



Vanessa Lanham-Day's

PLAYING TO WIN!

The 7 habits of
super-successful
small business owners

“Working with Vanessa was probably the biggest turning point for me in over 18 years of business.”

Chris Stone, Bushy Business



First Edition 2013
First published in Great Britain 2013
Revised in 2017

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PLAYING TO WIN! The 7 habits of super successful small business owners

The seven habits of super-successful small business owners

All business owners start out with a dream of being successful. We all had a vision of more financial security; the freedom to work less hours, spending more time on holiday, or with the family; or even just more time to ourselves.

But very soon, the reality becomes the freedom to work 12 hour days, 7 days a week, spending less time with the family and finding holidays are a rare treat!

So what makes the difference between those who do 'make it' in a tough economy versus those who seem to struggle; making a reasonable living but, in reality, they are only just getting by?

I've worked closely with business owners since 1988 as I've run my marketing business OnTrack Marketing. If I could predict – in advance – the winners from the losers I would be more than wealthy by now. The fact is, you simply can't. Many talk a good game and, on the face of it, seem to do many of the right things; but still success doesn't come. Others – often the least likely – seem to fly after only a few pointers in the right direction. You can hardly see them as they head off in an energised cloud of dust!

Disregarding all the basics (like their business idea being 'right', there being enough of a market or niche for their products, and getting the pricing right all of which are absolutely vital!) there is something fundamental afoot here. ***You could have two identical business models and two different business owners and the results would be chalk and cheese. I wonder why?***

From my experience it comes down to a number of key personality and attitude traits – and resulting behaviours. A respected colleague described his view to me earlier this year and it absolutely hit home (thank you Martin!); he said "it's the difference between people who are 'Playing to win' versus those who are 'Playing not to lose'".

You can characterise a 'playing to win' type from one of the 'playing not to lose-ers' quite easily. They do things with an energy and commitment that is guaranteed to make waves and make success far more certain.

This book is about the characteristics that I have observed that separate the 'winners' from the 'playing not to lose-ers'. The BIG question is – which one are you?

Doing versus talking about doing

Before I get into the detail of the Seven Habits, I think it's only right to pay homage to the original '7 habits' author, Stephen Covey (ie. the brilliant '7 habits of highly effective people').

It's more than possible that you have read this excellent book; and maybe Michael Gerber's 'e-myth'; Tony Hsieh's 'Delivering Happiness'; or even Napoleon Hill's 'Think and Grow Rich'.

What I've noticed is that the 'playing not to lose-ers' have often read all the books but aren't doing any of the 'stuff'. They certainly plan to; when they are bigger, have more money, have more staff, when it's not just them doing it all, after this next project, next year – sometime soon. Oh yes, definitely!

'Playing to win-ers' do tend to just get on with it NOW. And what I hope for you in this book is that it gives you some simple daily behaviours that you adopt NOW.

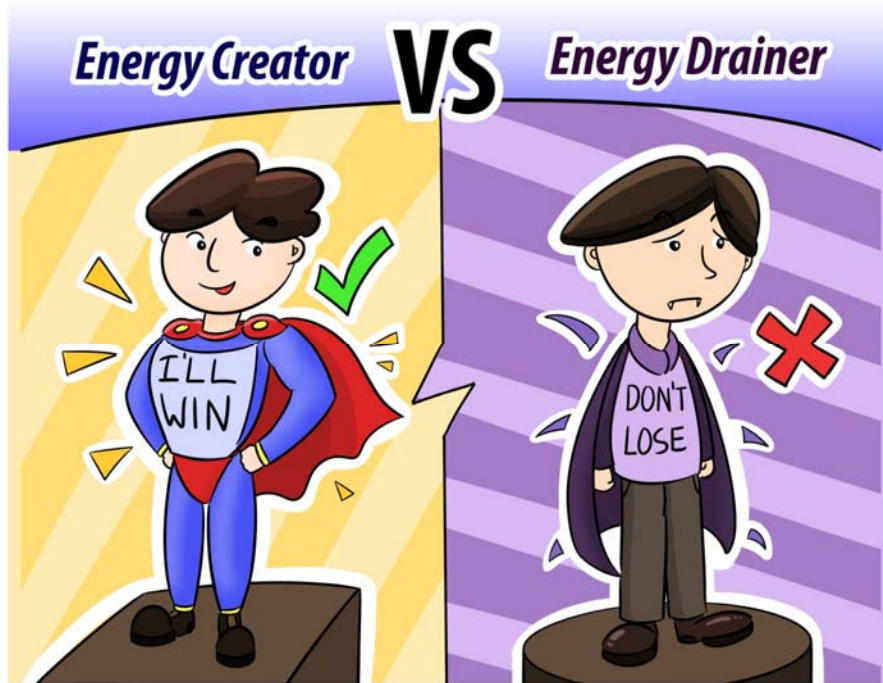
Please look at the 7 Habits and ask yourself honestly, **'do I play to win?'** Or **'do I play not to lose?'** The results you'll get are SO radically different you will be astonished.

