

# James Butler's Newsletter #90

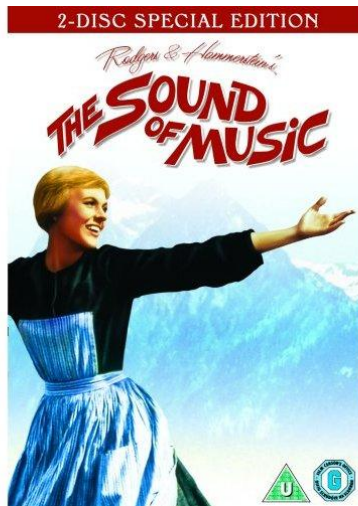
Amuse, Inform and Inspire

February 2010

Thank you to all the readers who were moved to respond to last month's topic on planning – at least two of whom have helped shape this issue's thoughts. This month, we move onto the vexed issue of what to do when you achieve your plan, which may not be an issue for all of us, but most people find they have achieved their goals in at least one part of life.

I would like to say welcome to the 80 or so new subscribers who have joined us in February. I hope you enjoy these monthly musings and welcome to a growing global family. For those who have been here a bit longer, Tracey my excellent assistant is doing some working on cleaning up our database and mailing list, so you may hear from her in the coming weeks.

Before I go on, I should perhaps warn you that whilst the following contains no scenes of an adult nature, or strong language, it does include a proliferation of metaphors. My English teacher may be horrified, but hopefully you will feel they illustrate a point!



## *Climb Ev'ry Mountain*

After Abba and the Osmonds, it was but a small step to inspiration by the legendary Sound of Music. The second best product of 1965, after someone very close to me, the movie is of course widely renowned as the source of much inspiration in the personal and business development field. Ok, maybe not, but this song came to my mind after I received the following in an email from a reader Clare after the last newsletter (quoted with permission):

*"You do a lot on goal setting, but what happens when you've achieved those goals, where do you go next? From a personal point of view, I'm struggling to set new goals as I feel quite happy where I am now, but I know that won't move the business forward. But what is forward, if I'm happy where I am?!"*

Clare has done really well in life – she has a great business ([www.clockstudio.co.uk](http://www.clockstudio.co.uk)), a great husband and lives in a beautiful part of Scotland. She has achieved many of her goals in life, yet feels compelled (perhaps by me!) to expect more. She has climbed several mountains in achieving the lifestyle she now enjoys – should she be expected to climb ev'ry mountain?

In my view, no. Especially in business, we get sold a myth that big is always better and I am not sure that it is. I get hundreds of emails a week telling me my life would be greatly improved if one particular thing were just a bit bigger, and I think we get similar pressure in our goal setting. I accept that I may be part of the problem.

But I do always try to say to clients that success is defined by the individual. For some competitors at the current Winter Olympics, a gold is the only measure of success. For the Ghanaian skier, being there is success enough. The key thing is that we find our own definition of success, then strive and achieve that. As the Mother Abbess once sung:

*Climb ev'ry mountain  
Ford ev'ry stream  
Follow ev'ry rainbow  
Till you find your dream.*

Yes – YOUR dream. Not your parents', not your friends', not mine and not your partners', but yours. And once you know what your dream is, and you get there, who says you have to push on to another dream? If I did ever get to date Sandra Bullock, would I be wishing Elisabeth Shue would join us?

So, to answer Clare's question, maybe the goals at her stage will be to consolidate where she is, conserve and polish what she has, and then contemplate over time if her aspirations change.

Imagine two hamsters in a cage. Who is the smarter, the one running furiously on a wheel, eager to get ahead, or the one who realises he has clean bedding, regular food, fresh water and 24 hours a day to laze in the nesting box? He has achieved his dream!

How do we know whether we're just loafing or we've achieved the dream? When should we run on the hamster wheel and when can we ease off? Well, these are questions that coaching can answer – which is why I recommended some coaching sessions for Clare. We don't yet work with hamsters, but any humans wanting help should call me on 01491 659073.

### *Painless Business News*

Painless Towers has had its fair share of hamster wheels in the last few weeks – we have a lovely flow of client work and some interesting and exciting projects on the go. We continue to try and bring in talented people to deliver various aspects of the business and I love the outsourcing model. Whether it be admin, websites, coaching delivery itself, PR or bookkeeping, we are building a team that helps us each live a little of our dream. As many readers know, the challenge is that hump you have to cross where setting up the systems and delegating is initially more time consuming, but worth it in the long run!

I enjoyed a Late Breakfast networking meeting recently – a great presentation from Claire Thirlwall – and it was a pleasure to hear from several there that they were finding their work picking up and that there may be tentative signs of a recovery. I hope that is the case for each of you too.

### *Book Review*

This month I have really enjoyed *Getting Into Guinness* by Larry Olmsted – a fascinating meander through the ups and downs of setting a Guinness World Record. It is astonishing, inspiring and downright scary the lengths some people will go to in order to achieve the goal of being a record breaker. Worth a read.

A book I haven't read, but a reader has, is *Attracting Perfect Customers* by Stacey Hall and Jan Brogniez. It has taken Caroline's business to a new level after I lent her my copy. In a recent email she said to me (quoted with permission):

*"Within 2 weeks of starting to read the book the person I had defined as my perfect client (and I had worked with 4 years ago) rang me to ask me to go back!"*

Trouble is, Caroline is now insisting I read it! The book talks about being a lighthouse on a beach, for your clients to find. The mistake many people make is they keep changing what they want, which is the equivalent of moving the lighthouse, so people can't find you. Caroline's excellent comment on this was *"Without James' guidance I might still be the lighthouse running around on the beach"*. Indeed.

## Painless Puns

After the last issues on planning, reader Jeremy sent me the quote "Life is all about how you handle Plan B", which is so very true. Whatever we plan for, we need to be ready for something else too!

From the Guinness book, I like this quote from Christopher Darwin: "If it was easy, everyone would do it. Right now there are probably people at the pub down the road making wild plans. But they'll never do them."

And from elsewhere this month, I saw this quote, which I know my friend Andy will love:

*We see things as we are, not as they are.*                      Leo Rosten

Thanks to Vivienne for this story from her Valentine's weekend: "It was a total disaster. He meant well, and booked us a table for the Saturday night, but how was he to know I don't like snooker?"

Bev was far luckier, being married to me. I bought her a new bag and a new belt for Valentine's Day. Hoover works a treat now.

## Final Words

It feels slightly heretical to have a newsletter saying bigger isn't better and that consolidation is better than continual growth, but I think it can be true. The key thing is that you have really explored where you are now, and where you want to go. If the two are the same, congratulations. If they're not, see the last issue to develop a plan!

What I really want is that every reader of this newsletter does climb the right mountain and finds their dream (thank you Mother Abbess) and helping people explore where they want to go is what we do really, really well. So if you want some external input to the process pick up the phone or send us an email.

Warmest regards

James Butler

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