

Taking Action

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by **Russell Foster**

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Over a century ago, author and visionary Wallace Wattles used the quote, "An ounce of action is worth a pound of theorizing." As many of you might already know his famous book, ***The Science of Getting Rich*** is the foundation for most moneymaking programs on the market today. And the number one goal of any business is making money. We may not always realize it, but the principles he set forth in his short and powerful book are the foundation for success in business and in life.

And the crux of his message is the need to take action.

Simply put there are dreamers and there are achievers. Those who do not take action are the dreamers; whereas those who do take action will be the achievers. Which one do you want to be?

This is an appropriate topic for me because just this week I finished a project that began as a dream over a year ago. I remember getting a vision for this e-book back in 2009 and I was so excited. I was sure that it would be finished quickly and easily. Like many tasks that business owners, like you and I, have to juggle, this one got put on the shelf and almost never got finished. Luckily that is not the case for this project. Furthermore, the lessons I learned in the process are powerful and I share them with you today.

Here is what happened, and let's see if this sounds familiar.

Almost a year ago, this e-book was still in the dream phase. Like many ideas, it was one of those projects that seemed fun and exciting because it was new. When I started the e-book, I had many other projects to work on, but was sure that I could juggle them all. Needless to say, life got in the way and after getting about half way through writing phase I put it down. Now to be fair, there were more pressing issues that needed to be addressed and completing this product was not top priority. Currently, this project is only weeks away from being on the market, and here are two mistakes that almost prevented this e-book from happening.

Mistake number one...I was not fully committed to bringing the project to production. When I got busy, I just forgot about it completely. In hindsight, what I should have done is put the project lower on the priorities list while I was busy and moved it back up when I had the time.

Mistake number two...I have to admit that I was totally unrealistic about exactly how much time and energy it would take to bring this product to market. Like many projects, it took much longer than expected. I believed that in two months I could have this e-book finished, when in reality, it took more like 6 months of dedicated attention.

Based on what I learned from this experience, here are a few simple tips.

Tip Number One...Prioritize

Just a few months ago, I realized that I was working hard, yet I was beginning to feel like I was not being productive. I was making progress, however nothing was getting finished. I took two days to analyze all the projects I was working on and prioritized each one. Also, did a very detailed report of what would be required to finish each of the projects.

Now in reality, I was not actually working on my “to do” list, however, I was taking action. Furthermore, the long-term benefits of that planning time were undeniable.

In business and in life, we all have a host of things we need, want, or feel we should do. However, there is only so much time in a day, and therefore we need to prioritize where we will best use this valuable asset. In addition, taking a few minutes, hours, or even days to plan and prioritize (provided it is done correctly) is just as critical as taking action. In fact, *it is taking action*. Much like the example I gave above about the e-book, taking the time to prioritize my list of projects might be the difference between a completed project and another unfinished idea in the back of my mind.

Tip Number Two...Work Smart Not Hard

A few years back, there was a co-worker of mine that made a habit of starting a new project without doing any real planning. Invariably in the middle of everything, he would have to stop what he was doing and run to the store to get supplies. He did not think much of it, and was quick to take action. What made things even more interesting was that he almost always had to make a second trip because he did not stop long enough to get all the supplies he needed. After the third time of doing this, a group of us began to call him Two-Trip-Tony.

And here is where I want to caution the readers about the need for specific action.

**Taking action does not mean
blindly beginning projects
without thinking through what we
need to finish the job. Here is
where I am going to stress the
need to take smart and well
thought out action.**

Taking two days to prioritize my to-do list and make a detailed list for each project was smart and well thought out action. In addition, once I did this all my actions from that point on were more focused and more effective.

Tip Number Three...The Devil Is In The Details

Here is another quick story about a project that I was working on just a few weeks ago. I sent a file to my editor for another book I am writing. I did not think much of it and once I hit the “send” button, I just assumed everything was fine. My editor was going to begin working on the book while I was going to be on a business trip. As you might have guessed, when she went to open the file it was corrupt and she could not do anything with it. When she discovered it, I was too busy with my business trip to get her the new file. To make matters worse, in my haste, I did not back up the file and I had to spend 4 hours re-doing the last round of changes I made; a costly, but valuable lesson.

We lost over a week because neither one of us made sure to check that the file was usable.

In this case, a few minutes to double check could have saved hours of time and a lot of frustration. As nitpicky as it sounds, take the few extra minutes to double-check everything. This way you can avoid costly and time-consuming mistakes.

Tip Number Four...Break Large Projects Into Small Workable Chunks

In business and in life, it is easy to get overwhelmed with the massive amount of stuff we have to do every day. An easy way to keep from getting overwhelmed is to take large projects and break them down into small workable chunks. Set deadlines for certain aspects of the project or have weekly checklists to track progress.

As a writer, I regularly work on projects that take between one and two years to finish. It can be very easy to get lost in time. I find it very helpful to set deadlines for certain aspects of my book to get finished. And based on where I am in the writing phase, I will make notations on my calendar, days or weeks in advance to complete a specific chapter or section that I want to finish.

There have been times where I was diligent about this and I found it very helpful. Likewise, there have been times when I was more lax, needless to say, not as much got finished. Whatever it is, find a system that works for you and what you are working on.

Tip Number Five...Be Realistic About How Much Time Is Required

Perhaps the biggest mistake and pitfall in any business venture is underestimating the time it takes to complete a given project. And I have a great story about this.

I have one client, Carla who is extremely talented as a graphic designer and website builder. Once finished, her work is amazing. Unfortunately, she routinely underestimates how long projects will take and often disappointed her clients by taking far longer to complete things. In fact, one simple design took over a month to complete, when she told the client it would be less than 2 weeks. Because she was underestimating each task, she over booked herself and often became overwhelmed.

Together, we have worked on being more efficient as well as being honest about how much time things will take. In fact, she has learned to over-estimate in order to give herself a little cushion, which has really reduced her stress level and made her work more enjoyable. Needless to say, her clients are happier as well.

I had to learn the same lesson in order to finish my e-book.

Once I was realistic about the time and energy commitment, things began to fall into place, almost as if by magic.

By following these simple tips you will be more productive. They have worked for me, my clients, and I know they will work for you.

Russell Foster
Writer/Speaker/ Life-Coach
<http://www.russellfostermentoring.com>



Author, success-coach, and mentor, **Russell Foster** provides his clients the roadmap to a more empowering mindset. Whether it is one-on-one or in a large group setting, Foster loves guiding others to a more productive way of thinking and acting. Using powerful tools such as self-hypnosis, Neuro-Linguistics and EFT, Foster shares with his live audience and his readers the unlimited power of the human mind and how to tap into it their inner genius. Together he and his clients develop a new way of thinking to adjust to changes in the market and business and create new skills to overcome physical obstacles as well as psychological barriers.

In his upcoming book, *A Clear Slate* he takes his reader on a journey into the power of the mind, and more importantly, he stresses to each and every one of us, what we can do once purged of the limiting beliefs that plague so many of us.