The choice is yours.



Vanessa Lanham-Day

Habit One



I've made this habit number one as it's so fundamental. Being an energy creator underpins all the other habits of people who 'Play to win'.

I'm sure you know precisely what I am talking about when I mention an 'energy vampire'. Some people just DRAIN you. You can find them at home, in the office or in the pub.

They always have a good reason why it won't work; they've tried it before; there's not enough time; or it's just not possible for them. You want to throw yourself off a cliff after 15 minutes in their company!

Energy creators, however, are always inspiring and see solutions rather than problems. They always have plenty of ideas, they never say die and are always up for a challenge. Energy creators are good people to spend time with.

Using empowering language

Energy creators say 'I can', 'I will', 'I want' – energy vampires say 'I'm not sure', 'I can't', 'that's not practical'.

Energy creators ask questions – 'How can I make that work for me?', 'How can I make this better?', 'What techniques are they using that I can adopt?'

Energy vampires tend to make statements; 'That won't work for me'; 'I've tried that before'; and 'That's not how it works in my sector.'

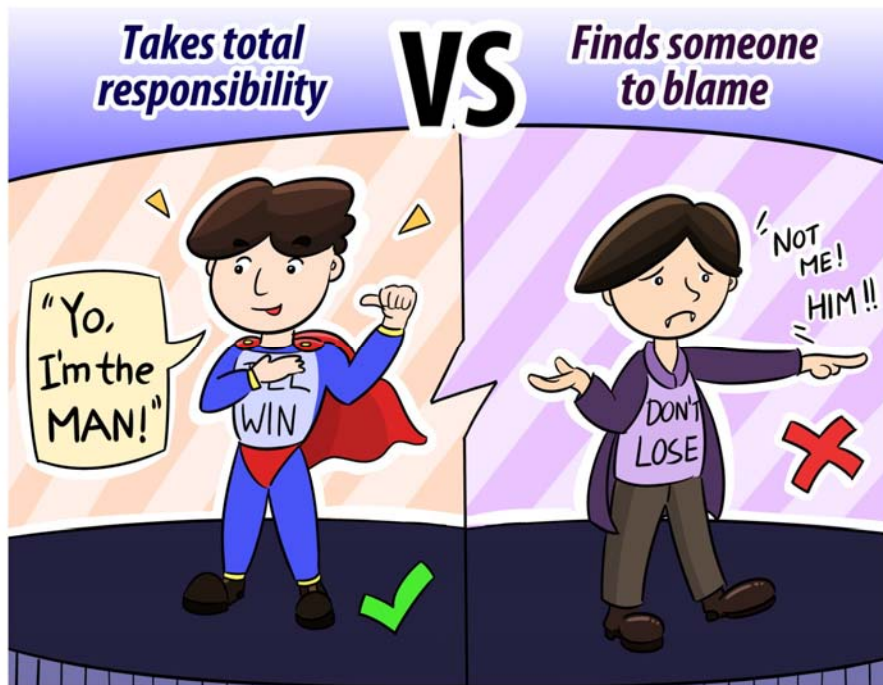
Language is VERY empowering as your subconscious believes everything it's told.

