

HOW TO

**SABOTAGE
YOUR
COMPANY**

IN 5 EASY STEPS

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How to Sabotage Your Company in 5 Easy Steps

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Terms

While there are several definitions of the term *sabotage*, we'll begin by clarifying what I am NOT referring to.

Most sabotages occur in the context of deliberate destruction of corporate assets, which is commonly seen in both corporate and military realms:

- 1: destruction of an employer's property (such as tools or materials) or the hindering of manufacturing by discontented workers.
- 2: destructive or obstructive action carried out by a civilian or enemy agent to hinder a nation's war effort.

I am *not* talking about these.

In this very short treatise, the culprit is neither an enemy of the state nor a disgruntled employee.

It is the owner of the company.

- CEO's and other C-Suite Officers
- Executive teams
- Board Members
- Management Team Members

Basically, it's you and me.

Whether we own the company, or are simply overseeing a department, by doing things in certain ways, and without realizing it, we often are the ones sabotaging our progress.

We don't plan to, nor design calculated steps for accomplishing it, and for the most part we don't see that we're causing it nor do we realize that we're solely to blame.

It's an unconscious oversight of several strategic aspects of business. We've done it for so many years that we ourselves might have become the reason why our progress is constantly taking two steps backwards for every step we take forward.

“We are both the cause and solution to the matter.”

For starters, I will tell you a story of a very clumsy executive to help us set the tone. And then we're going to look at the five steps we often take in sabotaging our own companies.

I'll come at it first from a negative perspective which will give us a different angle to see the issues more clearly.

Then on the second half of this book, I'll address it from the positive aspect along with giving you tools to identify your own landmines while equipping you to focus on key areas that can restore your company to the path and speed you want it to be at.

Although I will spend ten pages on each of these areas in an upcoming book, I believe brevity will suit us best for now in identifying both the problems and their solutions.

Introduction

We'll call him Joseph.

A business owner from many years ago.

"It's somewhere around here.

Has to be. Stop what you're doing
and give me a hand finding it right now!!"

On daily basis, his assistant would stand in the doorway watching him fumble through scattered paperwork around his office the same way his ideas were scattered in his mind.

After a few moments, she would go over, shuffle some items and find it.

But it didn't stop there.

Only one of his company's computers received all the company email, so he would take it upon himself to print the entirety of all emails received every day, including spam and junk, and drop it off on someone's desk and say things such as,

"They're telling us our Bank of America account has been compromised!
Take care of this right now!"

They didn't bank with Bank of America.

When his printer ran out of ink, he would ask how to set the printer to print off another printer.

And to save money on postage, he decided to have someone call the bank and tell them to start emailing the company's invoices to their customers. (No misprint)

What will surprise you is that in spite of all this, he had contracts worth several million dollars per year both in private *and* public sectors.

While this true story is extreme in how some of us get in our own way, let's not be naïve in thinking that we're not subtle at doing certain things that can hinder our company's progress and thereby create similar results as our runaway hyper-boss mentioned above.

**50% of failures are directly connected to
*the WAY we do things.***

Over the last two decades, I've worked with companies of all sizes and industries, from

- one-man operations to your
- favorite soft drink companies to
- industrial contractors to
- NASA itself

In their most basic make-up, they contain the same components.

People & Processes.

So, when it comes to running the business, innovating ideas, resolving conflicts, creating revenue or any other area, they all tend to look at challenges the same way.

Which is expected.

But also the problem itself.

1. Marketing: The Roller Coaster Thrill

Roller coasters are phenomenal. Especially the wooden ones that rattle your brain for five sharp-turning minutes while travelling at speeds that seem to be utterly illegal.



It's a great concept for amusement parks, but not an approach companies should follow when marketing their business to the public.

Nevertheless, 62% of all marketing is as effective as opening all the doors and windows in the house while the AC is blowing cold.

