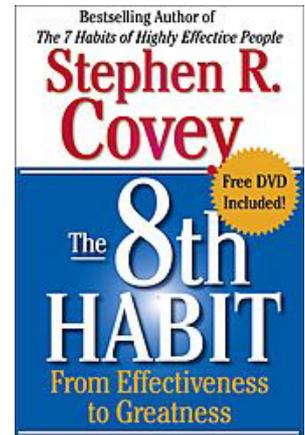


EXECUTIVE BOOK SUMMARIES

The 8th Habit

From Effectiveness To Greatness

by Stephen Covey



The Author

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Main Idea

The 8th habit of highly effective people is: "Find your voice and inspire others to do likewise". This latest habit is not an add-on to the original seven habits, but represents another dimension of effectiveness which will enhance the performance of each of the other seven habits.

The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People

<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Be proactive 2. Begin with the end in mind 3. Put first things first 4. Think win/win 5. Seek first to understand... Then to be understood 6. Synergise 7. Sharpen the saw 	<p>Dependence</p> <p>↓</p> <p>Independence</p> <p>↓</p> <p>Interdependence</p>
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The 8th Habit – Find your voice...and inspire others to do likewise

Find your voice	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Discover your own voice 2. Express your voice 	
Inspire others to find their voices	<p>Focus</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Expand your influence 2. Be trustworthy 3. Build trust 4. Blend other's voices 5. Create a common vision 	<p>Execution</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Align goals and systems 2. Empower others

A. Find Your Voice Pages 2 – 3

To find your voice means to engage in work that genuinely taps your talents and fuels your passion. It means to do something significant with your career – to sense an unmet need and then to fully harness all your talents and passion to meet that need. To find your voice means to take the path to greatness rather than settling for mediocrity.

B. Inspire Others To Find Their Voices Pages 4 – 8

Once you've found your own voice, the way you can continue to increase your feelings of achievement is by helping others to find their own unique voices as well. Most likely, this will be done through an organisation of some kind because most of the world's work is done by organisations rather than by individuals. To inspire others means to recognise, respect and create meaningful opportunities for others to express their voices. The word inspire is derived from the Latin *inspirare* which literally means to breath life into another. This is exactly what you do when you encourage and positively influence others within your own organisation to find their voices.

A. Find your voice

1 Discover your own voice

To find your voice means to engage in work that genuinely taps your talents and fuels your passion. It means to do something significant with your career – to sense an unmet need and then to fully harness all your talents and passion to meet that need. To find your voice means to take the path to greatness rather than settling for mediocrity.

One of the most frustrating things for the majority of people is the fact they rarely have the opportunity to realise a life of greatness and contribution. Instead, people spend the majority of their careers operating at a much lower level. They are aware of the tremendous challenges and problems which exist, but most people have not developed the internal power nor the moral authority to become a force in solving those problems.

To address this challenge, you need to find your own voice. When this happens, a fire will light inside you which will fuel tremendous drive and commitment. To be able to actually find your voice, however, you first need to understand a simple way of thinking about life.

A whole person has four basic components:

1. A physical body.
2. A mind capable of independent thought and analysis.
3. A heart which can feel emotion.
4. A spirit – your soul or philosophical center.

Each of these components has a corresponding basic need or motivation:

1. Physical body – “To live”.
2. Mind – “To learn”.
3. Heart – “To love”.
4. Spirit – “To leave a legacy”.

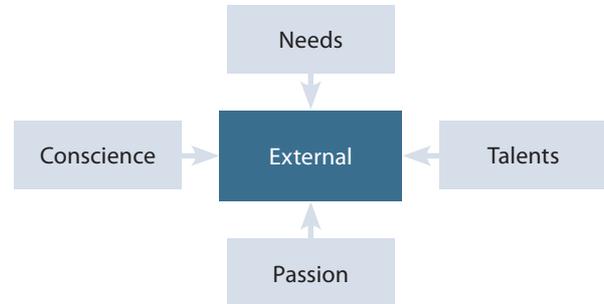
The highest manifestations of these capacities are:

1. Physical body – Discipline
2. Mind – Vision
3. Heart – Passion
4. Spirit – Conscience

As you begin to understand, respect and ultimately balance these highest manifestations for yourself, synergy is created. You become energised as you begin to understand what you’re actually capable of achieving. When you engage in work that taps your talents and fuels your passions, and which fills the need your conscience has drawn you towards, you find your voice. This is often described as “finding your true calling in life” or “unlocking your soul’s code”.

