



A MANAGEMENT GUIDE TO
CUTTING THROUGH THE NONSENSE
AND DOING THINGS RIGHT

THE POWER
· OF ·
SIMPLICITY

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The Power of Simplicity · Jack Trout

For this post we're going to take a look at a book which, despite its focus on marketing, is actually an extremely useful tool for managers in their professional role and individuals in their personal lives: Jack Trout's 'The Power of Simplicity'. In it the author drives home the message that "Less is more".

In the business world, leaders can find themselves mired in a swamp of complex or vague information that can lead to a wide range of interpretations and thus to inefficiency.

As leaders, we need to have a clear, concrete, and simple focus to help us stand out. One way to recognize a bad leader is when, faced with a challenge, he or she poses a viable suggestion to his or her team and says "We should do..."; a real leader asks his team for options, helps them prioritize and says "Let's do it" to show support.

Good leaders know what they're doing and where they're going and their message is clear, inspiring. The author listens to his own advice in this book, and clearly delivers his own messages without beating around the bush: "But the trick to a good organization is that everyone has to be focused on the same sheet of music. The reason that conglomerates never worked very well was because you had too many orchestras playing the same hall. And they were playing different kinds of music to boot". Which is why he argues that "The future belongs to the well-organized and well-focused company". That is, the winning company, because "people love the underdog, but they prefer to buy from the overdog".

Even so, simplicity is no easy task; it requires knowing how to focus and a lot of effort to eliminate the superfluous. As Blaise Pascal said, "I would have written a shorter letter, but I did not have the time".

Our conclusion: More is less. We all know that working more isn't as effective as working smarter, right?

This is how it begins...

"Through the years, being called 'simple' was never a plus. And being called 'simpleminded' or a 'simpleton' was downright negative. It meant you were stupid, gullible, or feebleminded. It's no wonder that people fear being simple. We call it the curse of 'Simple Simon'. When psychologists are asked about this fear, they get a little more complex. (Not surprising.) Psychologist John Collard of the Institute of Human Relations at Yale University described seven kinds of common fears. (All of us have some of them.) 1. Fear to failure. 2. Fear of sex. 3. Fear of self-defense. 4. Fear of trusting others. 5. Fear of thinking. 6. Fear of speaking. 7. Fear of being alone.