

Planning Possibilities

News & views brought to you by Michelle Coussens

Welcome to my September 2018 Issue!

I am writing this issue on 9/11, remembering where I was on that horrific day. I worked at the Federal Reserve Bank of Chicago back then and had not yet started my consulting business. While my experience at the Fed was a privilege in terms of my exposure to great minds, important policy issues, and impressive, thoughtful people, I never quite felt the same about going into work after that day. The world had changed, and with it, my new understanding of the Chicago Fed's risks in terms of not only its location, but the nature of its work.

John Kerry has a new book out, and whether you are a fan of him or not, you have to appreciate its title— "Every Day is Extra". I happened to run across the title today, of all days, and I found that to be a poignant coincidence. As you plan for your future and contemplate our collective losses of 9/11, treat, appreciate, and savor every day as, well, extra.

Michelle



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Planning for Good Decisions

Prepare
Communicate
Execute

PLAN B CONSULTING MISSION STATEMENT

To assist organizations in becoming more effective and efficient through practical business planning, resulting in meaningful and measurable outputs, outcomes, and impact.

Projects traditionally were defined as very large endeavors. While there are still very large projects that have actually become more complex in today's society, there are also more smaller, shorter-term projects, as well. Thus, projects are more common. In addition, projects are also used more in the workplace because more people are seeing the advantages of project management techniques, associated tools have become cheaper and more accessible, and work tends to be more cross-disciplinary in team settings across various organizational functions.

Learn about what project managements trends to consider in planning on page 2.

Planning implications of project management trends

Here are some business trends that should be contemplated as you plan for future projects:

- *Integration of Business and Technology: How are you leveraging technology to move your organization forward?
- *Innovation Affecting All Aspects of Business: What cutting edge projects will keep your organization at the head of the pack?
- *Translation of Data and Knowledge into New Products/Services: What new products and services could you develop using data you already collect?
- *Transformative Effects of Customer Influence, Information & Access: Are you including input, feedback, or other involvement of representative customers in your project plans?
- *Faster and Faster Pace of Change and Disruption: What re-engineering or continuous improvement efforts are being incorporated?
- *Increased Value of Human Capital as an Asset: How are you considering talent in selecting and staffing projects?
- *Blurring of Lines Between and Within Organizations: Are there opportunities to partner with others on key, strategic projects?

Planning Predicaments: Are you selling or leasing to your customers?

Where
planning
concepts
meet
reality

The selling versus leasing proposition used to mainly apply to cars and places to live. So much has changed in the last few years in how products and services are provided. Instead of selling them, many new businesses have cropped up that provide *access* to them, often for a *temporary* time period. Want to listen to a song? Instead of buying it, why not access it in the moment, instead? Want to watch a movie? Subscribe to Netflix, or Hulu, or Amazon, or...

In your planning, are you considering new business models for providing your offerings beyond the traditional "buy and sell" model? If not, are you consciously considering why not? What new competition might move in on your market and turn the traditional proposition framework upside down? How could you differentiate yourself through a subscriber model?

Online Plug of the Month



Looking for great advice and resources regarding **your** resources? Then, look no further than <https://www.resourcefulmanager.com/>. Resourceful-Manager delivers practical information, training and tools to solve management and business problems and tackle difficult situations with employees. Topics Include: accountability, action plans, asking for a raise, coaching, decision making, delegation, difficult conversations, employee retention, feedback, FMLA, goal setting, guide, hiring, interviewing, job descriptions, leadership, legal cases, managers, meetings, motivating, onboarding, performance reviews, persuasion, productivity, salary talks, scripts, soft skills, templates, terminations, time management, and worksheets.

Communication Corner

Journaling might sound like a proxy for "Dear Diary," but actually, it has application in the business world. Communicating to one's self through reflection can serve as a strong influence over our future plans and behavior.

At the end of the work day, while you ride the train or unwind at home, spend a few minutes jotting down the following.

- 1) What went really well today at work and why
- 2) What did not go well today at work and why
- 3) What surprised you today and why
- 4) What you can do differently in the future based on "today"
- 5) New ideas from the day to consider/discuss with others either now, or down the road

These are five basic questions that, through such quick debrief, can not only bring a sense of accomplishment and clarity, but can continue to guide you and foster momentum for the next day, and coming days.



Book Banter

Organizing Your Day: Time Management Techniques That Will Work For You, by Sandra Felton and Marsha Sims, 2009, Revell.