It is called Brand Marketing. It means:

To create a name, symbol or design that identifies and differentiates a product from other products.

It's a perfect system for large companies. But you're not large. Yet when it comes to marketing, you're acting like the big guys.

Next time you're driving, notice all the billboards using Brand Marketing. They

splatter their name out there as often as possible in order to solidify their household name. Very effective for the big guys because the market already understands their product. They already have a connection with the market.

But in our case, they still do not know what makes us different and surely not what makes us better than the competition. So, in their eyes we're just a commodity – another performer on stage but without a compelling reason to be remembered when the need arises.

So, the bottom line is simply this:

Brand Marketing works great once you've connected with your market. But until then, we need tactics that will create those connections.



Otherwise we will continue spending thousands of dollars every month, without really knowing whether our investment is paying off properly or not.

2. Meetings: Mid-Day Naps

Despite the latest technology's advances, there is still more to do and less time to do it in. And for some reason, we've decided that the best solution is to talk about it more.

After all, if there's a problem, we need to discuss it. And the more we discuss it... the more we discuss it.

Businesses hold 11 million meetings every single day. And in the last 20 years, those meetings have gotten about 10% longer, reaching an average of 45 minutes in length.

Long enough for a good power nap.



On top of that, we schedule them in the conference room. Large enough for 8 to 12 with another 12 against the walls. Yet the average meeting is 3 people.

But when these rooms are occupied, we'll spend an average of 30 minutes looking for another conference room to meet in. But there isn't one. So, we wait to meet later.

And when we finally meet, we don't know what we're meeting about. There's neither an agenda nor clear guidelines so we dilly dally and waste 80% of our time talking about what we should be talking about.

**3 out of every 4 attendees
work on something else.**

Only 37% of businesses use agendas to run their meetings. But even fewer will take proper notes and less than 20% will follow up on action items from the previous meeting. But at least we're looking busy. If we're awake.

Usually they're so boring, distracting, and unengaging that 9 out of 10 people in meetings daydream about being somewhere else. They're usually a waste of time and very effective de-motivators.

Of the five steps we take in sabotaging our companies, nothing impacts us more negatively than unproductive meetings.

They're a constant drip that tortures us all day after day with no end in sight.

3. Training: Save Your Money

When purchasing a product that requires batteries, it's a good deal when they're included. That's the way it should be.

Helps us save money.



But applying this to our team members in the area of their personal development will cost us big in the long run.

All the batteries they *need* are included when we hire them. That's true. But after a year or two of working for us, things should change, and challenges and responsibilities should become more demanding.

But by continuing to assume that the same batteries they brought with them are capable of equipping them in completing their tasks at higher levels, we place undue stress upon them. Adding 10 lbs. to their backpacks every year will slow down their progress quite noticeably and by default, the entire company's growth.

Then we expect them to rejuvenate themselves and improve their skills in order to do a better job day after day.

One reason we bring this upon our staff is because over the years we've come to categorize them as a business 'cost.'

With such a starting point, there's never an inclination to invest money into them.

Besides, 63% of all business owners

- don't train their people at all
- don't know where to start
- don't know how to measure progress
- and don't expect any

But even when we see the value in developing their skills, we still

- don't know where to start
- don't have indicators to measure progress
- don't expect progress

So, instead of going into challenging and unknown areas, we stay put amongst the security and familiarity of the way things have always been.

This approach will always save us money. Never mind that the biggest side effect of not training our people is to ensure a stagnant existence for them and in due time quite possibly the complete sabotaging of our own company.



4. Indicators: Numbers Don't Lie

Hunting quail demands much patience. They are small, quiet and can remain camouflaged in the bush like green on leaves.

In a similar way, amongst so many numbers and other key data within our businesses, a lot of it can remain undetected to the untrained eye in the very same way as these birds can in the wild.