- So, if you say 'I can't', guess what happens.
- Try saying 'I can' and notice the difference.
- If you say, 'that's not relevant to me', how much will you learn and develop, I wonder?
- If you just ask 'how ...?', guess how hard your subconscious will work to find an answer for you.

You CAN adopt the habits of an energy creator and you CAN 'check' yourself if you spot vampire habits coming on! You CAN use empowering language and you CAN get into the habit of asking empowering questions. These are learned behaviours that will give you radically different results.

And make sure you ask those around you to tell you – quickly! - when you fall into bad 'vampire' habits!

Habit Two



No-one ever said running a business would be easy. The economy has been tough in recent years. The banks haven't always been there with the cash when businesses have needed it. And the weather! I'm guessing if you were running a beach chair hire business in Cornwall over the last few years you might consider you had something justifiable to moan about.

I'm not saying there aren't outside factors that will have an impact on your business. What I'm saying is that the most important thing is how you respond to them.

After all, no-one will ever be as passionate about making your business work as you are and if you don't take responsibility, it's going to be a tough road ahead.

My website isn't working ...

Just recently a business owner complained to me that his website 'didn't work'. He had a Google AdWords campaign running with the aim of gathering data by getting prospects to sign up for his ebook. He was getting lots of hits on his Ad and a good ratio of 'click throughs' but no-one was signing up for the book; hence his assertion that his website wasn't working.

We looked at his website homepage to try to understand the problem. My immediate observation was that the most visible sign up box was for an earlier campaign he'd run; you had to scroll down quite a long way to be able to input your details as there was no mention of the e-book on the visible part of the website at all.

It took just a few basic tweaks to the layout of the home page to significantly improve the chances that people who clicked through from the advert would take up the offer of a FREE e-book.

For me, a far more useful response would have been ...

- What's going on here – why am I not getting the response I want?
- Is my advert targeting the right people? With the right proposition?
- Is the landing page the right response to the advert?
- What are my analytics telling me? Is it a mobile device or browser issue?
- Does my e-book have a mega compelling title that would make it a no-brainer for my target clients?
- Could I make the sign up any easier?
- How are other people who successfully collect data this way doing it?
- What can I learn from them?

I found it incredibly illuminating that his first reaction was to 'blame' the website.

Embracing mistakes and failure

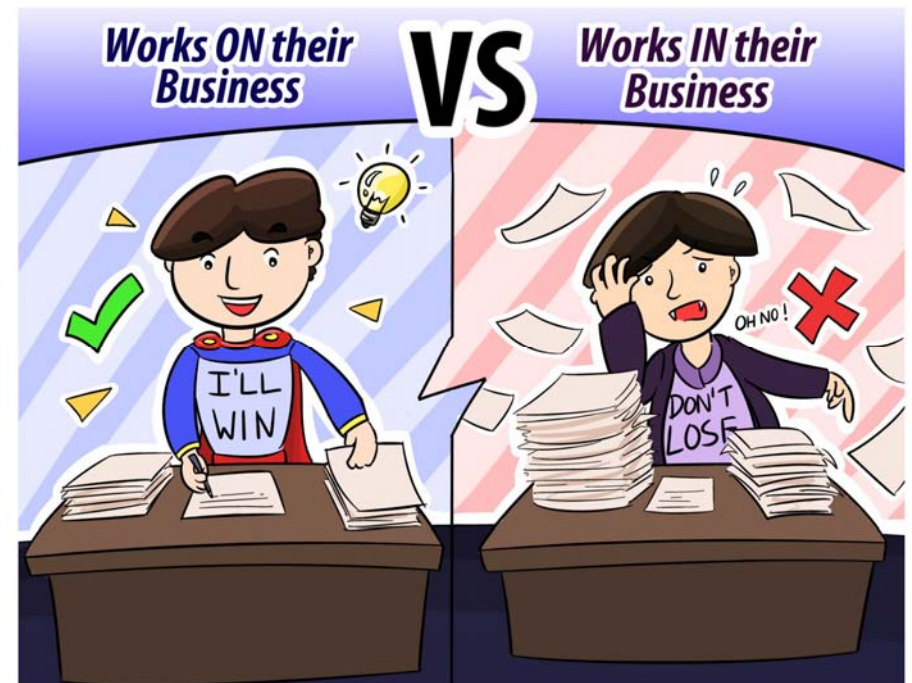
The economy isn't your fault. Nor is the direction of the Jet Stream across Europe, or the state of the international banking system.

