



WORK SMARTER PRINCIPLES

POCKET GUIDE

MORTEN T. HANSEN

1

DO LESS, THEN OBSESS

There are two common beliefs about work. The first is that we should increase the scope of our activities, pursuing multiple responsibilities and options. We believe that by taking on more tasks, we accomplish more tasks and improve our performance. “Doing more” is usually a flawed strategy.

The second misconception concerns the idea of focus. Many argue that people can only perform at their best if they select a few items to work on and say no to others. It over-emphasizes choice, as if that’s the only requirement: If you are disciplined enough to choose a few priorities, you will succeed. Picking a few priorities is only half of the equation.

The other half is the harsh requirement that you must obsess over your chosen area of focus to excel. Employees who chose a few key priorities and channeled tremendous effort into doing exceptional work in those areas greatly out-performed those who pursued a wider range of priorities.



2

REDESIGN YOUR WORK

YOUR
DESIGN
HERE

A smarter way to work often exists, provided we can craft clever redesigns of key tasks.

Throughout the workplace, small redesigns can have a big impact. Want shorter and more effective meetings? You could create better agendas or disciplined people so that they don't ramble on. Or here's another idea: try removing all the chairs in the room, compelling people to stand up. Research has discovered that stand-up meetings are 34 percent shorter than sit-down meetings, and the decisions they produce are equally effective.



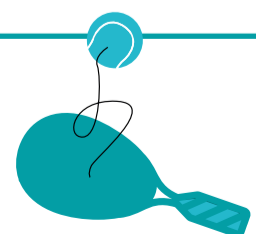
TURBO

3

DON'T JUST LEARN, LOOP.

Given the impressive feats that top performers in sports, music, chess, and spelling bees have achieved using deliberate practice, you would think that legions of employees in the working world would rely on this approach to master their job-specific skills. Yet most individuals don't.

To start improving a skill, effective learners in the workplace break it into manageable chunks, what I call micro-behaviors. A micro-behavior is a small, concrete action you take on a daily basis to improve a skill. The action shouldn't take more than 15 minutes to perform and review, and it should have a clear impact on skill development.



4

PASSION AND PURPOSE.

PASSION LED US HERE

Some people pursue passion in navigating their careers, but they also manage to connect this passion with a clear sense of purpose on the job—they contribute, serve others, make a difference. They have matched passion with purpose. This provides people with more energy that they channel into their work. Not more hours as in the “work harder” paradigm, but more energy per hour of work. **That’s working smart.**



5

FORCEFUL CHAMPIONS

DO SOMETHING GREAT

Top performers master working with others in three discrete areas: advocacy, teamwork, and collaboration. Lining up emotions properly, showing (and not just telling), and making people feel purpose enables you to inspire people so that they will support your efforts. Everyone can use these tactics; you don't have to have a charismatic personality to inspire colleagues at work.



6

FIGHT AND UNITE

FACE ME I FACE YOU

Much of a team's work occurs in group meetings. It follows, then, that a team's performance and your own individual performance hinge on the quality of team meetings—how well people debate issues, and how fully they commit to implementing decisions.

When teams have a good fight in their meetings, team members debate the issues, consider alternatives, challenge one another, listen to minority views, scrutinize assumptions, and enable every participant to speak up without fear of retribution.



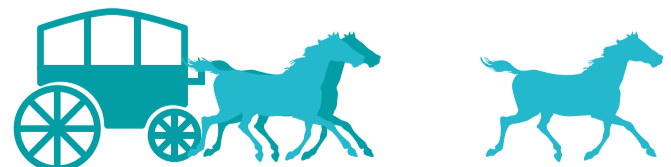
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THE TWO SINS OF COLLABORATION

Stick with It!

Collaborating too much or too little within an organization can create problems and affect work performance. The secret is to find out when you need to collaborate or not.

Disciplined collaboration allows you first to assess when to collaborate (and when not to) and to implement the effort so that people are both willing and able to commit to it and deliver results. It is the last of our seven principles that you can adopt to transcend the traditional “work harder” mindset and work smarter.

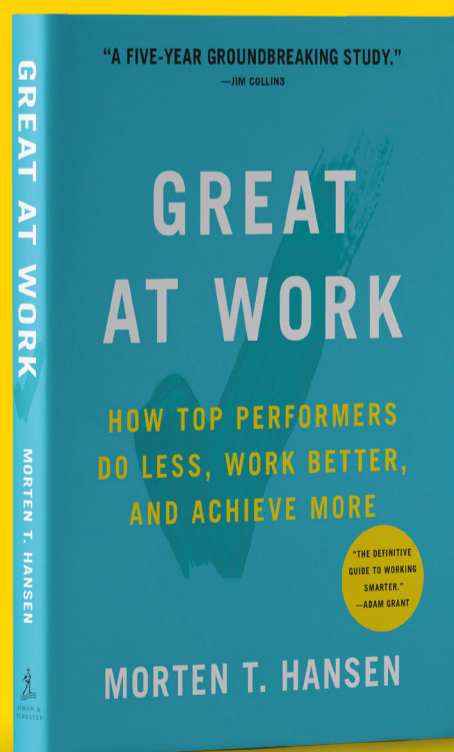


One of the greatest tragedies of the “work harder” mindset is the assumption that we must sacrifice vital parts of ourselves to excel. We put in more hours and take on more tasks, short-changing family, friends, hobbies, exercise, and sleep. Before long, we wind up burned out, unfulfilled in our personal relationships, and saddled with health issues. A critical question thus emerges: Does pursuing the seven work-smart principles and becoming a top performer mean sacrificing your wellbeing? **The answer is no.**

Now, it is your turn to start implementing these techniques and becoming great at work!

**MORTEN
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Visit mortenhansen.com to learn more



**HOW TOP PERFORMERS
DO LESS, WORK BETTER,
AND ACHIEVE MORE**

From the *New York Times* bestselling author of *Great by Choice* comes an authoritative, practical guide to individual performance—based on analysis from an exhaustive, groundbreaking study.

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