

Strengthen Your Strengths! *Pick the Best 'Who' to Solve the 'How'*

There's a saying: "Jack of all trades, master of none."

Screwing up two, four or nine things at the same time is certainly being very busy – but the polar opposite of productive.

Old Russian Proverb: "If you chase two rabbits, you will catch neither one."

Inventing that first wheel around 3500 B.C. in Mesopotamia must have been hard! Probably harder than the more than 1,000 experiments that Thomas Edison and his West Orange, NJ, lab team performed to invent the incandescent light bulb.

These are classic "Hows" at the bleeding edge of creativity.

How do I fix a leaky faucet? How do we build a brick patio or replace the brakes on our car, seed a lawn, write a novel, or knit a sweater? You may know "How" to do all, some, or none of these things.

Why are these questions important – the "Hows" of the world? Two obvious reasons: **We have a finite amount of time, and we have certain striving instincts that come pre-installed at birth.**

So what do we start off doing? Formal education, which gets us up to speed with society. Then specialized training, required for certain types of jobs.

However, when arriving at the door of the working world, most of us are still neophytes. We're self-confident, proud ICs (individual contributors), eager to roll up our sleeves and take on any "How"

challenge singlehandedly.

But while taking on the "Hows" in life is important, they don't even come close to the importance of identifying the "Whos" needed to perform the majority of our "Hows."

The late Steve Jobs: **"Great things in business are never done by one person. They're done by a team of people."**

When I began my training under Ed Coyle 30-plus years ago, he said something that has stuck with me ever since. He remarked that there was vastly more value in his Rolodex than what I would learn under his tutelage. You know – the Rolodex, that old-fashioned, half-moon-shaped device containing business cards representing the network of the most important "Whos" he'd collected over his long career.

At the time, I didn't give his Rolodex advice that much gravitas even though I found his connections to be a superb mix of the best-of-the-best in legal, accounting, tax, banking, insurance, and other disciplines.

I believed I was great at "How!" You know – no challenge too great, no mountain too high, to learn everything rapidly and complete a task. I'm a decent student and pick up new things quickly. I do well at tasks, after putting a lot of blood, sweat and tears into them.

Actually, in hindsight – how naively foolish! **I had to rid myself of the notion that I could do everything myself.** That a job overdone was well

done. That I must tackle new “Hows” that came up every hour of every day.

The issue becomes very real when we notice the way we feel when we have to take on a new “How.” It’s as if all the oxygen is sucked out of the room. We get into a negative energy state, realizing all the time, effort and money that we will expend to learn “How” to do something new.

Time is the real killer. We have to give up some, or a lot of, our precious time to start from scratch to figure out a new “How.” When it’s not in our wheelhouse, it becomes hard, cumbersome, frustrating, infuriating and just plain not fun.

Thinking of it another way, **the greater your “Who” Rolodex, the easier life becomes.**

Ed’s Rolodex was magical. My sitting in on one of his 10-minute conversations with a great “Who” recalibrated my thinking. Hiring that “Who” resulted in time and money well spent – not to mention an efficient high-quality result executed with clarity and confidence on behalf of our client.

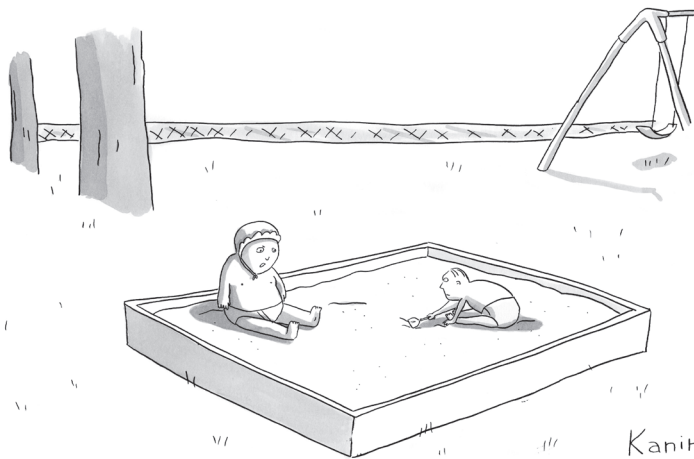
What the best people in any specialty do, is focus. They put their effort with laser-like precision on a few things and do them very well.

There is a term for this, from The Strategic Coach; Unique Ability®.

Unique abilities are those things you are excellent at, while marshalling endless energy that fuels and motivates you over your life.

You can do it all day, every day, without tiring. When you are doing it you are in the zone, “in flow.” Flow: the term that Dr. Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi of the University of Chicago coined back in the 1970s.

A flow state is why we love watching our favorite entertainers, athletes and professionals perform. They make it look easy, even effortless. It’s as if they were born to do that one thing: act, sing, dance, bat, run, ski, swim, orate or perform surgery.



“It turns out I just wasted the whole morning networking with a dog.”

Ed’s Rolodex was full of “Who” experts.

Those professionals made my job delivering wealth management services far easier.

It in turn focused my energies on maintaining and augmenting our company’s universe of “whos” to present day.

You, I and everyone on this small blue dot in the universe have unique abilities – things we do that others may marvel at.

Ed provided me with one side of the coin. Great “Whos.” There’s another side, too – my own personal “Who.”

... and, to be sure, there are only two sides to any coin.

We’re talking money here. I’ve been helping people with money and money issues since my paper route at age 11. This is my “Who,” my unique ability.

