

THE KNOW

Single-minded
success

Brought to you by
Thorne Widgery

Ever get to the end of a busy day wondering what the heck you got done?

Working so hard and getting nowhere just feels so darned frustrating. It doesn't have to be.

Yes, running your business can be a demanding, exhausting & gruelling affair.

It can also be (and should be) a rewarding, worthwhile, valuable, meaningful and enjoyable part of your life, where you can see and feel progress towards the vision you have for your business.

Just like steering a dinghy in fast moving water, you can only steer the boat if the boat is going faster than the torrent – you can only steer your business if you work on improving your business.

Just going with the flow - however fast it is - results in danger and death!

In business, just doing the urgent day-to-day jobs and none of the important jobs, keeps you busy but doesn't get you what you want.



Top Tip

Here's a proven solution for you...

Get clear on what you want your business to look like or where you want your business to go.

Then work out what one thing you must do every day so that you get there.

In a nutshell



Do one important thing every day that takes you towards the business you'd be proud to own and run.

Size doesn't matter...

Whether your business is small or large, there are lots of jobs that need doing – cash flow, customer care, sales, marketing, wages, recruiting, doing what your customers have paid you for, getting customers to pay, paying suppliers.

The list of jobs is almost endless. And the flow of these jobs is like a river, it never stops.

It's hardly surprising that you're forced to put off the 'important' vision-focused jobs, just to get all the urgent jobs done:

- 1 A call from a customer takes you away from training a colleague
- 2 Chasing cash takes you away from an important joint venture deal
- 3 A customer mix-up stops you planning your new product launch

But if all you ever do is the day-to-day work every day, all you'll ever get is more of the same day-to-day work tomorrow. Why not get better?

Just like John Bytheway, best-selling author and speaker, says:

**"Inch by inch, life's a cinch.
Yard by yard, life's hard."**

Ed Sheeran smashes it by working inch by inch...

Contrast 2017 with 2009. During 2009, sleeping rough or sofa-surfing, Ed Sheeran played more than 300 gigs at small venues and open mic nights...

Every day moved Sheeran towards the goal he had as a teenager. He honed his talent day in, day out, to be better at his one thing – working a crowd with his guitar and a loop pedal.

It worked. In 2015 Sheeran sold out 3 nights at Wembley Stadium.

In March 2017 Sheeran released his third album, 'Divide'. Within a week, all 16 songs were in the Top 20.

What if every daily action gets you a 50 percent increase? Would you be more committed to taking daily action if every day got you a 50 percent better result? We would be.

In 1983, a scientist called Lorne Whitehead showed that one toy domino can topple another domino 50 percent bigger than itself.

This means if you start a domino run with a 5 centimetre domino, the 10th domino will be taller than Neil Fingleton – the tallest man ever in Europe at 7ft 7inches. The 24th domino will be taller than The Shard in London!

“When one thing, the right thing, is set in motion, it can topple many things.”

– Gary Keller, *The One Thing*

For sure, Sheeran didn't see a 50 percent audience increase at each gig but his skills grew one gig (domino) at a time.

Real-life business success also shows the power of daily steps...

Ed Sheeran's progress is very like the real-life progress, that great businesses make – as shown by Jim Collins' research in his book, 'Good To Great'.

The Jim Collins' study showed how 11 great businesses exceeded market growth by more than three times the norm (one attained 18 x the market growth).

All 11 great businesses made lots of little steps. Little regular steps that resulted, eventually, in rapid and sustainable success (for 15 years).

Collins called this the 'flywheel' effect - regular action builds momentum and eventually the wheel starts flying. Many days pass without much obvious progress or success.

A bit like Ed Sheeran's daily grind in 2009 resulting in very little return, until he got massive success in 2015 and 2017.

What's your daily 'get-up-and-get-going' driver?

To keep driving whilst seeing little or no progress can be demoralising. It's easier to give up than keep going. Ed Sheeran didn't give up. He stuck to his daily gig-a-day grind. He knew what he wanted, he was a driven man.

For you to be driven to take action every day towards your goal, you'd better be passionate about your goal. It worked for Jim Collins' 11 'Good To Great' businesses - they focused on what was deeply passionate to them.

Working out what their deep passion was, helped show them which domino run to start. And which domino run to keep going. And which domino runs to avoid.

Jim Collins points to the need for a Big Hairy Audacious Goal (BHAG) – this is the big, ultimate domino at the end of the run.

What does it look like? Know this and you'll be driven and you'll know which daily actions (smaller dominos) to take...

The 3 keys to your BHAG...

“All business people want productivity and profit, but too many fail to realise that the best path to attaining them is through purpose-driven priority”

Like Gary Keller points out – your purpose sets your priority and your priority determines the productivity your daily actions produce.

Working on purpose...

“No matter our motivations, most of what we do in life is ultimately meant to make us happy.”

Keller points to the findings of a pre-eminent psychologist, Dr. Martin Seligman, who suggests 5 factors that contribute to our happiness - our 5 sources of happiness:

- 1 Positive emotion & pleasure
- 2 Achievement
- 3 Relationships
- 4 Engagement
- 5 Meaning

Which one of these is your main driver?

What Big Hairy Audacious Goal for your business connects with your main driver?

Clear and present priority...

Once you are clear on your purpose (your BHAG) setting your priority for the next 5 years, the next year, this month, this week, today, gets easier.

Keller provides a focus question to help you work out your priority in each time frame. To work, it must influence your daily actions (dominos):

“What's the one thing I can do, such that by doing it, everything else will be easier or unnecessary?”