When discussing KPI's - Key Performance Indicators - clients will immediately list the usual suspects:

- Gross Sales
- Profit & Loss Reports
- # of Customers
- Expense Reports

But the numbers which are often overlooked, mainly due to unfamiliarity, are the numbers *behind* the numbers.

There are two types of them. Two main categories of numbers that are seldom sought out by executives primarily because they're neither fancy nor sexy.

On Defense

Costs, expenses & procurements. These are products and services we have to purchase every month to keep our business running.

Yet in these areas, because there are seldom squeaky wheels, and all costs are budgeted, we assume we're paying fair prices and getting adequate services.

But in a 20-year study, 3,000 companies were found to be overspending an average of 7% and in some areas up to 41%.

On Offense

We have sales and marketing departments which drive our bottom lines.

What we don't fully realize is that other departments not only contribute to it but also support them.

Nor that there are at least a dozen strategies that create revenue without making a sale. We assume it all hinges on our sales force, but yet a full 63% of us do not provide training for them. And because we've been trained to brainstorm and solve problems by ourselves for the most part, we don't network outside our industries so therefore miss out on ideas that are very applicable to our own scenarios.

As if we've never planted a garden, we just don't know how to dig deeper.

5. Service: Whatever That Means

When asked the reason you either like or dislike a company, the answer will always have to do with customer service.

But when clarity is pursued, and poll takers are asked to expand their definition of *customer service*, it will usually come down to *punctuality*.



In other words, how punctual is the company at keeping their word.

Do they *do* what they *said* they would do.

The entire essence of professionalism, of customer service, and even of trust itself, comes down to our ability to keep our word.

This is where all relationships either thrive or break down.

And yet, most business owners are not aware of how much they fuel distrust and disengagement from both their staff and clients by the way they will leave clients hanging and waiting for longer periods of time than what they were told to expect.

And for the most part, we don't see the connection between keeping our words all of the time, to the amount of revenue we're bringing in.

In school, anything between an A and a D is a passing grade, and since we're not compelled to pursue utmost excellence in taking care of our clients, we remain comfortable doing an average job at delivering service to the market.

We're Mediocre at Best.

- We ask for a minute, but we take 8.
- We're late on appointments.
- We don't follow up after saying we will.
- We don't send the requested info.
- We don't disclose everything we should.
- We deliver when convenient for us.

The result is disengagement.

Clients will put up with it, but only until someone who's willing to go further than us shows up. And then we scramble only to realize we've always been able to do what we said we would do, but just didn't do it.

Yet all of this is only a symptom of the bigger problem: Self-centeredness.

No more than 15% of us proactively strive to become excellent ourselves nor to provide excellent service when taking care of our clients.

The good news is that by addressing these issues head on, we'll obtain added leverage over our competition from here on out.

First Step

There we have it.

Five ways by which we business owners, executives, and managers, unconsciously tend to sabotage our own companies.

It's like as soon as we achieve certain progress, we remember that we've been grounded, so immediately we give away our permission to enjoy it.

And since we've been doing it for decades, we no longer realize we're doing it.

But not anymore.

Thanks to this golden nugget in your hand, you're now freshly aware of the several ways we do so, or have just been reminded of what you've seen happening in the past.

Either way, let's take this opportunity to make a change for the better. No use continuing to dig a hole we don't want.



The options we now have are these:

- Shake our heads in *disagreement* and put this book on the shelf.
- Nod our heads in *agreement* and still put this book on the shelf.
- Or sharpen our pencils, and spend a few more minutes together brainstorming ways to apply a few solutions.

On the second half of this treatise, we're going to look at the same areas again, but from the positive perspective.

In each area, I'll cover one to two tactical solutions which will be simple to understand and likewise simple to apply.

No strings attached.

The only ingredient needed is your interest in seeing your business flourish and a yearning desire to put an end to the charades we play from time to time.

Also, you might feel I could have expanded much more on each point, and I agree. But I chose to be brief in this writing. It's only our first *meeting*, and my tactic is to not overwhelm you with too much data.

