

Ten Strategies for Maximizing Your WORK

managing constraints for *career*
security



MONDAYISGOOD
practical career help

About Monday Is Good

- Tom Dixon, CPIM
- My background
 - Not an “HR Professional”
 - Not representing my employer
- Why interested in career coaching

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Remember...

“The important distinction is this: the content might be *for* you, but it's not necessarily *about* you. Take what you need, but ignore the rest.” ~ [Seth Godin](#)



The Theory Of Constraints

The theory says that every system, no matter how well it performs, has at least one constraint that limits its performance – this is the system's "weakest link." The theory also says that a system can have only one constraint at a time, and that other areas of weakness are "non-constraints" until they become the weakest link.

<http://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/toc.htm>

The Goal

"There really is no choice in the matter. Either you manage constraints or they manage you. The constraints will determine the output of the system whether they are acknowledged and managed or not."

— Noreen, Smith, and Mackey,

The Theory of Constraints and its Implications for Management Accounting (North River Press, 1995)



So What?

You are a profit-making enterprise.

If you want to continue to grow and increase performance (profit) then focus improvement efforts where they will have the greatest impact.

1. Identify the constraint
2. Exploit the constraint
3. Subordinate everything else to the constraint
4. Elevate the constraint
5. Go back to step 1

Strategy #1

Be A Free Agent

constrained thinking

Be A Free Agent

Acknowledge you work for yourself...because you do

- One customer (traditional job)
- Several customers (freelance / contract work)
- Many customers (small business owner)

Change in mindset

- Career security versus job security

You have something **valuable** to the marketplace

Free Agent Attributes

- **Self discipline** – do high quality work and always meet deadlines, without having to be asked
- **Goal-setter** – go beyond assigned goals and create personal stretch goals
- **Risk-taker** – willing to go out on a limb if they feel strongly enough
- **Flexible** – welcome change as an opportunity to learn something new



Benefits

- Not at the **mercy** of your employer.
- In **control** of your own future.
- Can do work you **love** even if working for a company you don't.
- Constantly working to **improve** yourself.
- Improve your perspective, which improves your **attitude**, which creates **opportunities**.



Strategy #2

Research Yourself

constrained strengths

How Did You Get Here?

- How did you decide:
 - Whether to go to school?
 - What to major in?
 - Where to work?
- Drifting versus purposeful decisions?

Ask Yourself

- What am I doing when time seems to “feel differently”
- What would I be upset if I was told I could never do again?
- What have I done in the past that has gotten me excited?



Finding Strengths

- *Stand Out: The Groundbreaking New Strengths Assessment from the Leader of the Strengths Revolution* by Marcus Buckingham
- DISC Personality Profile

Strategy #3

Network

constrained connections

Networking Pitfalls

- Making it about YOU
- Rushing
 - Best time was 5 years ago
 - 2nd best time is TODAY
- Relying on LinkedIn

In Your Current Role

- Make connections at work
 - Think across divisions / functional groups
 - Sit next to someone you don't know
- Make connections with suppliers & clients
 - Current company benefits
 - You benefit
- Contact past employers
 - Different dynamic when employed

Expanding Your Network

- Ask current connections:
 - Who should I know?
 - Who has helped you in the past?
- Have lunch with someone you don't know every week in 2013.
 - Pick-up the tab

Networking Tips

- Focus on how to help the other person
- Be prepared
 - Things to have ready:
 - Resume (but you probably won't use)
 - Business or networking cards
 - Updated Linked-In profile
 - Story of what you do

Strategy #4

Interview Every Year

constrained possibilities

Benefits

- Stay current with the marketplace
 - See what's REALLY going on
- Build confidence
- Identify skills needed
- Build your network

Important: Be honest with your employer – not a chance to pit employers against each other

Strategy #5

Create Your Portfolio

constrained story

How To

- Keep file of wins
 - Be specific, UOM is always \$\$
 - Keep copies of annual reviews
- Keep positive & negative feedback
 - Emails
 - Notes / awards

Get Creative

- Examples of your best work
 - Remove sensitive data
- Physical portfolio
- Online portfolio
 - Landing page
 - Website/Blog
- Focus on results



Why

- Help in developing or updating resume
- Help in developing elevator speech
- Identifying areas of strengths
 - To work in
- Identifying areas of weakness
 - To work-around
 - Blind spots



Strategy #6

Invest In Yourself

constrained expertise



Keep Up

- 3% Rule
- Read industry news
 - Magazines
 - Newsletters
- Be involved in trade groups
 - APICS
 - Trade magazines & journals

Keep Up

- Setup Google Alerts
 - Keywords related to your industry
- Pursue certifications
 - You probably don't need another degree

Strategy #7

Create A WOW Experience

constrained value

WOW

- What is the expectation (boss/hiring manager)?
- How can you exceed those expectations?
- Write it out on paper
- Pick one or two and DO THEM
- Can be simple

*“WOW” experience concept from Michael Hyatt’s *Platform: Get Noticed in a Noisy World*.