The real sticking point for most of us: What will we decide to do each and every day? And, what will others do to support us in achieving our “Hows?” **It’s here where it gets a little bit tricky.**

First, how about a brief look into Old Blue Eyes, you know, Frank Sinatra.

We all know what a phenomenal performer Sinatra was from the 1940s “all the way” to the 1980s.

Now ask yourself: What did Frank do to prepare

for an upcoming performance at, say, Madison Square Garden?

Did he schedule the venue, order the tickets, sell the tickets, and set up the lighting, audio, props and stage scenery? Did he select the orchestra, and interview all the back-up singers and other supporting talent? Did he prep the stage the morning of the show and pre-test everything?

Of course not! Frank showed up for a sound check, then returned later to perform. His manager, agent and others coordinated, scheduled, and handled everything else. Frank stayed on his side of the coin: "I did it my way."

Entertainers in Hollywood have employed this "Who" selection model for many decades.

Another example: Someone pitches a story about a Southern boy with a learning disability, with braces on his legs, who miraculously becomes a star running back, saves a dozen men in Vietnam, starts his own seafood company, all the while living and thinking very simply.

Obviously the producers liked the initial story pitch, because "Forrest Gump" became that 1994 movie.

The producers did something interesting. They stayed on their side of the coin and began auditioning and selecting great "Whos": Tom Hanks to play Forrest Gump, Sally Field his mother, Gary Sinise in the now-famous role of Lieutenant Dan,

Can you imagine if the producers had attempted to learn the "How" of directing and acting, the "How" of cinematography, editing, and so forth?

We are finding that, in business, the companies that immediately target the best "Who" that can deliver the "How" are the ones that thrive.

We get asked often enough about selecting a stock for someone. Many times people assume since we are in wealth management, we are stock pickers.

We could be.

Several decades ago we structured an investment platform of stock, bond, real estate, cash and other diversified investment categories by identifying top "Who" professionals. Each of them is exceptionally good at selecting that specific stock or bond or piece of real estate and so forth, which they analyze full-time each and every day.

This fully integrated, objective "Who" approach to investing acts as a real-life accelerator — the obverse of a more plodding, piecemeal "How" approach — and today is more relevant than ever.

Almost everyone today carries around a multifaceted "Who" device, a smartphone, with its ability to perform a variety of functions that make life a little easier.

How many of you still pull out a circa-1960 Smith Corona typewriter with its newfangled correction

Individual commitment to a group effort - that is what makes a team work, a company work, a society work, a civilization work.

-VINCE LOMBARDI

the director Robert Zemeckis, the screenwriter Eric Roth, plus the cinematographer, editors, and the various support staff including the caterers.

The result? A wonderful, timeless movie we still enjoy today.

The tricky part is staying on your side of the coin.

tape to type a letter to a family, friend or business associate? Then sign the letter, place it in an envelope, stamp it, and walk or drive it to a mailbox? Okay, you may still write thank-you notes, birthday cards and the like. Some things don't change.

What you instead routinely do today is grab your smart "Who" device and call or text a family member, friend or business associate or reach out

through email, Facebook, Instagram, or some other application.

There are amazing “Whos” out there. Recently, we needed a new eight-second lead-in animation to our Coyle video blog post. You may have seen it. It was done through the site Fivrr.com.

A young man from half-way around the world provided it for less than \$50. Amazing! It took only a few weeks, and would have cost much more with a much longer lead time if produced locally.

At last count we are up to more than 20 technology “Whos” in what we like to call our communications Whoville. (No Grinch need apply!) They are phenomenal at their craft and great at making it easy for us to put out just-in-time, relevant, impactful content. – To make complex “Hows” appear simple and support our quest to provide useful content to clients and potential clients.

The real conundrum in this whole “**Who-not-How**” is you and me. **We are conditioned in our thinking to believe we should stoically do many tasks that we are just not good at** – nor ever will be - without expending quantum amounts of time and effort.

Today’s world spurs a mindset shift to a way of thinking we previously believed was only the playground of the high-end entertainers, athletes, CEOs, politicians and all those in high positions of authority.

Advances in the power and speed of the microchip are bringing first-class “Whos” down to affordable prices for all of us.

Yes, we still pay premium prices for very important goods and services, but now all of these other “Hows” that chew up our time and frustrate us can be accomplished by people, teams, devices and

other technology – great “Whos.”

Whether you’re Frank Sinatra warming up to croon to the audience, or Tom Hanks channeling the innocent, thoughtful Forrest Gump, you have your own “Who.”

The faster you find it and stay the course with it, the better the outcome for you and, by extension, for those around you.

The 19th-century humorist Josh Billings advised: “Be like a postage stamp – stick to one thing until you get there.”

Concentrating on one thing at a time may be the single most important factor in achieving success. Focusing on one job at a time increases the probability of high quality results. Trying to “do it all yourself” cheats yourself because, by yourself, you can’t ensure that even one thing always gets done really well and on time.

And, multitasking is terribly exhausting. It’s inefficient. It divides your attention and leads to confusion, weakened focus, and sometimes even.....

“How-pies” — results that can be smelly, messy and hazardous to your physical and financial health.

Stand-up comedian Doug Benson: “People say pot-smokers are lazy. I disagree; I’m a multitasking pot-smoker: Just the other day I was walking down the street, I was putting eye drops in my eyes, I was talking on my cell phone, and I was getting hit by a car.”

The Who not How concept came out of an initial discussion at The Strategic Coach® a few years ago. It’s a grand old concept reworked for the 21st Century.



Gary Klaben

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