The human voice is unique and significant because it lies at the intersection of your own unique:

1. *Talents* – your natural gifts and strengths.
2. *Passion* – those things that excite and enthuse you.
3. *Needs* – the necessity that you earn a living by providing what people are willing to pay for.
4. *Conscience* – that still, small internal voice or compass which confirms what is right and when you’re doing it.



The challenge of life is to discover your own quite unique voice, which will lie in the potential that was bequeathed to you at birth. When you discover that, no longer will you feel like a victim of your circumstances. Instead, you’ll be in a position of power to move forward with confidence into the future.

“All children are born geniuses; 9,999 out of every 10,000 are swiftly, inadvertently degeniusized by grownups.”

– Buckminster Fuller

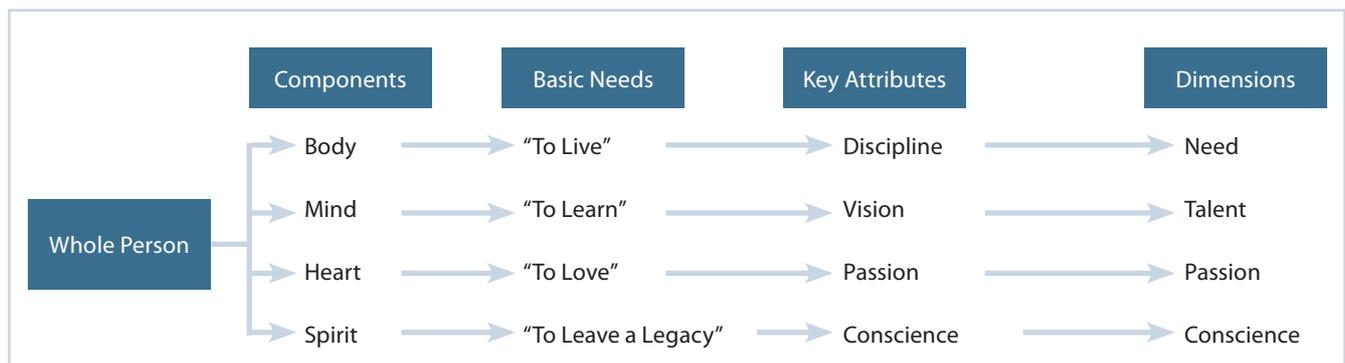
“I have found that by making four simple assumptions in our lives we can immediately begin leading a more balanced, integrated, powerful life. They are simple – one for each part of our nature – but I promise you that if you do them consistently, you will find a new wellspring of strength and integrity to draw on when you need it most.

1. *For the body – assume you’ve had a heart attack; now live accordingly.*
2. *For the mind – assume the half-life of your profession is two years; now prepare accordingly.*
3. *For the heart – assume everything you say about another, they can overhear; now speak accordingly.*
4. *For the spirit – assume you have a one-on-one visit with your Creator every quarter; now live accordingly.”*

– Stephen Covey

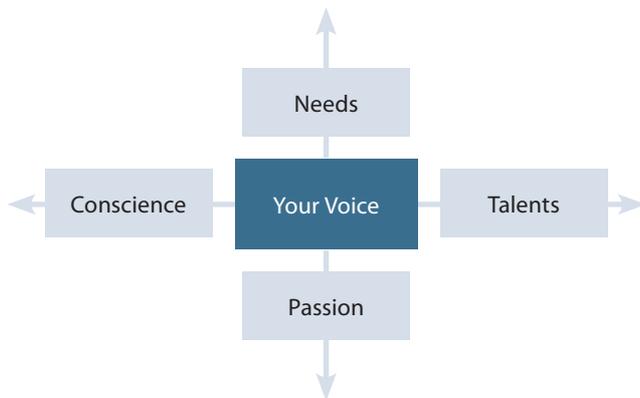
“There are a thousand hacking at the branches of evil to one who is striking at the root.”

– Henry David Thoreau



2 Express your voice

All of history's greatest achievers have only one thing in common. Through long-term effort and intensive inner struggle, they have greatly expanded their talents, passions, needs and conscience. By doing this, they have enhanced the power of their voices, thereby increasing their influence and reach.



