**One of the key ingredients for business success is …?**

**If somebody asked you what is the most crucial aspect of business (in its widest sense of the word) to focus on to ensure success, what would you say?**



***Ger Graus***

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Some would choose sales. Some would say marketing. Many would claim its leadership. Others believe it is systems. More than a few would be adamant that the most important element is financial acumen. I don’t disagree that these areas are all vital to the creation of any outstanding enterprise. I could make a very strong case for a sense of purpose and passion of course. But in my experience there is one element rarely talked about that trumps all the others in importance.

That element? Urgency.

Think about it. What is the number one gripe of executives and entrepreneurs today? They can’t get enough done. Sure they’ve got great ideas, plenty of them, but actually making those ideas happen is the hard part.

It is not just a matter of spending more time working. The reason so many are not achieving as much as they would like is not actually a shortage of time. It is that other stuff, other people get in the way. In so many different ways. They take ages to decide. Or make it difficult to get the job done. Or sit in endless meetings pontificating on the pros and cons. Or put off allocating the right resources. Or just don’t make a decision. Or forget they agreed to do something. Or don’t follow up. Or sit on their hands, ingenuously spilling critical comments. In all cases they become the gatekeepers to opportunity and success.

The plain truth is that getting anything done in this world is damn hard, because the inertia, complexity and resistance to action are so strong. The only way to cut through it all is to act with a real sense of urgency. To behave with an almost desperate urge to get the job done and as soon as humanly possible at that.

Only when you have a spirit of urgency – and the spirit is clearly the connection to a sense of purpose and passion for this - can you push your way through the barriers and red tape. Only by acting with urgency can you get others to deliver on time. Only by being truly urgent in your dealings can you achieve anything significant in a short time. The more you think about it, the more it rings true. Urgency is the one thing that drives projects forward with speed.

If you are not urgent, people sense it and things move more slowly. Things take ages to bear fruit. Mediocrity abounds. The question you may be asking is of course is, are you performing with enough urgency? Are you expecting enough? Of yourself? Of others? Urgency is not an easy character trait to develop – it is born from that spirit. The world does not particularly like urgent people. They can seem rude and pushy and unreasonable. Yet being that way is often the only way to get anything of consequence done – for now, not for next year! (Education is a classic example of this ‘tomorrow-will-be-better’ culture, forgetting about the millions of children of today.)

The reasonable person adapts her or himself to the world. The unreasonable ones persist in trying to adapt the world to them and institutionalise the accountability. Therefore progress depends too much on the unreasonable people. There are several different types of urgency we should focus on if we want to achieve great things.

1. Urgency with strategic planning. I know so many organisations and leaders who have taken seemingly ages to make a decision. As a result of their strategic reluctance and complacency they often get left behind in their industry.  (What have you been thinking about for too long? How about making a decision in the next day or so on it?)

2. Urgency with other people. Who owes you an idea, a product or report? Why haven’t you got it already? Does it really take that much time? When you ask for a result with genuine urgency – connected to that spirit, that sense of purpose and passion - you usually move straight to the front of the other person’s line of important tasks. That’s where you and your cause deserve to be, must be, to get things done quickly. Is your sense of urgency understood, shared?

3. Urgency in your own mind. To achieve greatly, we must cultivate great urgency in the way that we think, connected to that spirit of purpose and passion. We need to see ourselves as highly time sensitive, fast achieving people. Only when we view ourselves this way are we likely to muster the energy and drive to make things happen at warp speed. As the great American psychologist, William James, so often reminded us, we become what we consistently think about. If daily we have a self-image as somebody who has a real spirit of urgency, then soon we are likely to become that type of person.

So if you are not happy with the speed at which you are achieving, don’t just look at tactics, like sales, marketing, systems ... Spend at least as much time focusing on the one mindset that makes all the other stuff happen.

A real, deep, all encompassing, powerful sense and spirit of urgency.

