

# Promoting Excellence™

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THE KENNA COMPANY

HELPING LEADERS SELECT & ENGAGE HIGH IMPACT PERFORMERS

## The Time Management Fallacy: Revealing the Importance of Self-Management

We've all heard, "You can't manage time." It's true. No matter what, there are always 24 hours in a day." Okay, that makes cognitive sense, but we still think of managing time: "I need one more hour!" "The day just doesn't have enough time in it." "I'll just have to make time for it." The fact is, though, managing time is a fallacy and we need to stop whining about time and let go of this notion.

The real issue is **Self-Management**. And many of us aren't very good at it. Semantics? Maybe. But as long as we focus on time, versus ourselves, it will be hard to improve—as we must.

**Self-Management** is the ability of a person to prioritize and complete necessary actions in order to deliver desired outcomes within allotted time frames.

Someone who is good at **Self-Management** feels energized by their jobs and personal life. They don't just react to their environment. They carefully let in what works for them using skills like diplomacy, goal setting and planning. And they keep out time wasters live ineffective meetings and doing unnecessary tasks. They are in control of their lives and outcomes..

Someone who is not as good at **Self-Management** is often controlled by their environment. They may be in a job they don't like, take on too much responsibility, or lack the discipline of focus. Many people I coach admit that lack of **Self-Management** is causing them a great deal of stress.

When we see someone who is good at the skill of **Self-Management** we use adjectives like "in control", "calm", "organized", "goal oriented", "purposeful" and "content" to describe them. Often we comment about how much the person does and how they still have time to have high 'quality of life'.

Here are some important skills for **Self-Management**:

- **Pursue business objectives in an organized and efficient manner.** (Example: Do you know what your 4 or 5 key accountabilities for your job are? These are the key goals that will have the most impact on your business. They are the reasons your job exists. They should be quantifiable and time bounded.

Continued—Column One—Page 2 Self-Management

## PASS THIS ISSUE ON TO:

- 1) \_\_\_\_\_
- 2) \_\_\_\_\_
- 3) \_\_\_\_\_
- 4) \_\_\_\_\_
- 5) \_\_\_\_\_

## The 28 Day Personal Effectiveness Challenge

**Want to become more effective? If you do, take me up on this challenge.** Make it a habit to end every working day by doing the following:

Clear your desk. Put everything in a file or to-do folder and in a designated spot. You will start each day off on a positive note. An uncluttered desk will also help to keep you organized and properly prioritized. (You'll get tired of seeing the things you haven't finished in your to-do folder and, if truly important, do it. If it hasn't been acted on for two weeks, throw it away)

Reflect on your day. Ask yourself some questions at the end of the day—perhaps before going or to bed:

- "Did I accomplish my business goals for today that I set at the end of the day yesterday? How did my actions help the company?"
- "Where and how could I have spent my time better today?"
- "Am I moving closer or farther away from my personal dreams and major business goals (these are the goals for which your job exists)?"
- "Did I make anyone's day better?"
- "Are there choices I am making in my life that are not in my best interest?" (Example: Not exercising, not resolving an issue / conflict)

Plan for tomorrow. Transfer your tasks in your daily planner, Outlook Tasks, etc. Make a prioritized list of to-do's (actions), and list the goals that must be accomplished. By planning for the next day—today—you will relieve stress and be prepared to be off to a fast start tomorrow morning.

Want this to work: Find someone (if you can't find someone else, call me—I'll do it for you for free) who will help you stay accountable to these habits for 28 days. If it's not working for you at that point, ask why. If it is, continue.

**Does anyone want to hold me accountable to this challenge?**

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If you are organizing your day / week you would make the best use of your time by using these key goals as your planning template. If the activity does not sync with these goals, why do it?