Similarly, in order to express your voice more decisively and distinctively, you need to work at building your capacities in each of these four dimensions:

1. *Vision* – being able to see a future state in your mind's eye before it materialises in the flesh. Vision is simply applied imagination, as most things are created mentally before being brought into physical reality. Great leaders see the untapped potential in their people, and inspire them to move towards realising that potential. In comparable fashion, to express your voice more powerfully, you need to cultivate the habit of looking for the good in people and affirming that. As you communicate to the people around you, your belief in them and their future, you'll bring out the best in them.
2. *Discipline* – which is effectively willpower embodied. Discipline is needed to actually make things happen. To be disciplined means to accept reality, become totally immersed in the facts and then move forward from there. Without exception, successful people are disciplined enough to do what has to be done rather than what would be expedient or easy to do. Or put another way, discipline in practical terms usually means forgoing immediate pleasure in anticipation of a far greater future payoff.
3. *Passion* – the unrelenting drive which comes from the heart. People with passion are motivational to be with because they believe the best way to predict the future is to take part in shaping it. Influential people are passionate about what they do because they have found their purpose and role in the world, their mission in life. When people are passionate about what they do, they don't require any supervision to get things done. Their fire and motivation comes from within rather than being imposed from without.
4. *Conscience* – your moral sense of what's right and what's wrong. Every religion and every culture of the world has an accepted set of values which dictates a sense of fairness and the concepts of honesty, respect and contribution. Conscience encourages people to sacrifice something good in order to obtain something even better. Ego may suggest that the end justifies the means, but conscience will tell us a worthy end can never be accomplished with an unworthy means. Conscience transforms passion into compassion and allows us to build relationships of trust with other people. In

short, people who live by their conscience will have inner integrity and peace of mind.

If you apply these four dimensions to any role that you carry out in life, you can and will find your voice in that role. The key is to be able to answer four questions in the affirmative in each of the primary roles of your life:

1. What need do I sense in my family, in my community or in the organisation I work for?
2. What talent do I possess which, if properly disciplined and applied, would meet that specific need?
3. Does the opportunity to meet that need tap into the things I feel most passionate about?
4. Does my conscience allow me to take action in this way and become intensively involved?

"When you can give yourself to work that brings together a need, your talent, and your passion, power will be unlocked."

– Stephen Covey

"Conscience often provides the why, vision identifies what you're trying to accomplish, discipline represents how you're going to accomplish it, and passion represents the strength of feelings behind the why, the what and the how."

– Stephen Covey

"Wisdom denotes the pursuing of the best ends by the best means."

– Frances Hutcheson

"The best leaders operate in four dimensions: vision, reality, ethics and courage. These are the four intelligences, the four forms of perceiving, the languages for communicating that are required to achieve meaningful, sustained results. The visionary leader thinks big, thinks new, thinks ahead – and most important, is in touch with the deep structure of human consciousness and creative potential. You must gain control over the patterns that govern your mind: your world view, your beliefs about what you deserve and about what's possible. That's the zone of fundamental change, strength, and energy – and the true meaning of courage."

– Peter Koestenbaum

"From now on, the key is knowledge. The world is not becoming labor intensive, nor materials intensive, nor energy intensive, but knowledge intensive."

– Peter Drucker

"Most ailing organisations have developed a functional blindness to their own defects. They are not suffering because they cannot resolve their problems but because they cannot see their problems."

– John Gardiner

"I am no longer a young man filled with energy and vitality. I'm given to meditation and prayer. I would enjoy sitting in a rocker, listening to soft music, and contemplating the things of the universe. But such activity offers no challenge and makes no contribution. I wish to be up and doing. I wish to face each day with resolution and purpose. I wish to use every waking hour to give encouragement, to bless those whose burdens are heavy, to build faith and the strength of testimony. It is the presence of wonderful people which stimulates the adrenaline. It is the look of love in their eyes which gives me energy."