Strategy #8

Set Goals

constrained vision

Why Goals Don't Work

- Don't understand “why” behind the goal
- Goal not aligned with bigger picture

Stephen Covey Was Right

Begin with the end in mind

– Start with Personal Mission Statement

- What does that look like this year?
- What does that look like 5 years from now?
- What does that look like 10 years from now?

– Work backward into actionable goals

Goal Checklist

- Written
- Specific
- Measurable
- Your Own
- Shared

Strategy #9

Seek Feedback

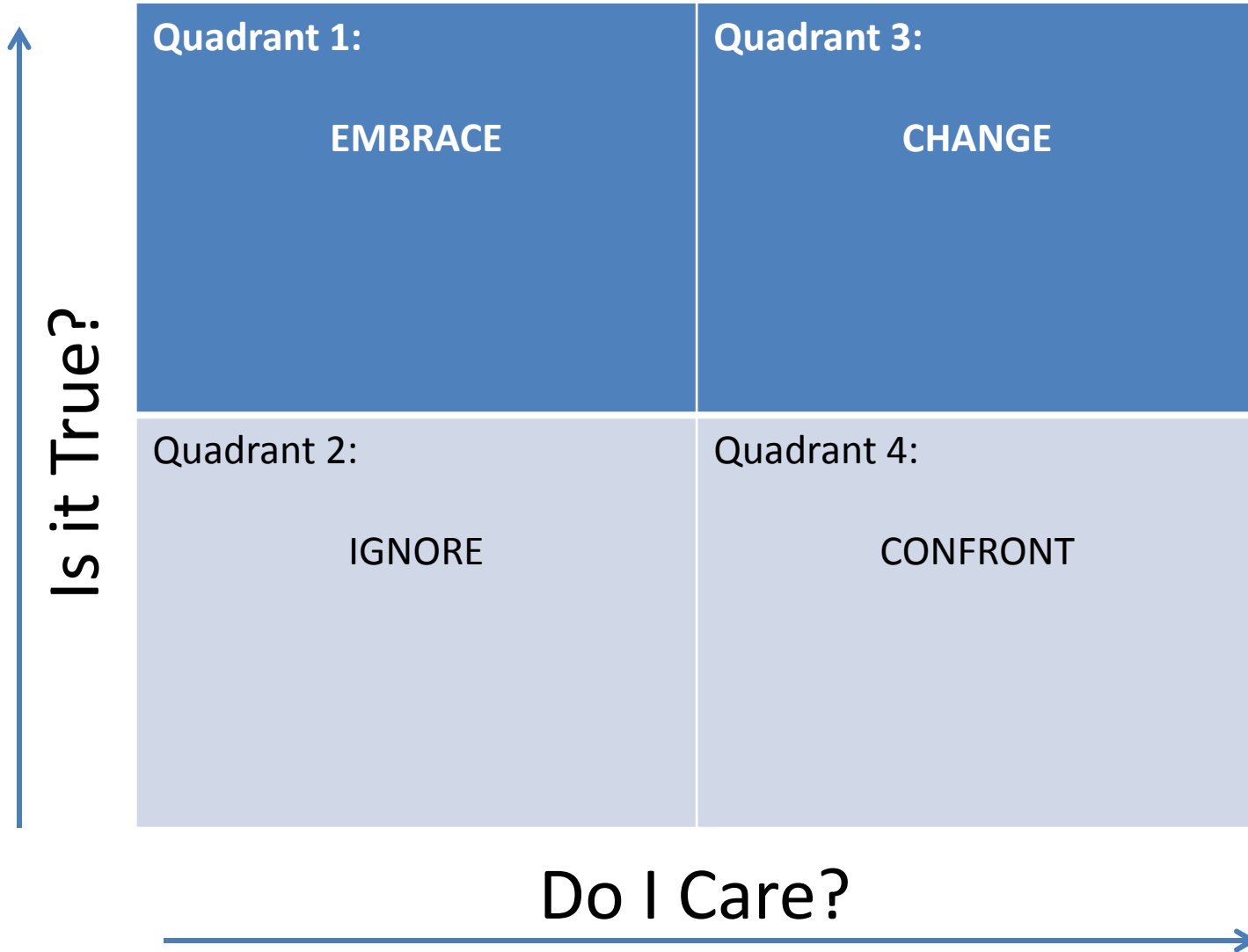
constrained reality

Sources of Feedback

- Solicit it
- Give it

Feedback helps us to grow – but we have to manage it correctly.

Use a systematic approach to avoid ignoring valid feedback out of anger or embarrassment.



Strategy #10

Look for Impacts

constrained influence



Impacts Matter

- Who are your internal & external customers?
 - How do you impact others' work?
 - How do you impact the customer?
- Who benefits from the work you do?
 - You provide a unique experience that no one else can duplicate

Bonus

Use LinkedIn Effectively

but not only

Quick Tips

- GIVE endorsements
 - Do 10 every Sunday night
- GIVE recommendations
 - Different people than recommend you
- Use CURRENT photo

Quick Tips

- Accept everyone
- Invite selectively
- Join groups & participate
 - Start discussions
 - ADD VALUE
- Update status regularly
- There is such a thing as too much!





For More...

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