

What does your business card actually say about your business?

A few weeks ago I had the pleasure of watching a presentation to my local [EO](#) Chapter by [Simon Mundell](#) Head of Business Development with [RESULTS.com](#) out of New Zealand. Simon shared some interesting material about how companies can operate better to get the results they are striving to achieve.

Of all the many things that [Simon](#) discusses, one stands out above the others; something so small that most of us tend to overlook its significance. Typically [Simon](#) will ask everyone in the group to pull out their business cards and swap with the person next to them.

The Mobile Future is Right Before Our Eyes!

Last week, I traveled to Dallas, TX for a guys' weekend with my son Tony, his close friend Steven, and my brother Mark. While there, we also attended the Bills vs. Cowboys football game. Having grown up in Rochester, NY, I am a Bills fan, which is often difficult to endure. That weekend was no exception. Even after a great start to the season, the Bills lost 44 to 7. Other than that, we had a great time, and the Cowboys' stadium is off the charts!

You seem to open your eyes more to what is around you when you're in a new environment, so being a bit more observant, I

watched the nonstop mobile usage around me. These observations made me want to share some recent research that has been released. Based on the research and my own thoughts, mobile devices are becoming a powerful force in our lives.

Investing: Sometimes the mattress looks good...



22 years in the investment world, running a money management and mutual firm taught me a thing or two. I experienced ups and downs, and learned a lot. The world is a difficult place when it comes to stock markets, and trying to decide where to place your money. In case you haven't noticed, after a decade the markets today are still lower than they were in 2000. Scary thought.

It's my experience that those in the marketplace that manage money have short streaks of what appears to be brilliance. They are labeled as a guru, right up until something changes in the market, and they go back to being the average Joe, or even worse, losing lots of money.

How Do You Get Great Ideas?

Many of us out there hold a strong aversion and distaste for meetings. You have heard it before, or possibly even said it yourself: “We do nothing but have meetings around here, so how am I to get any work done?” Why do we have such negative feelings in regards to getting a group of people together to discuss issues and create solutions to move forward?

I believe strongly in the power of the group and think it is vital to bring people together to create the best ideas. If you have read this blog for any amount of time, you have seen me discuss my belief in collective intelligence, an ideal I trust in so much that I even started a mutual fund managed around the philosophy.

A Lesson in Listening

There are times when you have to make business decisions that are painful. Those decisions are often accompanied by the feeling that your work, effort, worry, and money have all been a waste.

For 4 years now, my partner Rich and I have owned a franchise of [1-800-GOT-JUNK](#). These franchises have been successful all over North America, and we wanted to bring it to Knoxville. The founder of [1-800-GOT-JUNK](#) is a fellow [EO](#) member that I met in 2001. For 4 years I watched the business grow and become successful before we bought the rights to the Knoxville market.

Three Things Scrooge Would Say About Our Business

As we approach Christmas and get to spend more time with our family and friends in a spirited, colorful environment full of lights, we open our hearts and our pocket books to give and share what we have with others. While I cannot speak for you, it makes me feel good to give to others. When it is done with sincerity, I feel it has that effect similar to when the [Grinch's](#) heart grows three sizes. It changed him. I look to the holidays to have that growing heart experience and hope the holidays have the same effect on you.

A Connection Worthwhile

Did you ever wonder how a website that does nothing but allow you to display your life to all your friends and family and is free to use, could be worth around [\\$11 Billion](#)?? [Facebook](#) is. This valuation comes from the power of connecting...not just people, but things. When connectivity is increased, value goes up exponentially.

This could best be understood with the explanation of the "fax effect". The first fax machine that was made cost exorbitant amounts of money during research and development, and was worth relatively nothing.

3 Steps Forward, 2 Steps Back

Growing a business doesn't happen overnight (usually). It's happens step by step, one decision at a time. As business leaders, we are faced with making decisions every day. We constantly strive to collect as much information as possible, and then act on that knowledge in an attempt to move our companies forward and upward.

I recently had a conversation with my office manager Mukesh in [Pondicherry, India](#), where he was asking my advice on making decisions. More specifically, he wanted to know how much information he needed to hold out for before making a decision. It occurred to me that many of us struggle with the same question. How long does one wait and continue to collect information before making a decision, without worry that it is wrong?

5 Steps to Execution

My experience has been that we are rarely lacking strategy and planning, they are abundant. What we do lack is [execution](#) around those plans, which is the major problem we face running a business.

We follow a 5 step process to gain execution on our strategies, and it's had a major impact on our business.

To set the stage, think of your goals this way: After creating your [BHAG \(Big Hairy Audacious Goal\)](#), you will usually set

shorter term goals that create the path to reaching your BHAG.

Here at [Efficiency](#), we have our [BHAG](#), 3 to 5 year Goals, 1 year Goals and then Quarterly Goals.

What's so special about a Black Swan anyway?

Something that I've wanted to write about for a long time is the understanding of what the [Black Swan Theory](#) is and why the book by [Nassim Taleb](#) is so relevant to both our personal and professional lives.

In my investment days I read [Nassim Taleb's](#) 1st book [Fooled by Randomness](#). I was blown away by how he analyzed risk as a former Wall Street trader. Being a regular in the book store, I saw another one of [Taleb's](#) books [The Black Swan](#) about 3 years ago and picked it up immediately. I was once more blown away, only this time at a new higher level.