



Are YOU a BUSY FOOL?

Laura Ashley-Timms, the Licensing Industry's very own Coach, has teamed up with Total Licensing to challenge you to improve yourself and your business.

So read on... and then send in your questions to be answered in our regular 'Coaching Corner' feature.

I work almost exclusively now with Business Owners of Small to Medium sized Companies (SMEs). People tend to bring me in because they are open to making changes – usually with the ambition to significantly increase their company's profits and simultaneously enhance their own life too.

These Managing Directors and Owners have one thing in common – they want to improve. They all know that they can do more and however good they already are (for starters they're running successful businesses), all believe they can take it up to the next level.

If you think about it, this is no different to our top sportsmen; at some point they were the top performers in their club, so they competed at a regional level. Then they worked with their coach to get to a National Ranking and next wanted a World Ranking. When you've achieved the world ranking you want to be no 1, to win a World Championships or the Olympics. Once you have that gold medal, one is no longer enough, you want to keep growing the collection... all the time you are focused on constantly improving - and to do that, top performers almost ALWAYS have a coach working alongside them, motivating and driving them to reach ever higher.

At whatever level you are, if you are reading this and thinking, "Yes, I'd like to improve too" then ask yourself "Am I a Busy Fool or An Effective Performer?"

The Busy Fool

One thing my clients have in common is that they all work exceptionally hard. They put in long hours and are dedicated to their respective businesses, often at the expense of their families or of a great overall quality of life.

Often they accept this as the cost of providing well for their families and their staff –but is it really necessary? Can you really have it all?

How do you Spend your Time?

1. You leave work, tired. You've worked flat out all day, put in the hours, but are frustrated that you haven't really achieved much. If this sounds like you, you are potentially a 'BUSY FOOL'

2. You start the week with a rough idea of what you want to achieve and generally get some of it done. You know that you could do better, but feel on average that you muddle through. Is this you? If so you are a 'PEDESTRIAN PERFORMER'.

3. You spend the first 30 minutes of every week planning exactly what you want to achieve by the end of the week. You plan each day to ensure that this absolutely happens, even if it means rearranging some existing meetings or engagements.

At the end (or beginning) of every day you spend 5 minutes checking that you are on track, and re-jig your time as necessary. By the end of the week

you leave work satisfied that you have achieved everything you set out to achieve. Congratulations, you are definitely an 'EFFECTIVE PERFORMER'.

So what do you want to be?

Stephen R Covey, in his bestseller 'The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People', talks extensively about this very issue. One of the 'Habits' he identifies is aimed specifically at helping people identify how they are spending (and often wasting) time. His 'Habit 3: Put First things First' is all about identifying firstly how you currently spend your time and then restructuring what you do to focus on your personal priorities.

He uses the following Time Management Matrix to describe the ways we tend to spend our time:

The Time Management Matrix

The Matrix shows in a simple form the nature of the tasks on which we spend our time. We have 'Urgent' tasks and 'NON Urgent' ones. In addition some of these will be 'Important' whilst others are 'NOT Important'.

If you are a 'BUSY FOOL' and were to analyse where you spend most of your time it would probably be responding to the urgent crisis of quadrants 1 and 3, and hiding in the not urgent and not important time wasting quadrant 4!

The ideal scenario however is to spend as much time as possible in quadrant 2 (the home of most 'Effective Performers'), eliminating and

	URGENT	NOT URGENT
IMPORTANT	<p>1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Crises • Pressing problems • Deadline-driven projects, meetings, preparations 	<p>2</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preparation • Prevention • Values Clarification • Planning • Relationship Building • True re-creation • Empowerment
NOT IMPORTANT	<p>3</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interruptions, some phone calls • Some mail, reports and meetings • Many proximate, pressing matters • Many popular activities 	<p>4</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trivia, busywork • Some phone calls • Time wasters • 'Escape' activities • Excessive TV • Irrelevant mail

Don't forget that for readers of Total Licensing Laura is offering a completely FREE no obligation 30 minute coaching consultation.

So go on and pick up the phone, what have you got to lose? Your only risk is spending half an hour talking about yourself...Contact Laura Ashley-Timms at Notion Limited. Tel (UK) 0845 4568217 (Int) +44 (0) 1926 840078 Mobile +44 (0) 7968 164083 laura@notionltd.com www.notionltd.com

minimising the time spend fire fighting in quadrants 1 and 3. As you invest more time in planning, prevention and relationship building, there will be less need to spend time picking up the broken pieces of the Urgent quadrants.

Next steps – taking Action

As ever in order to improve you need to start taking ACTION. If you really are a 'Busy Fool' or just honest enough to accept that there is room for improvement then think about some of the changes you can make to become immediately more effective in getting better results in less time.

It's time to take a long, hard look at the habits you have formed and start making some changes.

1. Review last week. How did you spend your time? Which quadrant were you mostly in?

2. Look at the week ahead. What is fundamental to achieve this week? What few activities will start to move you closer

towards your goals? These can be small baby steps; the critical element is to keep moving in the right direction and to gain some momentum.

3. Proactively plan the next week to maximise your time in Quadrant 3. Rearrange, or better still, cancel unnecessary meetings. Delegate all low value tasks where possible. Only focus on the IMPORTANT areas and tasks.

4. Review your week on a daily basis as you get through it. Start each day spending 5 minutes ensuring that what you are focusing on is important and moving you forward.

5. At the end of the week review how much time you are now spending in each quadrant and set a target for next week to improve this again.

6. Repeat every week until this becomes a habit and you stop being a 'Busy Fool' and become an 'Effective Performer'!

Coaching Corner

Q: I have got to the point where I am feeling that if a job is worth doing well, I should do it myself. I know this is often not the most productive use of my time, but I have lost confidence in the quality of the output of some of my team. Are there any quick fixes to change this?

Managing Director

A: This is a good starting point...at least you can admit that this is not a good use of your time. It would be helpful to identify what specifically has led you to lose confidence in your team and are there particular members that have let you down recently?

Delegation is often the toughest skill to master for owner-managers. Because you build up the business yourself you are often knowledgeable about all the jobs within the company and know enough about the processes to do them. As you grow you realise that you should be focusing on the big picture: still in-putting the administration and accounts is really not the best use of your time, so you start to employ people to do the more repetitive tasks, freeing yourself to focus on growing the business.

Where it often falls down is in the communication. When things go wrong it is easy to blame someone – often anyone will do. "Hard to find competent staff", "if you pay peanuts you get monkeys" etc. Often the reality is down to simple miscommunication. What specifically did you ask to get done? Was there a clear process set out for this task? Did everyone's expectations match yours? Were you clear about the deadlines? Were there any checks in place?

Often an extra 5 minutes spent planning the task and checking understanding of whoever is due to complete it is all that it takes to ensure better results. This comes back to focusing on Quadrant 2 – PREPARATION, PLANNING, RELATIONSHIP BUILDING, EMPOWERMENT. The more you can focus on these, the less fire-fighting you will have to do correcting where things go wrong or feeling you have to spend time doing it yourself.