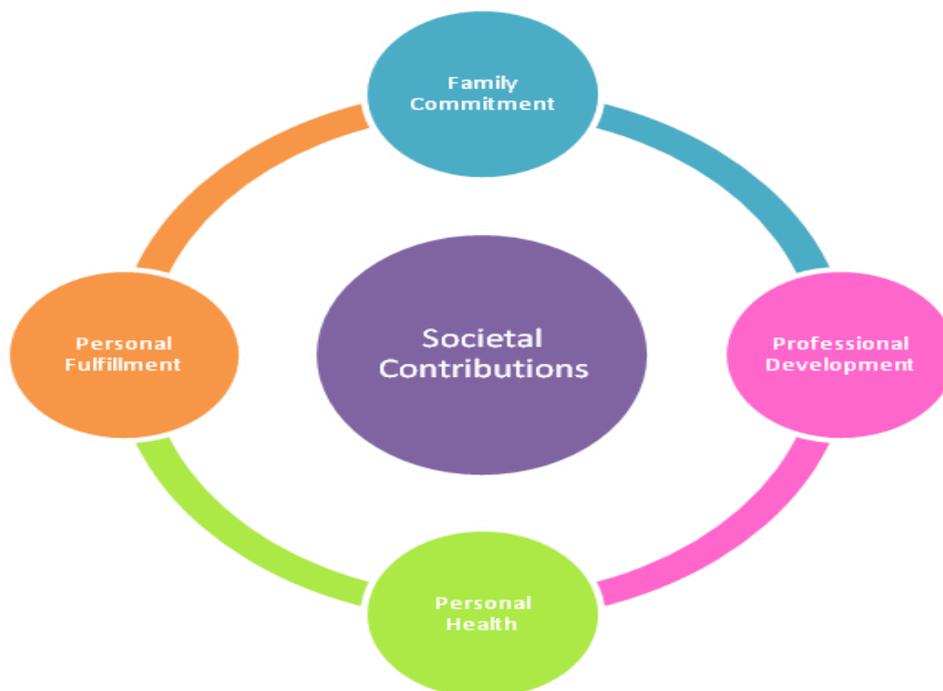
While this book was published "way back" in 2009, it still has some lessons that apply today. I read the book in preparation for a time management course I was teaching-- always on the hunt for additional useful advice to embellish my content. What are some of those tidbits? Ways to say "no" and otherwise set boundaries with co-workers; the tournament format for prioritizing; the prioritize-your-to-do-list approach (Go, Call, Do, Buy; or similarly, Priorities, Helping Others, Appointments, and Optional); causes of, and ways to deal with, procrastination; have a "to-don't" list; questions to determine whether you are good at delegating the right things to the right people at the right times; reasons and remedies for your (and others') lateness; and positive work habits to incorporate into your workday.

On habits, here are just some of the great pieces of advice the book provides:

"Check your planner at the end of every workday to see what is on the schedule for tomorrow. Give your office the once-over as you leave for the day... Write phone messages in the designated place each time (no more scraps of paper). Write your appointments in your planner as soon as you make them. Consult your planner before making a commitment. Confirm appointments in advance. Return material to the file immediately after using it. Stash important emails in the pertinent folder as soon as you read them... Put things by the front door that you will need to take with you in the morning. Read your mail daily with a trash can and shredder near by... Leave the house fifteen minutes earlier than you think you need to when you go to an appointment" (p. 196-197).

Personally Yours

Who's in charge?



Are you in charge of your life, or is your life in charge of YOU? People sometimes have an external locus of control, where they feel they are a victim of circumstance. How can you exert control over what happens to you and drive what happens next? Here's some food for thought:

- Seek to serve the greater good, but do it through actions that please yourself.
- Don't chase superficial definitions of success at the cost of enjoying life's smaller moments.
- Just like putting on your oxygen mask before your child's, make your goals and needs a priority in order to better impact yourself *and* others.
- If you get tired, worn out, or worn down (and who doesn't?), be kind to yourself. Recharge your batteries. Give yourself a time out.

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Services include:

- Speaking and training in planning and business management
- Personal coaching sessions on business performance and management
- Assistance in strategic/business plan development, update, review, and/or revision
- Customized market research and competitive intelligence analysis
- Strategic facilitation of the planning process
- Board retreat facilitation

This newsletter is intended to provide useful information but should not be construed as legal or financial fact, advice, or opinion.

Coming in October...

- * **The project selection funnel**
- * **Book discussion of Appreciative Inquiry: Research for Change, by Jan Reed, Sage Publications, 2007.**
- * **And more!**



Have an idea or comment to share? Have a topic suggestion or planning question? Send it in! I would love to hear from you!

Be My Guest/Reader Feature

Have a planning success or horror story? Have some tips for others? I would love to feature you. If you are interested in being included in a future newsletter, let me know if you would like to write a guest column or be interviewed.

UPCOMING TRAINING & SPEAKING EVENTS

- * **10/01/18-10/02/18: Critical Thinking, American Management Association, Chicago, IL, register at www.amanet.org.**
- * **10/11/18-12/06/18: Leadership (online), College of DuPage, register at www.cod.edu.**
- * **10/15/18-12/03/18: Introduction to Business (Monday evenings, Glen Ellyn campus), College of DuPage, register at: www.cod.edu.**
- * **10/18/18-10/19/18: Strategic Thinking, American Management Association, Atlanta, GA, register at www.amanet.org.**
- * **11/12/18-11/13/18: Strategic Thinking, American Management Association, Chicago, IL, register at www.amanet.org.**
- * **11/14/18-11/16/18: Strategy Execution, American Management Association, New York City, NY, register at www.amanet.org.**
- * **11/26/18-11/28/18: Strategy Execution, American Management Association, Chicago, IL, register at www.amanet.org.**
- * **12/02/18-12/03/18: Developing a Winning Business Plan, NeighborWorks® America, Pittsburg, PA, www.neighborworks.org.**

Email me for details!