– Gary Keller, *The One Thing*

What's the domino you can knock over today that gets you one step closer to the BHAG or ultimate domino?

Productivity power...

If you struggle to answer the focus question above, it's possibly because you've had a challenging day and your brain has run out of juice, just like a battery does, just like your other muscles do when you work them hard. You might also struggle because you're distracted by other things.

- 1 Distraction is productivity enemy number one
- 2 Enemy number two is brain fatigue

Keller points to research proving that to be productive on your BHAG, you should block off distraction-free (domino) time. This time should be when your brain is at its freshest and most powerful (in the morning before everything else kicks off!)

Set your dominos running

Pick your BHAG, block off daily distraction-free time, then go and knock your first domino over...



To be productive on your BHAG, you should block off distraction-free (domino) time. This time should be when your brain is at its freshest and most powerful.

Time to disagree

"I can't just focus on my 'one thing' every day - my business needs me to do lots of other stuff daily."

Yes, your business needs you to do lots of things every day for your business to exist.

But if you want your business to more than just 'exist' why not allow yourself 30 minutes of distraction-free time every morning? Or an hour once a week? And knock a domino over towards your BHAG. You'll then get to every Friday feeling that you have moved towards what you want, towards your BHAG. You'll be working your flywheel of success.

Success is sequential, not simultaneous. One small step every day or every week. Worth a try?

"I'm busy enough just doing what I can to keep my business going and earning a crust. Thinking about my purpose or BHAG is not for me."

If your BHAG is unclear, why not simply use a little distraction-free time when you're at your freshest?

Use the time to work out what you'd like your business to look like in 5 years' time. Or work out which of the five sources of happiness would best motivate you and how that would work in your business.

If you prefer, why not come and have a cup of coffee with the team here at Thorne Widgery and we'll talk it through with you?

"My daily to-do list still needs action every day, they're not distractions"

Getting your daily work done is necessary and can't be ignored. Similarly, you shouldn't ignore working on your business's BHAG. Is it too much to invest 30 minutes a day or 60 minutes a week moving your business forward?

One question that could help you reduce your daily grind is:

"Who else should be doing this for me?"

This can point to delegating work or outsourcing jobs that are not the best use of your valuable time.

Please tell me more...

We have two inspired reference books to help you achieve success in this edition of The Know:

- 1 Keller's 'The One Thing' gives practical, research-based insight for personal productivity and success.
- 2 Collins' 'Good To Great' shows the paths that 11 uber-successful businesses took.

Both books are connected in many ways, which further suggests the ideas are worthy of your attention.



Take one small step every day or week.



Use a little distraction-free time.



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Support

Supporting tools for this edition of The Know are available on businessbitesize.com/thorne_widgey

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Four in The Know tips for you...

Small daily or weekly steps towards your goal will get you there like it did Ed Sheeran.

A single focus worked for the great businesses in Jim Collins' research too.

- 1** Work out your long term Big Hairy Audacious Goal, one you can be passionate about
- 2** Use Keller's focus question to help work out your 'one thing' focus for the year, the quarter, month, week and today
- 3** Block off distraction-free time in your diary, however small, to do your most important 'one thing' work
- 4** Do your 'one thing' work when you're at your freshest and most energised – every morning

Ultimate argument:

“How do I know that a BHAG or 'one thing' focus will work for my business?”

Take no action on your one big hairy audacious goal (BHAG) and you'll stand still.

Spread yourself thin across many actions and many distractions and you'll make slow frustrating progress.

Do one thing every day towards your one goal (without distraction) and you start a domino run towards your success.

STOP being busy doing all the urgent jobs for a short time every day.

START doing one important thing every morning towards your one goal.

Your next steps:

Doing one thing every day, or every week, that drives you to achieve the success you seek makes sense, don't you think? Yes, it can be tough to do this alongside the daily grind of running your business.

Start by treating yourself to daily distraction-free time...

If all you ever do is the daily grind then you'll struggle to advance your business. Set aside distraction-free time either every day or every week – even if you have to hide in your favourite coffee shop or hotel foyer.

Use this time to take action on your Big Hairy Audacious Goal. You'll then be mirroring what Ed Sheeran did and what the 'Good To Great' businesses did too.

Distraction-free time every day, working on your 'one thing' every day, gets you success...

It's so easy to let the many and varied day-to-day jobs of running your business dominate your working life. Only when you take daily action on the jobs that improve the future of your business will you be like Ed Sheeran! You'll also be like the 11 'Good To Great' businesses that outperform their competitors by up to 18 times.

- 1** Work out your long-term Big Hairy Audacious Goal (BHAG) - one you can be passionate about, one that has you jumping out of bed every morning to get started. Make sure your BHAG is connected to what genuinely makes you happy.
- 2** Use Keller's focus question to help work out your 'one thing' (domino) focus - for the next 12 months, the quarter, the month, the week and today.

“What's the one thing I can do today such that by doing it, everything else becomes easier or unnecessary?”
- 3** Block off distraction-free time in your diary, however small, to do your most important 'one thing' work.

This is you using the domino effect in your calendar, every day or at the very least every week, so you make progress towards your BHAG.
- 4** Do your 'one thing' work when you're at your freshest and most energised – every morning.

Your brain, like all your muscles, gets fatigued through use. Schedule quality time when you're fresh on your daily BHAG actions – the morning is best!



BHAG = genuinely happy.



Do your 'one thing' when you're freshest.