

James Butler's Newsletter #64

Amuse, Inform and Inspire

December 2007

The end of the year is an opportunity to reflect, and I would like to thank all the clients, workshop attendees, colleagues and suppliers I have worked with over the year. Whilst not always the smoothest of roads, this has been a good year in the Painless camp and, like a football supporter in August, I have high hopes for the next 12 months.

Thanks also to all those who sent good wishes for my tiger talk, featured in the last newsletter. I am delighted to report it went well, and I was amazed how moved people were by my holiday snaps (and my excellent oratory skills of course!). Luckily, I didn't repeat my mistake of saying botanist when I meant naturalist.

This year, the lucky Mrs Butler and I have attended two top-notch concerts – The Police and Jools Holland. Both Jools and Sting were absolute masters at working a crowd, and both produced show-stopping performances. For both of them, a large factor seemed to be that they just looked like they were having as good a time as the crowd. And when Jools finished with the Reggae classic *Enjoy Yourself*, I thought "There's a newsletter topic". You see, I never stop working!

Enjoy Yourself

A large proportion of my work is about how to make businesses successful – delivering a better experience for customers, generating more referrals and gaining new clients. Yet, in the majority of cases, we have to start with what my client enjoys about their life and work. We can be fairly sure that if they're not enjoying it, the business won't grow. It is a shame how many people aren't enjoying themselves, at some level.

This is what Jools sang as his closing number at the open-air concert in the summer:

*Enjoy yourself while you're still in the pink
Enjoy yourself, enjoy yourself
It's later than you think.*

*You work and work for years and years
You're always on the go
Never take a minute off
Too busy makin' dough
Some day, you say, you'll have your fun
When you're a millionaire
Imagine all the fun you'll have
In your old rockin' chair*

*Enjoy yourself it's later than you think
Enjoy yourself while you're still in the pink
The years go by as quickly as a wink
Enjoy yourself, enjoy yourself
It's later than you think.*

(Click [here](#) to hear an excerpt, from Legal Sounds.com)

Being married to an actuary helps you realise that waiting to do everything when you retire is not statistically smart, because we don't all get the time we expected. Surely it is far better to enjoy ourselves throughout our life, not wait?

How great would the world be if we never heard again that someone has passed away suddenly, and hadn't done that thing they always wanted to do? A friend of mine has unexpectedly lost his father recently, just months before they were to do a "Trip of a lifetime". That friend sums it up perfectly at this [blog posting](#).

We owe it to ourselves anyway, but perhaps the greatest living tribute to Arvind's father would be if we were to enjoy ourselves every day, because it is later than we think.

So what are the things in your life that would mean you were enjoying yourself, but that you aren't currently doing? What is your trip or treat of a lifetime? How can you make it happen? Here are some pointers:

Make It Happen

Know what IT is – pretty obvious, huh? We have to know what it is that we enjoy, what it is that we have always wanted, before we can make it happen. What better time than Christmas to reflect on such a topic? What floats your boat? A client once referred to this list as their "Dare to Dream" list – what would you do if you dared to dream?

Know what IT involves – once we have an idea of what we want to do, perhaps we need to understand fully the implications. How much will it cost? Do I need to learn a new skill, or get to a level of fitness, or save up some money in order to make it happen?

Plan IT – I love a plan, and most (but not all) successes come from having some kind of idea of how you are going to achieve your goal. That doesn't have to be a 400-page document, it could be some notes on a scrap of paper, but understanding your path to making it happen is a big part of making it happen.

Enjoy yourself – while you're still in the pink – give yourself permission to do some things just because you enjoy them, big or small. Dare to dream and make 2008 the year that you do some of those things on your "I've always wanted to do X" list.

What's to stop you?

Painless Business News

Business building tip of the month – say in a newsletter you expect client sessions to drop off in December! That doesn't seem to have happened (a sincere thanks to all my clients), so this month has been nicely busy.

For the first time in six years I am in the UK for Christmas (that has been a shock to a few people!), so if you want to review your challenges with someone over the next couple of weeks, get in touch. I will not be working on the public holidays, but otherwise feel free to give me a call.

Book Review

For my recent birthday, my friend Liz gave me a book entitled "Provided You Don't Kiss Me" by Duncan Hamilton. At first I thought she was concerned I might be chasing her with a bunch of mistletoe, then I realised it is a quote from Brian Clough, the subject of the book. If you like football and were born before 1980, it's worth a read. If you just have an interest in management styles, it is still worth a look. An inspirational manager who sadly succumbed to alcohol abuse, he was a great source of one-liners. My favourite: "I wouldn't say I was the best manager in the business, but I was in the top one."

Painless Puns

Some thoughts for this month (the first is for those of you who don't like to plan!):

Why not seize the pleasure at once? How often is happiness destroyed by preparation, foolish preparation?
Jane Austen

Dying is no big deal. The least of us will manage that. Living's the trick.
Red Smith

Enjoy yourself. These are the good old days you are going to miss in the years ahead.
Anonymous

Some early Christmas Cracker puns for you:

Who hides in the oven at Christmas? A mince spy.

What's big, grey and wears glass slippers? Cinderelephant.

Shakespeare walks into a pub and the barman refuses to serve him. "Sorry, you're bard."

Final Words

I hope you enjoy yourself over the festive period, and into 2008. Spend the time with those you love, doing the things you love and looking after yourselves.

I like to think all my readers are still happily in the pink – so let us all make the most of the coming year, enjoy ourselves, and then it won't matter if it is later than we think.

Warmest regards

James Butler

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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.