– Gordon Hinckley, age ninety-two

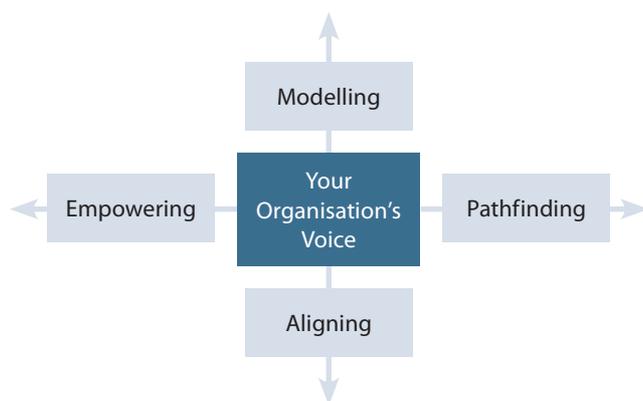
"There is nothing so powerful as an idea whose time has come."

– Victor Hugo

2. Inspire others to find their voices

Once you've found your own voice, the way you can continue to increase your feelings of achievement is by helping others to find their own unique voices as well. Most likely, this will be done through an organisation of some kind because most of the world's work is done by organisations rather than by individuals. To inspire others means to recognise, respect and create meaningful opportunities for others to express their voices. The word inspire is derived from the Latin *inspirare* which literally means to breath life into another. This is exactly what you do when you encourage and positively influence others within your own organisation to actually find their voices.

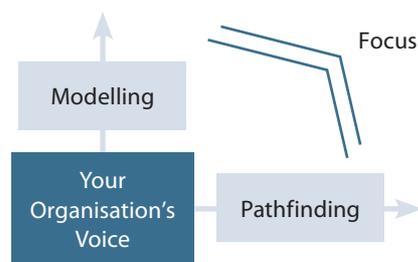
Whenever you express your own voice using the four dimensions – vision, discipline, passion and conscience – you are displaying personal leadership. For an organisation to do something comparable and express its voice, its leaders must fill four equivalent roles:



1. *Modeling* – the organisation's leaders have to set a good example themselves. They must create and buy into a corporate culture which is aligned with the organisation's vision, customers and future directions. Modeling inspires trust without expecting it.
2. *Pathfinding* – the organisation must jointly develop a viable strategy which will allow it to move from where it is now to where it wants to be in the future. Pathfinding creates order without demanding it.
3. *Aligning* – the organisation has to put in place structures, processes and systems which will engender the behavior which is desired and keep everyone on course. Aligning produces a form of institutionalised moral authority to act. Alignment nourishes both vision and empowerment without enshrining them as imperatives.
4. *Empowering* – focusing the organisation's talent on the results needed rather than the methods used and then getting out of people's way. Empowering is all about execution. In an empowered organisation, leaders give help and direction only when requested. Empowerment unleashes human potential without externally motivating it.

"In everyone's life, at some time, our inner fire goes out. It is then burst into flame by an encounter with another human being. We should all be thankful for those people who rekindle the inner spirit."

– Albert Schweitzer



Focus embodies both the modeling and pathfinding roles in helping organisations find their voice and achieve greatness. There are five things you can do to build and enhance your focus:

To Build Focus

1. Expand your influence

Regardless of whether you're the boss or not, you can influence your organisation to do better in the future. In practical terms, this requires that you take the initiative and act as a trim-tab for your organisation. A trim-tab is a very small rudder on a boat or plane that turns the bigger rudder, which then turns the entire ship. History is full of influential people who exerted loads of influence even though they had no formal authority. This is the spirit of what you need to do within your own organisation.

In practical terms, being a trim-tab means:

- You strive for personal excellence – and encourage all those within your circle of influence to do likewise.
- You always do what's right – rather than waiting for explicit permission to be given. Instead of being assigned, you take personal responsibility and use your initiative to solve any problems and move forward.
- You avoid complaining, criticising or being negative – and view these actions as shallow attempts to shift the blame from your shoulders to someone else.
- You empathise with your boss – and try to anticipate the pressures he or she is operating under. Whenever you're given an assignment, you pause and consider the "why" this matter is important. Then take the initiative and provide more than was asked of you. This will make a big impression.
- You have to be constant – and encourage your peers to stick to sound principles and good business practices rather than twisting and turning with every social wind that blows.

As you do these things consistently well, your boss and others in formal positions of power will have increasing trust in your ability to perform. That, in turn, will lead to more opportunities for you to take the initiative. Over time, you will be able to substantially build focus within your organisation by creatively trim-tabling your way through.

