



Greetings!

Can you believe we're ready to change the clocks back? The newness of the September school openings has now passed and we need to keep grounded in our goals for the fourth quarter. It's a great time for action and reflection. In this month's issue, we talk about powerful meetings and reflect on closing conversations and meetings. Life and business is all about communication---no matter how it is structured.

May the hour you gain in turning back the clocks create joy and happiness in your life. Always remember, what you focus on is what you get.

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The Last Five Minutes

In our September newsletter, we talked about the **First Five Minutes** of a conversation or a meeting. We highlighted:

1. Clarify the purpose of the meeting or the conversation (i.e. with a vendor).
2. Know what your desired outcomes are and how you will achieve those outcomes.
3. Ask the other party or the team what else they would like to discuss or achieve.



So that's how we started the meeting – now what are the **last five minutes** of the meeting? The last five minutes are so important to be able to go back and look at these issues.

- What decisions have we made?
- What are the actions that we have decided to take?
 - Who's responsible?
 - By when?
- What agreements have we made?

In our experience, we find it very useful to go around and ask:

- What are you taking away from this meeting?

In many meetings, it is necessary to keep a list that we call a "parking lot." If there are issues that come up during the meeting that cannot be discussed at the meeting but need to be held on to for future discussion, they can be put into the parking lot.

Worthwhile and Powerful Meetings

Over a year ago when we first started our newsletter, we wrote a short article on **Effective Meetings**. As we work in businesses, this is a topic that continues to come up constantly.

Did you know that in the United States, on an average day, there will be about 17 million meetings?

If you put on your financial hat, and look at a meeting from the perspective of cost to a company, it is staggering. Just ballpark an hourly cost of keeping someone in a business, which includes their salary, benefits, space, support, etc. and look at the cost of some of the meetings you attend. It is mind boggling.

There are many ways to make meetings more effective and here are a few simple ways to look at it.

1. Is this meeting necessary?

Meetings are a way to exchange information and get ideas. What we often hear from teams at companies is that meetings are a way to download information. Much of this information can be "downloaded" in other ways. If you are not going to be able to create a dialogue, get feedback, take action – you may want to ask is the meeting necessary?

2. Is it necessary for me to be present at the meeting?

As you all know, people get invited to meetings and get put on a cc list for many different reasons. If you don't think you can contribute, you are not prepared to contribute, or you are not going to get anything out of the meeting, check with your supervisor or manager whether this is the best use of your time.

3. Is the agenda important?

When you have an agenda that people know in advance, then they are able to make decisions about meetings and they know how they can contribute. You may even want to include some questions that you want them to think about before coming to the meeting. We have noticed that many times it will take people a while to warm up when they get to a meeting. If they are not sure why they are there, how they are going to contribute, and what are the outcomes. . .they'll never warm up!

4. Will there be an opportunity to take action or make decisions?

As we said in the previous article in this newsletter about the **Last Five Minutes** of meetings or conversations, make sure that you have actions. You probably shouldn't have a meeting unless you want there to be some type of action or decision.

So, meetings cost a lot of money, can have a great deal of value, and can also waste a lot of time.

One idea is that Corley Hanson Associates is available to help you with your meetings. We have gone into many companies and observed half of a meeting and then coached and provided feedback to people about what they were trying to accomplish, what's the best way to do this, and help them develop a way to implement meetings in a different way.

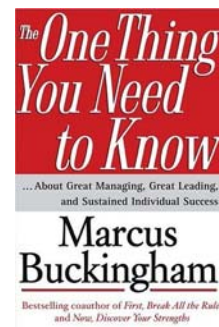
Fast Company published an article titled, "*You Have to Start Meeting Like This!*" in their April 1999 issue. To read this article. . .

[You Have to Start Meeting Like This!](#)

Book Review: The One Thing You Need To Know...About Great Managing, Great Leading, and Sustained Individual Success

by *Marcus Buckingham*

Buckingham captures what is the essence of managing and leading as he builds off his previous work; *First, Break All the Rules* and *Now, Discover Your Strengths*. He draws from a wealth of examples to reveal what he sees as a single dominant insight for what is great managing, great leading, and career success. Once you understand the key insight, it will focus your efforts towards great managing and leading. He states clearly that the one thing great managers know is "*Discover what is unique in the individual and capitalize on it.*" and that great leaders do the inverse, they "*Discover what is universal and capitalize on it.*"



Corley Hanson Associates is using this book as a reference for leaders in a number of coaching and training programs. It brings together a lot that we already know in a clear, concise format.

[To order this book](#)

Movie Review: "North Country"

This is a powerful yet tough movie based on a true story. It depicts the struggle of a daughter (played by Charlize Theron) who shames her father when she takes a job at the same Minnesota iron mine where he works.

Director Niki Caro ("*Whale Rider*") once again captures a culture where women struggle against the prejudice of men. Leadership and courage are boldly demonstrated when Charlize Theron's character takes the mining company to court for discrimination. This is heartbreaking and powerful moviemaking. We highly recommend it.



ActiveComm: Communication Training and Coaching

One of our team members on the West Coast has just launched a new focus on communication skills training. Bryan McClain continues to work with Corley Hanson Associates and is also available for specific programs around communication.

"When a person is speaking to you, do you think about what he or she is saying, or what you are going to say next?"

The goal of ActiveComm's training services is to enhance the essential communication skills that are invaluable in all business and interpersonal environments. They offer training that is tailor-made to the needs of their clients and can develop new content when necessary. ActiveComm's training is also constantly changing and growing in order to incorporate the newest developments in skill acquisition and communication. Their commitment to content ensures that their clients receive only the most effective and advanced training available.

ActiveComm employs a unique training philosophy that is based on a deep background in psychological learning theory. This background has led to a series of training programs that go above and beyond the training that has been traditionally offered. ActiveComm does this by providing the option to include coaching with seminar-style training. ActiveComm coaches follow-up the seminar instruction by continually correcting any errors in techniques while also helping the client to set goals over time. Through continual refinement and repetition of a technique, the technique eventually becomes natural and effortless. The coach will also keep a client on task as far as achieving his or her goals much like executive coaching. This format of instruction is unique to ActiveComm; you won't find it anywhere else!

"All seminar services include follow-up coaching designed to ensure implementation of new skills."

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