

F.T.I.

The #1 Reason Most Small Businesses Don't Grow (or do as well as they could)

I was speaking to a group one time and my friend Kirby Lammers who was in the audience, chuckled and muttered "F.T.I." I asked him what it meant. He said a speaker he heard once called it "Failure To Implement." Many times you know *what* to do and *how* to do it, you just *don't* do it. After coaching hundreds of business owners and addressing thousands, I have found that F.T.I. is the #1 reason that small businesses don't grow or do as well as they could.

A Japanese proverb says *Vision without action is just a daydream. Action without vision is a nightmare!*

Small business owners are so overwhelmed, distracted and just trying to pay the bills that actually implementing anything additional can be daunting. This manual is chock full of phenomenal systems and strategies that can help your business, but if you don't use them they obviously won't do you any good. These systems and strategies have literally revolutionized small businesses around the world, but it only happened because they overcame F.T.I.

So, what causes F.T.I. and how can you overcome it?

The 4 Golden Keys to Implementation

Key # 1: Inspiration

Have you noticed that the most successful small business owners are excited about the future? Have you noticed they are focused on the possibilities rather than just the problems? They see something others don't see. They have hope for the future because they *know* they can grow the business. They *know* they can improve their lives.

I call that *inspiration*. Inspiration is different than motivation (in my mind). Motivation comes from external forces. You've got to make payroll, so you're motivated to close a sale. Or, you get to go to Hawaii, so you are motivated to make that happen. Motivation is created by external forces that may be positive or negative. A reward or a penalty.

But inspiration (in my mind), is something that is kindled on the inside. Inspiration happens when you actually see a compelling vision for the future that creates desire to reach that dream. Your dreams fuel your life. No dream, no fuel. No fuel, the vehicle doesn't move.

I am convinced that one of the biggest limiting factors is lack of vision. The lack of a dream equals the lack of desire. When your imagination captures a compelling vision for your life and you connect the success of your business vehicle to it, you now have something to work with.

If there is no dream, why would you want to do the hard work in this book? You wouldn't. And you won't. So, you must develop a compelling, inspirational vision for your life. This will create the desire (the fuel) to move your vehicle forward.

Business owners suffer from many distractions, a lack of focus and a lack of discipline. Business owners aren't organized or motivated. And the reason is that you aren't inspired. If someone called you up with an all expense paid trip to Hawaii for two, but you had to leave tomorrow, you would get pretty doggone focused and disciplined all a sudden. You see, that picture of Hawaii created desire. So, keep searching for your dream. What would you dream about if you could not fail? What would your perfect day look like?

Finally, stay positive by putting inspirational information into your mind EVERY DAY. Avoid talk radio, television, or conversations that don't inspire you. Don't ignore your family, just try to avoid getting into negative or useless conversation.

When your feet hit the floor each morning, focus on the possibilities rather than the problems. Focus on your goals. Focus on your vision. Every day. Refuse to be negative.

Key #2: Organization

Many years ago, I began a daily habit that serves me well to this day. I started carving out an hour in the mornings to work on my projects - to implement. I call this time my "Time Capsule". This is a capsule of time that I take every day (except Sunday) to focus on my top projects and take action. During this time, I don't take phone calls and I don't get involved in anything but working on my projects. The only person that can contact me during this time is my wife. If you have a key staff member that needs to be able to contact you because you are still working "in" the business, let them know how to contact you, but to only contact you during that time if it is truly an emergency.

The best time for your Time Capsule is early in the morning before anyone else is awake. Especially if you have young children. Once you get involved in the duties of the day, it's difficult to get back to your quiet time. Make a pact with yourself and impose a rule that you can't do anything else until you've done your Time Capsule. You may groan at having to get up an hour earlier, but I would ask you if your dream is compelling enough. Do you have a dream? What do you get if you take massive action? What will the outcome be if you actually implement the things you need to implement? What is the cost of *not* doing it?

Impose a sense of urgency upon yourself (like the trip to Hawaii) and pretend you are going on vacation tomorrow. Do that every day. Speaking of vacation. I love the beach and one of the things that always helped me was to have a trip to the beach planned each quarter. I knew that if I worked really hard for 3 months, I had a nice reward at the end of it. Put your vacation in your plan and use that as a source of inspiration.

Key #3: Training

Zig Ziglar said "you were born to win, but to be the winner you were born to be, you must plan to win and prepare to win before you can expect to win. But if you plan to win and prepare to win, you can expect to win". Training is preparing. Training is learning and practicing these strategies until they are second nature.

Learning these strategies is a good start, but you've got to get in the ring and spar. You've got to train as hard as you fight. So, often small business owners use the strategies incorrectly or they cut corners. You must discipline yourself to learn and flesh out the systems in the real world.

Focus on the biggest return-on-investment projects. Once you've taken the Born To Win Business Assessment to see where you are now, pick four projects to build your systems. Pick the four strategies that you know will move your business forward in the next 90 days. Pick those that you know will help you reach your sales goals.

When you get overwhelmed, busy and distracted, refocus by going back to the Phenomenal Four Projects. Work on those every day during your Time Capsule. Take action on your projects every day.

The Most Important Key To Implementation

I've saved the best for last. Above all, the last key is the most important. Only the rarest of business owner is successful without this one...

Key #4: Support

Every business owner needs support, encouragement and accountability.

Support means that you have a group of people around you to help you fulfill your vision, mission and purpose. This will include your staff, but also should include your peers.

Encouragement means that you have a group of people around you that remind you that you can do it. Zig Ziglar said "encouragement is the fuel people run on". I am so grateful for those around me that show me that I can do more than I can ask, think or imagine.

Accountability means that you have a group of people that are there to ask you the tough questions. Have you done what you need to do this week to reach your goals? Are you staying focused on your goals? Are you working your plan? Are you developing your systems? Accountability is huge. I am so grateful for those people that are tough enough to ask the tough questions. I don't always like it, but no pain, no gain.

I am so grateful for the mentors, coaches and consultants I have been blessed with in my life and business. We need people that have our best interest at heart, not just someone that has knowledge. You can be inspired, organized and have the best strategies, and still not implement. The reason? You work for yourself. You aren't accountable to anyone. You may not be getting the support and encouragement you need from those closest to you.

If you're like me, I've worn my wife's ears off with business stuff for over 28 years. One day I had a big dream that came to my mind. It was a doozy! I was standing in the kitchen unloading the dishwasher. I unload, my wife loads. As this dream came to me, I began to share it with my wife. It was so big that as I explained it to my wife, I had my eyes closed and both my hands in the air. I said "honey, I see us doing this and that..." as I drew the picture of the dream in my mind. She had her hands on her hips, tapping her foot and when I finished she said "I've got a dream too, of you unloading that dishwasher right there"!

My wife has been my biggest supporter. It was a friend of her family that I got my original idea from. She gave me my first Rolodex (remember those?). She referred her friends to me. She was very successful in sales and helped me make payroll many times. She went out and worked with me. She endured my foolish escapades and massive debt build up. But as she says "I always knew you had potential, it just took a long time to train you!"

In many cases, the business owner has drawn the spouse into the business and the working relationship isn't very positive. The challenges of the business are brought home to the dinner table. This creates many pressures.

Other business owners are helpful, but don't have the skill to lead us where we need to go. They can share helpful strategies and resources, but they don't get paid to keep us accountable. You need a coach. Professional athletes have a coach. In fact, they have more than one. They have coaches for specific areas.

The original definition of a coach came from "carriage" - a medium to get you from where you are to where you want to go. Think of the stage coach of the old west. Small business owners desperately need coaches in their lives to support them, to encourage them and to hold them accountable.

I've used many coaches and consultants in my career. I shudder to think where I would be without the support, encouragement and accountability of my coaches. When my company was in a financial mess, I reached out to my good friend Ellen Rohr. As a consultant, she came in and helped us get our financial system in order. This is what I needed. Hands on help to keep me accountable to the goal that I said I wanted.

Another example is Mark Ehrlich. Several years ago, I felt I needed someone I could rely on to help me get where I wanted to go. Someone that had already been there or had walked with someone that had. Mark had worked on and off with Michael Gerber since 1977. I first met Mark when Michael spoke at my conference the first time. Mark helped me find my unique gifts and held me accountable to the dream I had. Both of these people made a tremendous difference in my life and business.

About 9 years ago I got really healthy. I lost 50 pounds and got really fit. I had a certified nutritionist that taught me what to eat and when. As long as I did what she said to do, it worked. I saw her on a regular basis and that kept me accountable to eating right. I had a personal trainer that came 3 days a week. I got so fit that I could easily do 50 pushups. I was lean and very strong.

But then I did something really dumb. I got bored with my trainer and I didn't want to work for it anymore. My trainer was frustrated because I wouldn't do the work. I got lazy. Before too long, I stopped training. I figured I would do it myself. I play extreme basketball every Sunday and I figured I could find a place to play basketball (something I loved rather than the boring routine of strength training) a few times a week. I could ride my bike.

How do you think that went? Not good. It wasn't too long before my legs got weak and I blew out my knee playing basketball, and had to have surgery. This put me out for over 6 months. I started gaining weight, feeling lethargic again, and began cheating on my diet (I was now having my supplements shipped rather than meeting regularly with my nutritionist). Then end result, is that my gut began to grow back.

At this writing, my weight is still down by 20 pounds and I'm relatively healthy because I don't eat junk food. I still eat relatively healthy and I do exercise by playing basketball, walking and riding my bike. But it's not the same. I want to be super fit, not just average.

What about you? Do you want to be phenomenally successful in your business, or marginally successful. Have you tried to go it alone for too long? Have you proven that you need support,

encouragement and accountability? Have you proven that you most likely won't do the things you need to do? Are you ready for support, encouragement and accountability?

If the answer is "yes", I have some phenomenal news for you...

Phenomenal PODS™

The driving force behind the massive success small business owners are having around the world is due to a process I call PODS™ (Power Of Discovery Systems™). Our members meet in small groups of less than 12 people every week over the phone to get support, encouragement and accountability. Each member reports what they have implemented for the week. The coach gives feedback (support), gives them a pat on the back (encouragement) and asks them about the goals they said they wanted to achieve (accountability).

I have found this to be an *extremely* effective method for long-term implementation. During this process a number of amazing things take place...

1. Members are accountable to implement the things they said they wanted to accomplish. After all, who wants to show up and admit to the group that they didn't do anything? No one.
2. When members implement, they get the validation, feedback and the "atta boys"? Who wants that? Everyone! As Zig said, this is fuel we run on. We don't get enough encouragement as small business owners. We just get to deal with all the problems.
3. Members discover they aren't alone. Other business owners are dealing with the same challenges they are.
4. Members are encouraged by success stories - as someone on the call has a breakthrough, it is shared with the other members on the call.
5. The Power Of Discovery™ - The biggest advantage of small groups is that the facilitator doesn't teach. Instead he or she *facilitates*. As the group processes the open ended questions and report in, they "discover" things. And when you find something, you own it. The power is in the fact, that no one told you that you had to do something. You discovered it on your own. When you discover it, you are much more likely to implement. The facilitator and the group are there to spur you on - to support you, to encourage you and to hold you accountable to the things you have discovered that you want to be accountable to.
6. Community is created. The most wonderful thing about PODS™ is that the group develops a sense of community - that we are on this journey together. This sense of belonging is deepened as our members attend our live conferences. They build friendships, compare notes on how they are implementing the systems and they care for one another.

The Phenomenal Training Systems coupled with PODS™ has revolutionized small businesses of many types around the world...

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www.HowardPartridgeInnerCircle.com**