Taking responsibility simply means you accept that no-one can respond to a situation except you. Getting it right first time is a pipedream – things can and will go wrong but you simply need to learn from your experiences and build your expertise.

People who 'play to win' routinely do. They embrace the learning that mistakes and failure bring. They see it as an opportunity. A stepping stone towards success. A little piece of knowledge that you take on board and that brings you closer to your goal.

People who 'play to not lose' always want to mitigate their losses – and a great way to do that is to stop as soon as potential failure looms!

Habit Three



Do you know a 'busy fool'? Someone who works hard all the time – often for very long hours – but never seems to get closer to what they want to achieve?

It's a trait that's very easy to observe in others but altogether less easy to observe in ourselves. And in my experience, a majority of business owners routinely suffer from some – or all! – of the following ...

- **Poor email management:** Responding to emails drives their day. The fear of becoming overwhelmed with an overflowing inbox means they allow emails to continually interrupt their daily work. They actively check their email on their mobile devices when they are away from the office.
- **Poor phone management:** Accepting random phone calls that interrupt the work they are doing. Fear of missing out on a potential customer. Wanting to respond to customer queries instantly.

- **Time for money trap:** Working direct with clients most of everyday, with no time allowed for development. Their prices are usually set so they don't have a choice if they want to pay the mortgage.
- **Micro-managing customers and staff:** Overseeing day-to-day customer work – chasing up suppliers, visiting customers, helping with packing an urgent order, jumping 'on the tools' to reduce a backlog. Getting VERY involved in the day-to-day issues and not allowing others to take responsibility.
- **Lack of book-keeping and admin support:** Dealing with book-keeping matters and admin rather than employing a book keeper or PA / VA in order to save money.
- **Poor technology choices:** Spending hours fiddling around with software they don't understand using equipment that's not up to the job.
- **Sporadic marketing efforts:** They work on their marketing and business growth - but usually at the end of a busy business day or at weekends. There is no regular pattern. They just don't have the time and they are not that clear on what they should be doing, even when they do have the time.

Does this sound familiar to you? I'm simply suggesting you have a choice. People who 'play to win' make sure they have time to work ON their business and not just IN it. People who 'play not to lose' often worry about the cost of outsourcing and will aim to minimise their outlay.

Winning strategies for working ON your business

For our 'winners' this means making some tough choices about how they spend their day. They value their time and treat it with respect.

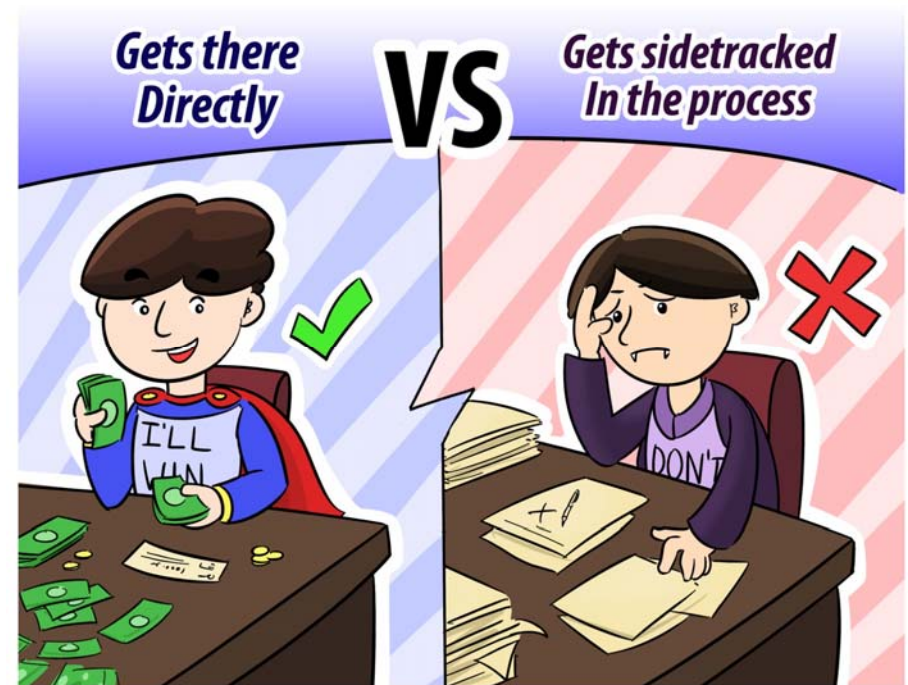
- **Email management:** They recognise emails as their most dangerous 'time vampires' and have a strategy to prevent them playing havoc with vital development work.
 - They routinely go 'offline' and switch off mobile devices – and dedicate specific parts of the day to managing emails all in one go.
 - They educate customers, suppliers and staff that they will get a proper response within, say, 4 or 24 hours.
 - They divert more important emails to someone who can respond quickly or into an alert system so they are interrupted only for urgent matters.

- **Phone management:**
 - They delegate call answering to an assistant, or a call answering service (again, with an urgent alert system).
 - They set start AND end times to calls with EVERYONE.
 - They schedule call backs rather than taking calls randomly
 - They DON'T routinely give out their mobile or direct dial number.
- **Time for money:**
 - They value their time and expertise and set their prices so they don't have to work over-long hours.
 - They don't think they are 'expensive' – instead, they know they are giving better customer service by charging properly and are more likely to secure the future of their business for their customers to use long into the future.
- **Managing customers and staff:**
 - They respect the value of customers absolutely - but never to the point where they put their own business goals second to their customers.
 - They make sure there are staff and systems in place – in house or via suppliers and virtual resources – to support customers properly at all times.
 - They will never play 'doormat' to demanding customers and would even sack those that abuse their time.
 - They step back and delegate responsibility – but monitor results.
- **Book-keeping:**
 - They are willing to pay for someone with proper experience to do book keeping for them – and in less time!
 - They recognise that the cost compared to the value of their own time is negligible.
 - They get that the most important financial role they play is knowing and understanding the top-level numbers – not generating them!
- **Technology:**
 - They are willing to pay for someone to support technologically-driven services, recognising the potential time drain these can be and that others are better qualified to do the job in less time.
 - They invest in the right equipment and aren't hostage to a computer that routinely fails or doesn't have the capacity required.

- **Focused marketing efforts:**

- They have a clear plan of action regards their business growth and marketing, are totally committed to achieving the deadlines they have set themselves.
- They break it down into manageable chunks and are committed to getting the work done.
- They will often make public commitments to make sure they have to follow through.
- They work on business growth and marketing EVERY DAY.
- They focus on the activities most likely to bring them the results they want when they are fully energised and at their most creative.
- Only a serious crisis will divert them.
- They have procedures in place to deal with other matters while they are working ON their business.

Habit Four



In business, people who 'play to win' are focused on where they want their business to end up. They barely see obstacles in the way – they are minor hiccups, something that can easily be sidestepped or even ridden over. Their business goals – and their related personal goals – are everything.

People who play 'not to lose' are much more likely to be sidetracked by procedure and process. They are far less clear about their 'bigger picture' as they are focused primarily on what they are doing right now.

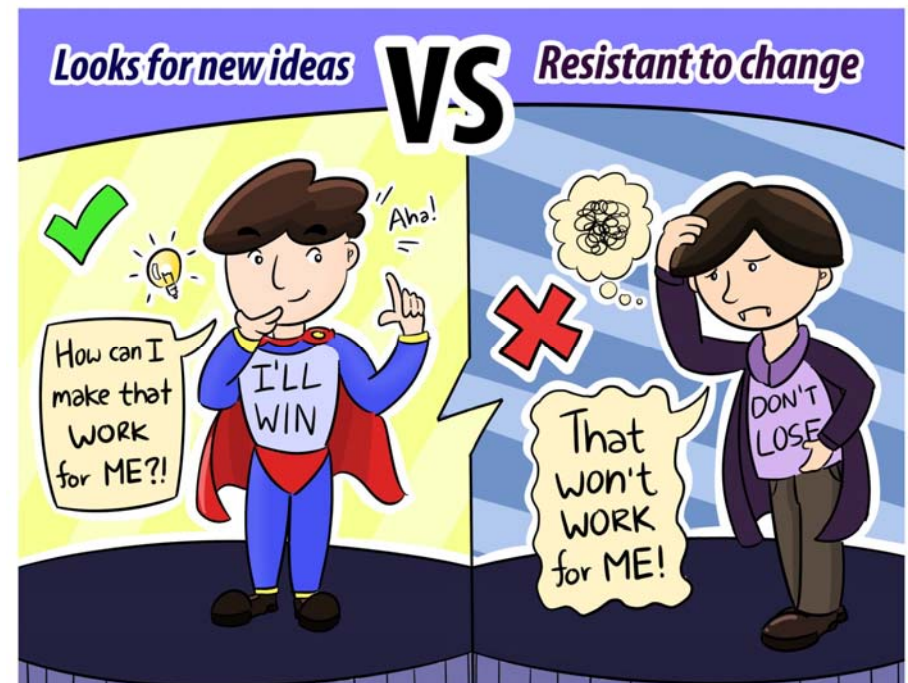
A major step in the right direction is to be 100% clear what your goals are and to have the answers to some essential 'playing to win' questions.

- In order to achieve your business goal, what level of turnover will you need to achieve? Or profit? Or number of customers?
- Where are you right now in terms of turnover, profit or customers?
- When do you want to get to your desired turnover or profitability?

- What marketing plan do you need to move you there from your current position?
- And what do you need to do differently?
- What knowledge or skills do you need to acquire to achieve your goals?
- What help do you need?
- How much can you afford invest to achieve your goals?

Playing not to lose is often the inevitable outcome of a lack of clarity over key business information. When you know the answers to the questions above you will be in a far better position to 'play to win'; you'll be able to focus unequivocally on getting to where you want to be.

Habit Five



What do they say? – the only thing certain nowadays is CHANGE. When I started by marketing business in 1988 you were pretty much sorted if you a) had a business card, b) a brochure, c) ran an advert in the yellow pages, d) sent the odd press release at the local paper and e) popped along to the Chamber of Commerce for networking events. Things have changed!

In 1988 clients could essentially outsource their 'marketing' - they could give their brochures to the sales guy and it was a case of 'job done'.

Nowadays, it's inconceivable that any business owner can disengage in 'marketing' as they used to. Agencies and consultancies can support but it's hard to imagine how small business owners can let go of control of their day-to-day business growth and achieve any real success.

That isn't to say you have to do everything yourself But you do need to be on top of it all – controlling what's happening.

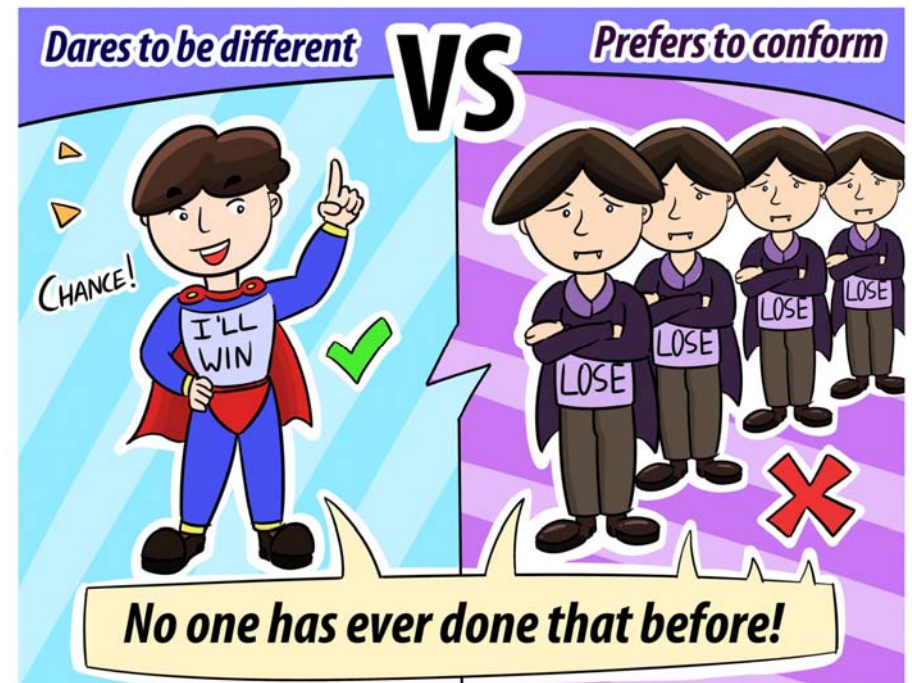
People who 'play to win' are always in control of what's going on in their marketing, employ specialists as necessary and will routinely try out new ideas with clear objectives.

- They'll try off-the-wall email campaigns and split test them against a more traditional model and carefully analyse the results.
- They'll check out what key players in the USA and UK are doing and attempt to mirror their methodologies.
- They embrace social media,
- They are open to learning whatever they need to know from whomever is best placed to teach them.
- They commit time and energy to acquiring new skills.
- They typically ask the question; 'How can I make that work for me?'

People who play 'not to lose' are suspicious of new ideas and are reluctant to move away from what's worked in the past. You may hear them say ...

- **Email campaigns:** 'Well, personally I hate them and I certainly don't want to harass my customers. And Split testing – what's that?'
- **Learning:** 'I don't have time to read through all those Dan Kennedy emails – what a waste of time! So American!'
- **Social media:** 'Twitter? who cares what I'm having for lunch or that I'm in the post office queue. Facebook is for my kids and is best left like that!'
- **Training:** 'I don't have time to go on courses – or the money! I have too much work and can't afford a couple of hours away – let alone a whole day!'
- Their defining statement is; '**That won't work for me**'

Habit Six



I guess right from an early age we are encouraged to conform. Certainly parents and teachers generally prefer conformity to wacky 'off the rails' thinking! But all the biggest and bravest – and most successful – entrepreneurs have always happily stood out from the crowd. There is simply no money in being the same as everyone else in your sector.

But it's an easy trap to fall into. If you are an accountant, you may well be tempted to create a brand that seems to conform to the agreed 'standard', saying the same things in much the same way as all your competitors. There is a sense of validation in being like all the others.

Mark Twain wrote powerfully about the foolishness of following the crowd well over a century ago; and his words still resonate today.

Mark Twain said ,...

Whenever you find you are on the side of the majority, it is time to pause and reflect.

The majority in your business, industry or profession are wrong about most – if not all – of their beliefs about how to be successful in that business, industry or profession.

That's a difficult truth to wrap your head around, but this fact doesn't lie: 95% of them earn a great deal less than 5% do. Only about 1% becomes rich through their businesses – compared with at least 20% to 50% who barely eke out a living or fail. EVERY population divides roughly into 1%, 4%, 15%, 40% and 40% groups. Many more at the bottom than at the top.

To put it bluntly, it means that ...

- Generally, only 1% are rich
- