



Clearing the Clutter: 6 Things Leaders should Let Go

It's official—spring is in the air! It's a time of rejuvenation, rebirth, and for over 70% of us—some good old-fashioned spring cleaning.

But while traditional spring cleaning focuses primarily on tidying up the home, today's participants often take it a step further, organizing other facets of their lives including relationships, finances, and intentions for the coming year. Spring has become the ideal time to clear our heads and our hearts, letting go of anything keeping us from being our best selves.

This same opportunity exists in the workplace as well. For business leaders bogged down by mounting pressures, responsibilities, and workloads, now is the perfect time to clear the clutter!

Need help getting started? In the spirit of spring cleaning, below are six things you should let go today to ensure you are performing to your greatest potential:

A Focus on Problem-Solving

Effective leaders are skillful navigators, often responsible for both establishing and executing the strategic vision of an organization. However, it can be easy to lose focus of these mission-critical job functions when there's also a stream of day-to-day issues you're tasked with addressing. While problem-solving is an inevitable part of every leader's role, it's important that you consciously track where the majority of your time and energy is being spent. If you find you're spending more time eliminating the problems you don't want than executing the vision you do, it's time to recalibrate.

A Fixation on Personal Weaknesses

Personal development is a critical initiative for any leader, and the quest for continual improvement should never taper. That said, your weaknesses didn't earn you your current leadership position, and they won't be the key to your future successes either. Work to improve upon any critical weaknesses you can realistically change, but don't lose time and energy on the ones you can't. Let the ego go, hire around the gaps in

your expertise, and commit the bulk of your energy to leveraging your strengths to the best of your ability instead.

Saying Yes to Every Opportunity

When you're passionate about what you do, it's easy to overcommit. To stay focused, make it a habit to regularly clean up old agenda items, discarding those that are low priority or no longer matter. And from simple speaking engagements to complex product launches, it's important to carefully screen each new opportunity as well, fueling only the efforts that will provide the most value. As Steve Jobs once said, "People think focus means saying yes to the thing you've got to focus on. But that's not what it means at all. It means saying no to the hundred other good ideas that there are...Innovation is saying "no" to 1,000 things."

Death by Discussion

If you've ever participated in a meeting and walked away unsure of next steps, then you know discussion does not always equate to progress. In fact, when not facilitated properly, discussion has the potential to waste critical time, frustrate participants, and complicate the task at hand. As a leader, your success depends not on discussion, but on execution. Therefore, it's your responsibility to ensure every meeting or discussion you participate in has both a purpose and a conclusion. Demand forward progress, and don't hesitate to shut down conversations that lack value or disrupt momentum.

Rigid Goals

Goal setting is undoubtedly an effective leadership tool, but it's also possible to become inadvertently blinded by goals that are too rigid. You may fail to capitalize on (or even recognize!) valuable opportunities that fall outside key initiatives, or you may find yourself chasing goals that have become irrelevant simply because of the time or money invested to date. To avoid these potential pitfalls, remind yourself that your goals ultimately exist to serve you. Set them carefully, revisit them regularly, and always feel empowered to update them when needed.

What's Worked in the Past

In today's blink-and-you'll-miss-it culture, innovation is king, and the same thinking that brought you success yesterday could lead you to failure tomorrow. Effective leadership requires a constant awareness of the changing marketplace, an authentic thirst for continual improvement, and a business model flexible enough to keep up with both. Celebrate your victories as they come, but then quickly move on. Long-term success belongs to those who think two, five, and twelve steps ahead, while those who fail to stay in front of the market risk getting run over by it.

So what does this all mean?

There's a reason Marie Kondo, author of the NY Times bestseller "The Life-Changing Magic of Tidying Up" appeared in *Time* as one of the world's most influential people of

2015. The more complex our lives become, the more taking even small steps to simplify can feel like an absolute game-changer.

Leadership is hard work, and becoming a better leader is harder yet. However, the benefits of improvement are substantial, and the path to get there doesn't have to be overwhelming. So if you recognize a need to clear the clutter, explore what a little "spring cleaning" can do to enhance your workdays. And focus on the reason, not the season. If you like the results, you'll love summer cleaning and fall cleaning, too.

Are you currently reaching your greatest potential as a leader? If not, what are the key barriers you're facing, and what might be some simple, but effective ways to remove them? If you need help getting started, give us a call today at #708-738-5040 or visit our websites at RRGExec.com and SearchWorksllc.com