"We must become the change we seek in the world."

– Gandhi

"Leadership is communicating to people their worth and potential so clearly that they come to see it in themselves."

– Stephen Covey

"Give the world the best you have and you may get hurt. Give the world your best anyway. Few of us can do great things, but all of us can do small things with great love."

– Mother Teresa

“Just as trust is the key to all relationships, so also is trust the glue of organisations. It is the cement that holds the bricks together. I have also learned that trust is the fruit of the trustworthiness of both people and organisations. Trust comes from three sources: the personal, the institutional, and one person consciously choosing to give it to another – an act that leads me to feel your belief that I can add value. You give me trust and I return it. Trust is a verb AND a noun. When it’s both a verb and a noun, it’s something shared and reciprocated between people. That is the essence of how a person becomes the leader of their boss. They merit trust by giving it.”

– Stephen Covey

Over the long haul, who we actually are is far more important than who we appear to be. Trustworthiness derives from the wisdom found in a person at the intersection of their character and competence. In practical terms, to be trustworthy, you must have:

- *Personal integrity* – you live a principle-centered life rather than doing whatever is expedient.
- *Maturity* – the ability to deal with tough issues compassionately and on the strength of your own private victory over self.
- *An abundance mentality* – where you can be genuinely happy for the success of others rather than viewing everything in terms of a winner-takes-all competition.
- *Technical competence* – the skills and knowledge needed to accomplish the task at hand.
- *Conceptual knowledge* – the ability to see the bigger picture and therefore to think strategically.
- *Awareness* – that all life is interdependent and connected to some degree or another.

A trustworthy organisation will keep its promises. The people within it do what they say they will do consistently. They will be able to make promises and keep them because their own lives are in order. They will live universal principles of personal effectiveness, such as those embodied in programs like The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People. They will also have a personal planning system in place, which will enhance their productivity and ensure what they do is aligned with what matters most.

“Character, in the long run, is the decisive factor in the life of an individual and of nations alike.”

– Theodore Roosevelt

“The supreme quality for leadership is unquestionably integrity. Without it, no real success is possible no matter whether it is on a section gang, a football field, in an army, or in an office.”

– Dwight David Eisenhower

“One man cannot do right in one department of life whilst he is occupied in doing wrong in any other department. Life is one indivisible whole.”

– Mahatma Gandhi

“There is no way you can make significant progress in your relationships with other people if your own life is a mess or if you’re basically untrustworthy. That’s why, in the last analysis, to improve any relationship, you must start with yourself; you must improve yourself.”

– Stephen Covey

In order to inspire others to find their voices, you have to build strong relationships with them first. Effective and sustainable relationships are always built on a foundation of trust. This is significant because the bulk of the world’s work actually gets done through relationships between various organisations and between people within the same corporate entity. Thus, the higher the level of trust that exists, the more you can and will get done.

Trust is like an emotional bank account. Whenever you do something that builds trust, you make a deposit. If you do anything that destroys trust, you automatically make a withdrawal from this account. What’s left is the equity you can invest in building a strong relationship.

There are ten ways you can increase the amount of trust in your emotional bank account:

1. You can create mutual understanding – by seeking first to understand the other person’s point of view before worrying about your own agenda.
2. You can generate an environment of integrity – by always following through and keeping your promises, big and small.
3. You can practice openness – by being honest about what you need rather than manipulative.
4. You can be kind and courteous – showing you avoid stereotyping and let the facts speak for themselves.
5. You can always think win/win or no deal – demonstrating definitively that you respect the other party in the relationship and have your own competitiveness under control.
6. You can always clarify your expectations clearly – so the other party will have a genuine opportunity to add value rather than going off on a tangent.
7. You can be loyal, even to those who are absent – showing that you have integrity and commitment rather than superficial intent.
8. You can be prepared to accept the apologies of others – demonstrating that your ego is in check and you’re realistic about the possibility of short-term setbacks.
9. You can give and receive genuine feedback – so that everyone in the relationship (especially yourself) has an opportunity to become aware of their blind spots.
10. You can be forgiving – willing to forget, let mistakes go and move on rather than endlessly mulling over an earlier misstep.

“It is a greater compliment to be trusted than to be loved.”

– George MacDonald

“No man for any considerable period can wear one face to himself, and another to the multitude without finally getting bewildered as to which may be true.”

– Nathaniel Hawthorne

“I know this now. Every man gives his life to what he believes. Every woman gives her life for what she believes. Sometimes people believe in little or nothing, and so they give their lives to little or nothing.”

– Joan of Arc

The best way to resolve conflicts within any organisation is to search for a third alternative which creates synergy as it addresses differences. When organisations do this, they create conditions where the organisation's voice can be more clearly projected.

In practical terms, the search for a workable third alternative which is "our" solution rather than this party or that party's solution requires a whole new mind-set. There must be a willingness to consider creative solutions, empathy for the viewpoint of the other person and ongoing two-way communication before this even becomes feasible.

So how do you develop a third alternative which will blend together people's voices rather than allowing conflict to rule supreme? There are two key questions you should ask when trying to develop a workable third alternative:

1. "Would you be willing to search for another alternative solution that is better than what either you have proposed or what we have proposed thus far?"
2. "Would you agree to one simple ground rule while we discuss this: No one can make his or her point until they have restated the other person's previous point to his or her satisfaction?"

If the other party will agree to both these suggestions, then you have a chance to work together to develop a synergistic plan which will work for both of you. Again, this is a win/win approach rather than a zero sum option where the only way one party can win is if the other party loses.

Note that synergy is never a compromise. Instead, synergy is created whenever a solution is developed which both parties acknowledge is even better than what they were originally suggesting. When properly crafted, the third alternative should be so enticing both parties become enthusiastic about it.

"Leaders do not avoid, repress, or deny conflict, but rather see it as an opportunity."

– Warren Bennis

"The Third Alternative isn't my way, it isn't your way – it's our way. It's not a compromise halfway between your way and my way; it's better than a compromise. A third alternative is what the Buddhists call the middle way – a higher middle position that is better than either of the other two ways, like the tip of a triangle. The Third Alternative is a better alternative than any that have been proposed. It is a product of sheer creative effort. It emerges from the overlapping vulnerabilities of two or more people – from their openness, their willingness to really listen, their desire to search. You simply don't know where it's going to end up. All you know is that it's going to end up better than where it is now. The Third Alternative usually starts with oneself. But it often takes the force of circumstances like some person opposing you before it really begins to take place within you."

– Stephen Covey

"Service is the rent we pay for living in this world of ours."

– Nathan Eldon Tanner

"I know not what your destiny will be, but one thing I know: the only ones among you who will be truly happy are those who have sought and found out how to serve."

– Albert Schweitzer

Every organisation grapples with four basic realities:

1. The realities of the marketplace.
 2. The organisation's core competencies.
 3. Stakeholder wants and needs.
 4. The organisation's value system and sense of purpose.
- Before everyone can focus effectively, these four realities must be clarified, integrated and harmonised. Getting everyone in the organisation on the same page is a necessary prerequisite before the organisation's voice can be projected with any degree of success.

So how do you achieve shared visions and values across an entire organisation?



The key is to mix together two elements to create a third. The two elements to be mixed are:

1. Your organisation's mission, vision and values – which effectively describe "Why" you are in business.
2. Your line-of-sight strategy – which is your overall strategic plan brought down to a daily level and complimented by a line of accountability. In effect, this articulates "How" business will get done.

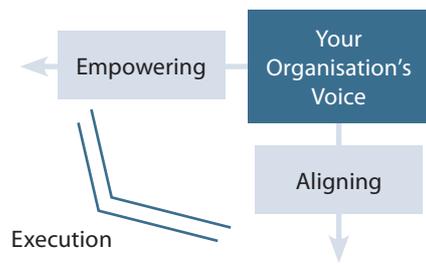
When organisations and individuals know what their key goals are and how they will be accountable for acting to achieve those goals, they can then focus on "What" needs to be done much more intensively and passionately. When this happens, the organisation will find its collective voice and a powerful culture will emerge which will facilitate the achievement of those specified goals.

"The very essence of leadership is that you have to have vision; you can't blow an uncertain trumpet."

– Theodore Hesburgh, president, Notre Dame

"Leadership is creating an environment in which people want to be part of the organisation and not just work for the organisation. Leadership creates an environment that makes people want to, rather than have to, do. It is a business imperative to create that environment. I must give purpose, not just work and function. As a businessperson, I feel obligated to create an environment where people feel part of something, feel fulfilled and have purpose. It is purpose – it is value in their lives – that leads people to truly give of their minds. Then you are getting the maximum from them, are giving the maximum to the person. Anything less is irresponsible to the organisation and demands more handling by the individual. When you see people as only fulfilling a function, you're treating them like a thing, like the chair you're sitting on. I don't think we as humans can assume the right to do that. We found the greatest satisfaction for an employee is to feel part of something and to feel trusted to make decisions."

– Horst Schulze, former CEO, Ritz-Carlton



Execution embodies the empowering and aligning roles in helping organisations find their voice and achieve greatness. Two things you can do to enhance your ability to execute are:

To Execute Better

1. Align goals and systems

Organisations need to design and utilise systems and structures that will reinforce rather than act at cross purposes to core values and highest strategic priorities. Systems always override all the rhetoric and best intentions of managers. This is an area where actions most definitely speak louder than words.

To create systems that are aligned with your organisation's goals:

Develop information systems which match your organisation's value systems – if you value long term results, measure both short term and long term results.

Create a compensation system that holds supreme and reinforces the organisation's values – by making cooperation and synergy key elements of the compensation program. Reward cooperative effort even-handedly rather than focusing exclusively on individual effort.

Have an abundance mentality – and make it feasible for everyone to win rewards when they accomplish the desired results and not just the elite top performers.

Stay flexible with your business systems and processes – so you can respond to changing circumstances intelligently rather than being locked into something unworkable.

Look constantly at what the world-class performers in your industry are doing – and learn from their example. Pick up what works for them and see whether a similar idea will be of benefit to your organisation.

Set up a great feedback system – which will allow ideas to circulate around the organisation without impediment or alteration. Get into the habit of asking people "What do you think we should do?" You'll be amazed by the quality of the information they will provide.

Achieve a good balance between getting results today and developing the capacity to generate noteworthy results in the future – so your organisation can be effective. In particular, avoid actions that are expedient today but which will have the effect of holding your entire organisation's future hostage. Measure progress on your most important goals – so everyone have clear, accurate, and timely updates on what's actually happening. The more actionable intelligence you can provide for your front-line people, the better.

"Aligning structures and systems with values and strategy is one of the toughest of all leadership and management challenges simply because structures and systems represent the past – tradition, expectations and assumptions."

– Stephen Covey

To Execute Better

2. Empower others

Empowerment is a natural flow-on result. When an organisation models trustworthy behavior, it inspires trust implicitly. Pathfinding creates order without actually demanding it. Aligning nourishes both vision and empowerment. Empowerment is the logical result of personal and organisational trustworthiness. When people are empowered, they find their voice by doing the things they feel passionate about. Their individual voices and the voice of their organisations blend together.

When people feel empowered, they need little or no supervision. Empowered employees use their own initiative to leverage and optimise the use of the organisation's assets – a type of directed autonomy. In this kind of workplace, the role of the manager shifts from being a controller to that of an enabler. Managers collaborate with their people to remove barriers and then become an ongoing source of help and support.

The key empowering tools for organisations are:

1. Win-win agreements between employees and the organisation – open-ended agreements in which the organisation's goals are specified but the means by which those goals are achieved are left entirely to the employee's discretion. Of necessity these agreements will be completely flexible and able to be changed to respond to the changing circumstances of the marketplace.
2. Self evaluation and performance appraisal – in which the employee evaluates their own performance on the basis of the 360-degree feedback received from sources around them. For empowered people, self-evaluation will always be tougher than anyone else's evaluation because the employee knows where their true weaknesses lie.
3. Servant leaders – who see their role as creating the conditions of empowerment and then getting out of their people's way and providing help only when needed. A good servant leader is far more interested in getting the job done than in having his or her ego stroked. The leader should effectively run alongside employees asking:
 - "How's it going?"
 - "What have you learned that's new?"
 - "What are you now trying to accomplish?"
 - "How can I help you achieve your goals?"