I have a couple of additional systems set up to provide you additional ideas and strategies later on.

More on this on the *Next Step* on page 16.

But truth be told, the tools you now have with you are not dependent upon me for success. Once you read each one, you'll see clearly how to apply it.

6. Marketing: Life-Long Value

Results are everything.

So, to position yourself for the best results in all of your marketing campaigns, make sure your message is clear when it comes to these 3 components.

1. What is it?
2. What's in it for them?
3. What must they do right now?

What is it?

Whatever your message may be, be crystal clear about it. Try different versions. Test it and verify that the reader sees exactly what you want them to see.

What's in it for them?

Grip them. Go for the heart. Go for their emotions. Make certain that they are stirred by their perception of how your product or service will enhance or affect them personally.

What must they do right now?

Leave no doubt as to what they are to do right away. Have a crystal-clear call to action that will have them connect with you somehow via phone, website, email or a download.

These are the three ingredients that create connection and action. Insert them in all of your campaigns and you'll be ahead of all the giants and brand marketers out there.

Life Long Value

Knowing the life-long financial value of your typical client will give you wisdom beyond 99% of your colleagues and competitors.

- A. How much does your typical client spend on each purchase? _____
- B. How many times does he purchase per year? _____
- C. How many years does he remain in your books? _____

$A \times B \times C =$ _____

If we assign \$500 to each purchase in this example, and the client purchases 3 times per year, and on average spends 6 years on the books, then $\$500 \times 3 \times 6 = \$9,000$.

Therefore, the Life-Long Value of this client is \$9,000 each.

What is your number? _____

This then leads us to the following marketing question:

How much am I willing to invest in order to obtain a \$9,000 client?

Your answer will bring more clarity to your definition of a successful marketing campaign and allow you to invest more wisely.

A side-note bonus to these numbers is making your company more profitable which will give you more time to get to the roller coaster park more often.

7. Meetings: Effective & Productive

Engine Rooms, Impact Areas & Key Indicators

These are some of the names that describe the departments that keep the ship running.

| | |
|---------------------|-------------------|
| Operations | Marketing |
| Inside Sales | Outside Sales |
| Customer Service | Purchasing |
| Shipping | Inventory Control |
| Accounts Receivable | Personnel |
| Public Relations | Engineering |
| And many others | |

For any meeting to be effective, it has to be held consistently. Weekly rhythms are best.

The points to apply right away:

- **Prepping for the Meeting and**
- **Running the Meeting.**

We'll use Operations as our example: to be held on Thursdays from 4:00 - 5:00 PM.

Between meetings, have them all write down their ideas, thoughts or issues on 'operations' on a yellow note pad. As much as possible, eliminate those sudden 'got-a-minute' conversations and one-on-one chats. Wait until Thursday's 4 o'clock meeting to discuss everything.

This process will minimize wasting time talking about things you're going to talk about again at the meeting. And mainly, it will allow for the best brainstorming when everybody can focus – together – on the issues at hand.

For the meeting itself, follow these guidelines:

1. Send out agenda 48 hours prior
2. Start promptly at 4:00 PM
3. Take notes
4. Begin by approving agenda
5. Review old tasks. Chairman goes first
6. Cover all other points
7. Stick to time allotted for each point
8. Assign new tasks
9. End promptly at 5:00 PM

Approving the agenda refers to everyone agreeing that you're going to stick to the written agenda. At this point, time's given to add last-minute issues. But once the agenda is 'approved,' everyone sticks to it.

Which is very challenging. Remember that 63% of meetings in the U.S. are run without agendas. Managing the clock is the biggest one of all, so be patient with your team as you apply this at your next meeting.

It will do wonders to stopping the sabotage.

8. Training: Building Them

You got to where you're at by developing yourself. It wasn't by chance and it wasn't by luck. You worked your tail off, you read, you studied, you applied yourself.

