

James Butler's Newsletter #49

Amuse, Inform and Inspire

September 2006

Some of you will know that I have just returned from a trip to San Francisco, Yosemite, Death Valley, the Grand Canyon and Las Vegas. It was a lovely break and I enjoyed spending time with my wife, my mother and her partner. It has also given me inspiration for a number of newsletter issues, one of which may be based on Alamo's demonstration of how NOT to deliver customer service in the car hire business. They say people tell 2 other people of a good experience and 9 of bad. Well, I just told 500 people to avoid Alamo!

The Grand Canyon was one of the most inspiring sights I have ever seen, and I feel very privileged to have been able to hike down into it. Firstly, it inspired my infamous humour – standing at the rim edge and saying "Well, this is a grand canyon", or "Isn't it gorgeous?" Oh, they rolled in the aisles at those! Possibly the most inspiring aspect, however, was the understanding that something of such enormity has been carved by something as small as some drops of water.

Time is on my side

The Rolling Stones were right, time is on our side (generally). But it wasn't just time that created the Grand Canyon, it was the constant, daily action of water and rock suspended within the river that, over millennia, carved something of such immense beauty. I believe that we can learn from this, and can use constant daily actions to create what we want to build too.



Now, most of us can't wait millennia, but then most of us have humbler aims than creating a 277 mile long canyon, up to 15 miles wide, and over a mile deep. Luckily, our annual or lifetime goals tend to be more human scale, so achieving them takes far less time!

We also have an advantage over the random nature of creating the Grand Canyon – we can plan what we do on a daily basis. Then we can apply our daily actions and see the results.

So where can we start? Well, first we have to know what we want to create – what do you want to achieve, in any field, in the next 6 months, 12 months or few years? Get a clear idea of what you want to achieve, and how that is different from what you have now.

With the knowledge of where you are now, and where you want to go, you can start to work out what to do to get there. You might need to think a little about what steps might be involved and what the best way to get there might be (and wouldn't a session with me be just perfect to achieve that?!).

So, now you know where you are, where you want to get to and what you have to do to get there. We can now rely on constant daily actions to take us there. If you did something every day (or every working day) to move towards your goal, how quickly would you make progress? When I trained for my marathon (have I mentioned that before?!), I didn't leap from running 3 miles at a time straight to running 26.2 miles, I built up the distance each week over a period of months. You can do the same with your goal.

If you're not sure how big an action it should be, have a look at how far you want to go, and by when – then the size of your steps should become clearer. And remember, the rate at which the Grand Canyon was eroded has varied over time – give yourself permission to do more when the going is good, and less when the going is tough. The key is to be doing something each and every day!

You Can't Always Get What You Want

You watch those Stones boys, with songs like these they could last a few years. As an eternal optimist, it feels unnatural to warn you that you can't always get what you want, but perhaps we do have to be prepared for that. My ambition to be Sandra Bullock's pillow looks increasingly unlikely to be fulfilled, for example.

However, I do firmly believe that if you know what you do want, you have a far greater chance of getting it. Not least because there is greater chance that your constant daily actions will take you in the right direction, if you know what that direction is.

The Colorado river spent an awful lot of time meandering through the plateau, creating a canyon far wider than required, with far more twists and turns than is "efficient". But the river had no plan. By having a plan yourself, you can minimise your meanders and get the most return for your efforts.

And it is important to understand that we choose to do what we do every day. Even doing nothing is a decision on our part – so the choice is not whether to undertake constant daily actions – but what those actions will be and where they will take you. What I want for you is that they take you closer to your dreams and goals.

As an aside, I recognise that it is the meandering and random forces of nature that created the beauty of the Grand Canyon (a straight narrow channel would have been more efficient, but attracted less tourists). So maybe we should allow some of that randomness into our efforts to achieve our goals – it may take us to unimagined places!

But if you want to stand a greater chance of always getting what you want, where should you start?

- **What do you want to achieve?** Getting this clear is the most important part.
- **Where are you now, and what is the gap between the two?** Now you can see what needs to happen to get from one to the other.
- **What are the steps between your starting point and your goal?** Bitesize chunks will be easier to do on a daily basis.
- **What support can you create to ensure constant daily actions?**
- **What's stopping you getting started today?**

Painless Business News

Welcome to all new clients this month – including those working with my associate, Amanda. The last two months have been an exciting time for the business, and it looks like further growth is on the horizon. As long as I keep up my daily 6th – . dai.1 Tc 64 5JTE!MC /P &

Wednesday October 25th sees my next workshop in Oxford, and there we will be working on the importance of, and strategies for, keeping in touch with current and former customers. This is an invitation-only invite, but newsletter readers are always welcome. This one is a 5pm to 7pm event, and is again £20. Email me to book a place or for more details.

Book Review

A holiday has produced the usual burst of reading (not that we had a lot of time to relax, with a packed itinerary!), and by far the best book was *We Need To Talk About Kevin* by Lionel Shriver – and thanks to a newsletter reader (I can't remember who!) for recommending it. A harrowing and very thought-provoking book, written in an innovative style (as a series of letters), it examines the pros and cons of having and raising children and their impact on relationships. As a non-parent, I would heartily recommend it.

Painless Puns

One of the graphic designers I use – and have done for 5 or 6 years – is Clare Lock at Clockstudio (www.clockstudio.co.uk). I need to thank her for this month's quote, which was part of a marketing campaign she put together, with her usual flare, for her own business.

Benjamin Franklin may have discovered electricity but it was the man who invented the meter who made the money.
Frank Wilson

And to prove your campaign works Clare, it is pinned on my wall!

This weekend sees new legislation in the UK outlawing discrimination on age, so I shall avoid any puns at the expense of the elderly, and instead refer to those of more generous proportions:

What was the name of the fattest, roundest Knight of the Round Table? Sir Cumference

Just before I went away I celebrated the first birthday of my beautiful god-daughter, Kathleen. Unfortunately we had to call the police when she would not go for her afternoon nap. She was charged with resisting a rest.

Final Words

The idea of the power of constant daily actions is not new – in fact I talk about it in my book, the Business Development Handbook - but it is an idea we should keep reminding ourselves of. What can you do to plan daily actions that are going to take you closer to your goals?

To complete the Rolling Stones theme, I am delighted to report that as we travelled one historic highway through California, Nevada and Arizona, we did indeed get our kicks on Route 66. What my kicks were I shall keep private, but remember my dear Mum was in the back of the car! Have a great month.

Warmest regards

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Careful assessment of your needs ensures that the most appropriate intervention is supplied – whether one to one ongoing coaching, strategic reviews, training events or facilitated group exercises within a team.

To discuss how you can painlessly build the business you want, call James today for a no-obligation discussion of your situation.