- **Prioritize activities as necessary to meet your job responsibilities.** (Example: Some activities are more fun, some are less fun. Sometimes the least pleasant are most important, but we put them off. By writing our goals and then all the actions you - or someone else - need to complete to accomplish the goal, you will be organized and efficient. Do the least pleasant early—get it over with.)
- **Maintain the required level of activity for achieving goals without needing direct supervision.** (Example: Take an acceptable level of personal responsibility and accountability for achieving your goals.)
- **Minimize workflow disruptions and time wasters to complete high quality work within a specified time frame.** (Example: Do you allocate sufficient time to focus on key projects, writing or thinking without people, phone, or noise distractions?)
- **Avoid using strengths that are not required in their job.** (Example: You have a sales organization reporting to you, but one of your competencies is personal accountability. It is so strong that you have trouble delegating and you end up taking on many tasks that should be done by others. As a result, you are often too busy to do what's really important like spending time coaching your managers.)

**Personal Note:** I am taking **Self-Management** very seriously. I realize that I have let some things slip that are important, I sometimes set unrealistic goals, I can become distracted with things I like to do, but are not important to my business. I use to have a rather chaotic office, not any more. Realizing lack of organization was costing me time, I read a couple very good books on organization (*The Now Habit* by Neil Fiore, PhD and *Getting Things Done* by David Allen—both worth reading) and have added a number of processes including completely rebuilding my filing system. I am not detail-oriented so this feels a bit foreign right now, but I am committed because of the benefits. I now get more done—personally and professionally.

If you'd like to find out how you score in terms of **Self-Management** and other key business competencies, call me about taking our new and truly amazing assessment called the *Attributes Index*™ ([click for a sample](#)). It will help you identify strengths and areas to develop. The *Attributes Index* is an important component of my coaching process and clients find it very useful.

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If you would like to purchase the self development CD on **Self-Management** or other competencies, send us an [e-mail](#) requesting our pricing and order form.

**Leadership is practiced not so much in words as in attitude and in actions.**

— Harold S. Geneen

## Why MANY Hiring Decisions Fail and What YOU Can Do About It

It's very satisfying to enlist the trust and confidence of our clients. This has been especially true in the area of helping them improve their system for selecting candidates for jobs. The reason the selection process is so meaningful for me is I have personally had people reporting to me and I know how hard it is on both the employee and their manager. And I know what a profound impact a poor hiring decision has on a businesses' profitability, productivity, culture, employee satisfaction and retention.



"Miss Adamson, pluck someone from nowhere and put him in a position of responsibility."

In a nutshell, here's some of the key reasons why the wrong candidate often gets hired:

1. Many hiring decisions—where there is not a good system in place—get made within 5 minutes of meeting a candidate. The decision is based on the resume and first impressions.
2. Many jobs either lack of a clear (or up to date) description of the job and reasons why the job exists. If you aren't crystal clear what's required in a job, it is impossible to adequately interview candidates.
3. Interviewers aren't trained to interview effectively.
4. The process of hiring someone for the job is rushed.
5. Competencies, attributes, motivators and behaviors—all critical to job fit—aren't considered or objectively measured. (Companies hire for skills and fire for attitude.)
6. Reference and background checks are not completed or are completed poorly.

"Often, our current clients believed they are doing a 'good' job. And they usually are. The hope of making better hiring decisions, though, is very attractive to most businesses."

What you can do about it? If any of the above reasons why the best interviewer, but wrong candidate can get hired in your organization we can help. Our company specializes in employee selection. We can help evaluate

your current system and the results you are getting. We can help identify problem areas and help you fix them. We can even help you benchmark jobs and objectively assess the qualifications of key candidates compared to the benchmark. (Note: We do not conduct background checks, but can refer you to one of the best companies in the industry.)

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Learn more about selecting  
the right employee

Go to our website ([www.kennacompany.com](http://www.kennacompany.com)). Or call Joe McKenna at 816-943-0868. We guarantee you will be satisfied or we work for free.

## If You Are Going To Give An Employee a Compliment, Please—Do It Right!

When your product manager finishes making a great presentation to senior management, don't just say great job. Tell them what they did well. For instance, "John, I am so proud of you. I watched management as you were discussing your brand's plan for FY2005. You had them captivated. I believe it was because of the thoroughness of your presentation, the creativity of your strategies and the confidence with which you spoke. Well done."

Not only are you telling them they did well, you are motivating them because they know exactly what you thought was good. This type of feedback—given at the right times—can do more for morale and confidence than just about anything else—even money.

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## Critical Behaviors For Effective Managers

The following are the top five traits every manager should practice. As a leader, basic necessities such as organizational and communication skills and an influential personality are given expectations. These are characteristics that too many in power often lack.

### 1) Go Where They Are

A good manager will know that to get the support from his/her workers will require the effort to work WITH them in order to achieve the level of success desired. Expecting someone to be at a level they have yet to achieve, only decreases employee self-esteem and thus, the morale of the company. You will not learn about them by reading their reports, you must spend time with them.

### 2) Know Your Employees

Allow yourself the opportunity to develop friendships with your co-workers. Invest time in them and loyalty becomes more possible since an emotional connection has been established. (Read: *What's the Purpose of Communicating* on page 3)

### 3) Be Observant

Recognize when conflicts arise. Some people may feel uneasy in the work environment for various reasons and you are ultimately responsible to ensure that they are comfortable.

### 4) Use Collaborative Approaches

Rather than avoiding a conflict or simply compromising, focus on working together to find a solution where all parties benefit. Compromising doesn't solve a thing since it is essentially a lose-lose situation.

### 5) Be Open-Minded

Keep your office door open. Make your employees feel that they can come to you with anything they are concerned about. Let them offer suggestions, and in some cases, allow them opportunities to be involved in the decision-making process.

Reprint permission by Jeremy Bennett (Adapted by Joe McKenna)



## What Do YOU Want To Do ... Before You Die

At age twenty—or even thirty—it seems that you'll live forever. By forty, though, you begin to realize that you may have lived half your life. You start taking planning for retirement seriously. And we start talking in earnest about "Someday".

Two years ago my wife, Mindi, and I bought a house at the Lake of the Ozarks in central Missouri. It's a beautiful lake and our place is a wonderful retreat.

When friends ask me if I'm glad we did it, I tell them it had been something we had wanted to do for years, but kept putting off. We'd rationalize and justify: "It's not the right time." "We'd be too busy to use it." "It's a long drive." "Money's tight right now." The reality is, I really wish we had done it years ago.

What are you putting off? What have you wanted to do, but you've been too busy or conservative to do it. Start a list. Keep it in your desk drawer. Call it "Things I want to do before I die". Whenever you think of something, write it down. Don't over think anything. Remember the Chinese proverb "If you don't dream dreams, dreams can't come true."

Start Now!

Do the things and live the dreams that are on your list.

Life is short. Live it well.

## About The KENNA Company

Founded in 1996

**Helping companies select and engage high impact performers**

We specialize in (click topic to learn more):

- Employee Selection
  - Benchmarking jobs
  - Assess candidates for 'job fit'
- Assessments
- Executive Coaching
- Team Building
- Communication Skills Training For Management
- Leadership Training and Development
- Customized 360° Feedback
- Customized Employee and Customer Satisfaction Surveys

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## Not Only Is This Employee Not Engaged In Her Job - She's Angry

In the last issue of *Promoting Excellence* I asked readers to e-mail me about anyone in their company who, they believe, is not 'engaged' in their job. I received a number of responses (not surprising considering studies have shown "Two of three employees would rather work somewhere else").

Reader: "There is an employee in the sales administration area of our business. This employee has been at this company for five years and was moved six months ago to this department. Her previous manager was unhappy with her job performance, but didn't have the guts to fire her. When the sales administration position came open, this employee's previous manager recommended her for the job."

