

James Butler's Newsletter #62

Amuse, Inform and Inspire

October 2007

Anyone who writes will tell you that one of the great attractions is when you get a response from a reader. From a coaching perspective, it is good to seek feedback and this is especially true for me with this newsletter. Whatever your reaction to what I write each month, please do share it with me!

Of course, some of the feedback complains about the quality of the puns (not realising that if I think they are making you groan, I think I've got it right). But the great George Metcalfe is just the latest to comment on the length of each issue. So, this month I am trying to reduce the content, hopefully so it takes a little less of your busy day to read it through. Please let me know whether it is better, worse, or just the same!

Time is on My Side

Not for the first time, the Rolling Stones can provide some appropriate lyrics to communicate a point. This month I want you to think about how much time you leave yourself to actually achieve the goals you set. My experience with clients, and myself, is that we are very impatient about achieving our goals – we want everything achieved yesterday, and without eating into our busy lives too much!

Of course, the reality is very different. Almost any goal worth achieving will take time and effort to reach. Do you consider time is on your side?

A clear area where this comes up is in giving ourselves a hard time if we haven't achieved what we planned. So you want to build a successful business by yourself, that employs several people and functions like a well-oiled machine? And you've been trying for a few months and you're still not there? Not got a turnover to rival Tesco already? Maybe we forget that the founder of Tesco traded as a market stall holder for 5 years before he even opened his first store (in 1929).

I suspect a lot of this comes from looking at the gap between where we are and where we want to be. Occasionally we should stop and look at the gap between where we are and **where we were**. We spend a lot of time and effort berating ourselves for lack of progress, yet outsiders often see that we have achieved a lot. Do yourself a favour, stop and look at the mountain you've climbed from time to time, not just the distance to the summit.

The second key area where we can ensure time is on our side, is to create the physical time in our schedule to achieve what we want. So many people I work with hang onto the technical work they feel safe with, rather than delegating to staff (or getting staff to delegate to), to free themselves to create the achievements they strive for. For many, this can be excused because doing the technical work brings in the cash (and all businesses need that to thrive). But, ultimately, such an approach limits the possibility to drive forward.

Does any of this sound familiar? Are you spending more time attending to client requests, ignoring the need to work ON your business, not just IN it? Do you then knock yourself for taking too long to achieve the bigger goals for the business? Think they might be connected?!

So, what can you do to change these behaviours?

Radical Surgery: Get out the diary, and set immovable time in your schedule where you can work towards your goals. Don't ask whether you can spare the time, ask **how** you can create the time.

Stop and admire the view: One of the few areas where my wife and I differ (another being the merits of fresh figs as a foodstuff) is how to enjoy walking in mountains. Bev is an achiever, so she likes to reach summits, cover distance and, if she slips with the map reading, set world records for longest distance covered on foot when only intending to have a "quick stroll". I, however, am an ambler. I like to cover a sensible route, at a sensible pace, in a sensible time. Ideally, such sensibilities will include leaning on fences looking back at the countryside we have covered. Even better is sitting outside a pub admiring the same! The optimum is probably somewhere in between – driven like Bev to get where you want to go, reflective like me to ensure you enjoy the journey and not just the destination. Where are you on that spectrum?

Painless Business News

Hard to believe we are only two months from Christmas. Once we get into mid November my nomadic lifestyle slows slightly and I have a few weeks back in Blighty to work on my second book, clear some other projects and, of course, pause and admire the view.

The last few weeks have been great for a flurry of new enquiries and returning clients. Thanks to all who have helped in that by passing my name on to friends, colleagues and others who look like they need help. With a couple of associates to keep busy, and more time in country myself next month, there is still chance to help others, so next time you see someone whose business is becoming a pain, give them my name!

Book Review

It is three weeks since the last newsletter, and I think I have read another ten pages of *The Undercover Economist*. Some R&R in Southern Utah should mean there is something more meaningful to review next month (unless of course Bev has me racing through every canyon in the Colorado Plateau!).

Painless Puns

Some lessons I have tried to apply in this newsletter:

Good things, when short, are twice as good.

Gracian (who, like me, must have married someone who is 5ft 4in)

Brevity is the soul of wit.

William Shakespeare

And Shakespeare inspired Dorothy Parker to say "*Brevity is the soul of lingerie*". I shall resist the temptation to bring my wife into the discussion now!

In the spirit of brevity, here are some nice short jokes. Remember, you're supposed to groan, and then smile.

What is grey, has four legs and a trunk?

A mouse going on holiday.

What is brown, has four legs and a trunk?
A mouse coming back from holiday.

Inspired by the structure of Alcoholics Anonymous, an uninspiring group created Under-Achievers Anonymous. Of course, they only managed 11 steps.

Final Words

As I said at the start, I would love feedback on this shorter newsletter (I accept it is still shorter, not yet short!). Please also let me know how you work on giving yourself time to realise your goals – both in creating the space to work on achieving them and in being patient and waiting for your labours to bear fruit.

Remember, you can choose for Mr Jagger to be correct – Time Is On Your Side.

Warmest regards

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James Butler helps people build the business they want. Through improving your strategic outlook and guiding you on sales, marketing and personal development he can provide renewed motivation and momentum in building your business.

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.