the needs and desires of our employer, whether it's the entire company or an immediate boss, we make ourselves part of the problem rather than part of the solution. Generally, if we are considerate in our work and speech, we will be given the same in return.

There is another side to this. We need to understand that our supervisors want to improve their positions. So, part of our objective, from our first meeting throughout our employment, is to make that person above us, look good. People want to hire team players. It's called "wisdom." A sprinkling of wisdom can cause others to push us along.

A FINAL SHOT AT TRADITION

For those who are looking for greener pastures through better employment, I'd like to add this comment: the drudgery of sending out a hundred resumes does not require much creative ability. You think you have accomplished something when it's done. But then you sit with not one ounce of control, except for follow-up calls, waiting for something good to happen.

What actually probably happened was that you mailed your resume to files and waste baskets all over the land.

If you get an advertised job, it probably isn't going to fit well. So, unless you are very lucky you will be hiring into more inhibitors. You will be pressed into a set of conditions (ruts) rather than creating something based upon what you are capable of. So, when you get those interviews, have the rest of this book in mind and do something great. The book is HOW TO FIND OPPORTUNITIES AND CASH IN ON THEM. Responding to an advertized job can actually result in being offered something unadvertized and far better.

When you acquire the air of sophistication, the special demeanor of success, you will be amazed at how many things will be brought to you. The people you talk to will want to associate with you, including your next employer. Becoming expert is just one way to do that and rise above the resume mill. You may already be on your way to being an expert in something.

How to Find Opportunities and Cash in on Them is available from Amazon.com, Barnes and Nobel, Borders and, for quantities, Xlibris.com.

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