The reader continues, "The job requires collecting and analyzing sales data, building PowerPoint presentations and coordinating the delivery of samples and selling materials to trade shows, etc. She's very unorganized and drops balls all the time, which causes sales reps to complain and forces the rest of us—including her manager—to pick up the slack. To make matters worse, she is constantly bad-mouthing someone in the organization or something about the organization. It brings everyone down and hurts our business. This department was very productive and a lot of fun before she was hired."

Response: Ouch! This definitely sounds like the description of an employee who is not happy and is not truly engaged in their job or the company. The resolution to this situation probably rests first with this employee's manager. Talk directly with her manager and identify the issues from your perspective. Stick to facts. There's a pretty good chance that this manager already knows the issues, but too often an employee's manager doesn't see the problem clearly and if others do not speak up, nothing happens.

If this manager agrees with you, he has three choices (and I have to make some assumptions):

1. Play Ostrich-Bury his head in the sand. Do nothing.
2. Termination-(Supported by appropriate documentation)
  - Sometimes the very best action to take is to "get the wrong people off the bus".
3. Corrective Management-It sounds like the job requires someone who is very structured, patient and organized. In addition, PowerPoint skills are called for in the job. Also, problem solving, interpersonal skills, customer service, flexibility and results orientation are probably all required. Finally, the job seems best suited for someone who is motivated by a results orientation. The key for the manager—whether developing this individual or filling the position when this person is terminated—is identifying exactly what is required by the job and what the incumbent's strengths and weaknesses relative to the job are.

If the manager decides that the incumbent can realistically be a good fit for the job and a productive member of his team, solid business and personal development (job related) goals need to be established and reviewed by the manager with the employee on a frequent basis. Bad mouthing needs to end immediately. If the employee is meeting or exceeding the goals—great. If not, proceed to choice two above.

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## What Is the Purpose Of Communicating?

From *Dialogue* by William Isaacs.

*"Too many of us have lost touch with the fire of conversation. When we talk together, it is rarely with depth. For the most part, we see our conversations as either opportunities to trade information or arenas in which to win points. Difficulties that might otherwise be resolved or even dissolved persist. And often we find we simply do not have the wherewithal to genuinely consider new possibilities, new options. Such miscommunication or misunderstanding condemns us to look elsewhere for the creative intensity that lies dormant within and between us. Yet it is an intensity that could revitalize our institutions, our relationships and ourselves."*

In the September issue of *Promoting Excellence*, I wrote about improving how you listen. The article caused a lot of people to send me notes about how thought-provoking the article was and how, when they thought about it, they did find themselves 'listening with their answer running'. They also acknowledged that it was a bad habit, one to be changed. One person observed that for him it was more of a pre-programmed script that determined how he chose to hear things from others. This is a powerful way to look at listening and it is what prompted me to share the quote from *Dialogue*.

We seem too often to be closed to openness—to hearing opinions and thoughts different from our own. Obviously there are many social issues we can think of that lend themselves to this premise. The world is at war over many of them.

This newsletter, though, focuses on business issues, not world issues. To this end, I suggest you read the quote from the perspective of people you work with, your customers, your vendors and your competitors. Are we trying to win and be right in our conversations or are we trying to broaden our thinking through dialogue so that we—and our companies—can be great? This is what thinking outside the box is about—considering new possibilities and embracing change.

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We offer a customized, in-house  
Communication Skills Workshop  
designed for business people who truly want to  
improve their ability to participate in effective and  
constructive dialogue. This is an excellent workshop  
to offer your senior management team.

For information call Joe McKenna at 816-943-0868.

*Think like a man of action, act like a man of thought.*  
Henry Bergson

*The beginning is half of every action.*  
Greek proverb

*It is hard to fight an enemy who has outposts in your head.*  
Sally Kempton

**HAVE A VERY SPECIAL HAPPY THANKSGIVING'S DAY**