That's the reason you're an Executive.

But when it comes to expecting more production from our teams, we assume they're as self-driven as we are. But that's not the case.

They're not wired the same way we are. So we must stop relying on them to develop themselves, and at the same time, stop punishing them for not developing themselves.

You're the boss. The buck stops with you. From now on, you're going to be part of the 37% of executives who love their people,

Who trains them so they can leave, but treats them so that they won't.

Begin by turning the GPS on.
Identify where you're at.
Identify where they're at.

Survey your leaders in each department and find out as objectively as possible how competent everyone is at their required tasks. It will require tough questions but even more, it will require honest answers.

Focus on the competencies that drive your business and that will bring the most leverage to your bottom line.

Three Key Competencies I recommend are:

1. Communication
2. Sales
3. Time Management

But before you wonder how much it may cost to hire an advisor on these areas, consider that there are particulars in each of these three categories that have already come to your mind. Begin with those.

Write down exactly how you want that particular task to improve, and follow these steps during the next staff training meeting:

1. **Tell them verbally, classroom style**
2. Again – visually on the board or flyers
3. Display - Show them how to do it
4. Have them do it themselves
5. Show them again
6. Have them do it again
7. Praise and critique & show them again
8. Have them do it again
9. Praise and critique & set them loose

No. 1 is the only training program used by 2/3 of all companies. But to be effective and to develop your staff properly you need to be repetitive and patient through all nine steps.

Do it for a few weeks, until it starts becoming second nature to everyone involved.

Begin a list of what's on your mind right now. And train them so they won't leave.

9. Indicators: Honesty at All Cost

If I tell you I'm increasing my sales calls,
how will you know I'm being truthful?
You will know by my behavior.
Behavior Never Lies.

Likewise, Numbers Never Lie.

But if ever we're misguided by them, it's
not because the numbers are wrong, but
rather because we may have not taken a
deeper look at what has 'created' the
numbers.

It's the old Cause & Effect concept where
there are always causes that create effects.

- Gross Sales
 - How do we compare to the past
 - How is the market different
 - How are we listening to clients
- Profit & Loss Reports
 - What other value can we add
 - Why are things the way they are
 - Why is *that* so
 - And again, why is *that* so
- # of Customers
 - Where are they coming from
 - Why are they coming
 - What do they need & want
 - How are we prospecting
- Expense Reports
 - What are the benchmarks
 - How are they communicated
 - Are there consequences
 - Why are they purchased

Back to Defense

This is the first phase in how I helped Turner Industries, Woman's Hospital, Piccadilly, The Advocate, McDonald's, NASA & others:

- Ask Vendors for full detailed reports
- Ask why you're paying current prices
- Remove peripheral costs
- Ask competitors for bids
- Terminate Automatic Renewals
- Survey usage internally

Take these steps and reduce costs by 3-5%.

The 2nd phase demands more detail and more expertise. You'll need someone like Legacy Consulting to assist you, but until then, take the steps you're able to take.

And on Offense

While keeping focus on the prize – the results – add a microscope and place it on the activities that create the results.

- Do we have a Dream 100 List?
- Are we training everyone?
- Who's reporting & what is reported?
- What's working & what's not working?
- How many daily calls are we making?
- How many times do they call?
- When are they moved to cruise control?

These are some of the numbers behind the numbers. Knowing them will help you to conquer your market further and to keep everyone much more honest about reality.

10. Service: Preeminence

Continuing on the theme of Cause & Effect, of course there's a reason why clients judge us on the way we take care of them.

Everything hinges on the way they feel we're taking care of them.

Punctuality is the tip of the iceberg, and it is driven by three key aspects which are very connected one to the other.

1. The definition we've chosen
2. How do we view ourselves
3. Whom are we in love with

The Definition

We use these two words interchangeable all day long, but once we see their original meaning, it will change the way we view the market from now on.