"It's when the spirit of servant leadership takes hold in a team, and between a manager or team and an associate, that trust fully blossoms. Again, it's the trust that one person or team consciously chooses to give to another – an act that leads me to feel your belief that I can add value. You give me trust and I return it. Trust (the verb) comes from the potential trustworthiness of the one receiving the trust and the clear trustworthiness of the one giving the trust."

– Stephen Covey

"The best way to inspire people to a superior performance is to convince them by everything you do and by your everyday attitude that you are wholeheartedly supporting them."

– Harold Greene, former chairman, ITT

"Duty, love and meaning are the highest sources of motivation."

– Stephen Covey

"Leadership is today's hottest topic."

– Stephen Covey

In summary, the 8th Habit is all about finding your voice as an individual, as a team and as an organisation.



There are four disciplines which can help close the gap between focus and execution for any organisation:

1. *Always focus on the one thing that is wildly important.*
People are naturally wired to be able to do only one thing at a time to a standard of excellence. Therefore, have just a few goals which are of the greatest strategic importance and which will provide you with maximum leverage.

To decide your organisation's top two or three "wildly important" goals:

Use an importance screen

Ask: Which goals, if not achieved, would render all other goals to be of little or no consequence?

Use a stakeholder screen

Ask: Which goals are the most important for your stakeholders?

Use a strategic screen

Ask: What is the most consequential thing that can be done to advance your strategy?

2. *Create a compelling scoreboard everyone will want to use.*
People play differently whenever they know a score is being kept. With this in mind, it's vital that you create a scoreboard which is highly visible and which will reflect how you're doing. Your scoreboard needs to be highly visible and must reflect progress towards your wildly important goals. It must be visible, dynamic and accessible. It also must be updated daily to reflect the impact of current events.

Your scoreboard may be in the form of a bar graph, a trend line, a pie chart, a Gantt chart or it might look like a thermometer or speedometer. For example, a scoreboard for a services company might look like this:

Goal	To save customers \$50 million by year-end	
		\$50 million
Measure	Customers dollars saved	40
Current	\$40 million	30
Target	\$50 million	20
Deadline	End of fiscal year	10

3. *Translate lofty goals into very specific actions.*
There's always a vast difference between lofty goals and what's happening at the front line. The stated strategy is what leaders talk about. The real strategy is what people do every day. Close the gap by explaining exactly what everyone is supposed to do about the organisation's goals.

Usually, this will take some creativity. You'll have to identify the new and better behaviors needed to achieve your goals and then translate those intentions into specific weekly and daily tasks. This is necessary, however, if you want the people at the front lines to be sufficiently empowered.

4. *Hold each other accountable for results all the time.*
People need to meet together frequently – monthly, weekly or daily – to account for progress on goals. These sessions should then help the organisation to refocus on what's wildly important.

To make these accountability sessions work, keep them brief. Focus on three key issues only:

A quick report on the vital few issues at hand.

A quick discussion on any viable new alternatives which have come to mind.

A short give-and-take discussion where managers focus on clearing the path forward and removing obstacles for the people in the organisation.

The key to institutionalising a culture of execution is to regularly measure and track how well the organisation is doing. Some people develop a collective measure of execution which is analogous to an IQ (intelligence quotient). This new measure – xQ (execution quotient) – may be quantified by grassroots information gathering at regular intervals. If the organisation is getting better at executing, its xQ will rise.

Once an organisation becomes effective using the 8th Habit, it can then use its voice to serve others. As this happens, organisations will take the lead in solving some of society's most pressing problems and needs. This will enhance the sustainability of the organisation and move society as a whole into an era of wisdom that has never before been feasible. In this environment, organisations will no longer be focused on "What's in it for me?" Rather, the key question to be answered will become, "What can we contribute as an organisation?"

"I believe that the rendering of useful service is the common duty of mankind and that only in the purifying fire of sacrifice is the dross of selfishness consumed and the greatness of the human soul set free."

– John Rockefeller, Jr.

"The surest way to reveal one's character is not through adversity but by giving them power."

– Abraham Lincoln

"The inspiration of a noble cause involving human interests wide and far, enables men to do things they did not dream themselves capable of before, and which they are not capable of alone. The consciousness of belonging, vitally, to something beyond individuality; of being part of a personality that reached where we know not where, in space and time, greatness the heart to the limit of the soul's ideal, and builds out the supreme of the character."

– General Joshua Lawrence Chamberlain