Client vs. Customer

Client: noun Cli-ent \ kli-ent \
One that is under the protection of another:
a dependent

Customer: noun Cus-tom-er \ ke-ste-mer \
One that purchases a commodity or service:
a transaction

Doctors, Attorney, CPA's, Consultants and a few others have Clients.

While it comes down to the way we treat them, the way we treat them is determined by the way we define them. Either as life-long clients whom we care for and for whom we will provide a solution that will

impact them and their families for years to come, or as a one-time transaction of something they could have bought a mile down the road.

The Glasses

We view ourselves either as experts in our field, or simply as salesmen of a commodity that is very common in our industry.

We may only sell hammers, but the way we treat that person during the 2-minute transaction will show them if we're perhaps experts at taking care of people.

And that will determine whether they come back to us or not, for nails.

Red Roses

In other words, are we in love with building our brand, our building, our own dynasty, or are we in love with our clients and taking care of their needs?

Either we are preeminent, or they are.

They can see right through us, and soon enough they'll know which definition we've chosen. And in return, the love they feel – or lack thereof - will help them determine how long the business partnership will last.

But ultimately, it doesn't matter what you call them as long as you treat them as clients. And from now on, you're to view yourself as the expert you are surely to become.

Next Step

There we have it.

Five ways by which we unconsciously tend to sabotage our own companies, along with practical solutions to get us out of the ruts we've been in for some time.

Now let's close with a couple of thoughts.

First is a concept I've enjoyed for 13 years, and then an idea for you to consider.

Preparing for the Starting Line

In 2006, my brother got a crazy idea. He wanted to run a marathon and asked me to join him. I've always been a runner but this distance was not on my bucket list at all.

We relied on the advice of two coaches, Bingham and Hadfield, who wrote a book called *Marathoning for Mortals*.

Their premise is unique in that while most everybody trains with the finish line in mind, their point is to train with the starting line in mind.

The reason is because once the gun goes off, there are too many variables that are out of our control.

From injuries, to the weather, to the crowd, to a sleepless night, too many things can go wrong in a 26.2-mile course.

Their point is simply that while aiming towards a clearly identified goal, we should focus our energies on the things and tasks that we're able to control.



- In marketing, aim consistently at a professional image, but focus on connecting with your audience.
- At meetings, strive to make them more engaging, but be punctual and accountable.
- When training, desire consistency all around, but motivate by developing their competencies.
- On indicators, keep eyes on realistic and challenging outcomes, but focus on the activities that create them.
- And on customer service, take care of your clients, but above all make sure you're taking care of your people first.

The more we keep everyone on track with the tasks they're excellent at, the happier they will be and the better value we as a company will bring to the market.

I've seen it over and over for two long decades. While these principles will increase your profits, nothing will give you a deeper sense of a life well lived, than taking very good care of the clients you serve.

I trust you will agree.

Keeping in Touch

This e-book is a preview to my upcoming *How to Sabotage Series*.

The first volume is due out soon, same title as this treatise, and you'll be the first to know once it's released.

Until then, through my weekly "Keeping in Touch" newsletter I'll continue sending business ideas to help you grow your business.

Make sure I have your email.
Alex@ConsultLegacy.com

And best for last, consider joining

LeadersTable Webinar Series.

You have just read 5 of the 50 lessons I will cover over the next 12 months through a series of videos and webinars.

| | |
|------------|---|
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The overall theme is Leverage

And the goal is to help you think more strategically while becoming more *executive* in both your decision-making processes and your leadership style.

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I think you'll find it to be the most effective Executive Development program for the money.

Okay.
Back to this book you've just read.
Apply it. Don't wait.
Share it with your colleagues and friends but above all, go ahead and start applying one of the five solutions, whichever one hit home the hardest.

If you have any additional questions on the How to Sabotage Series, contact me at Alex@ConsultLegacy.com 225.571.1746.

I look forward to Your Success!

Alex Velasquez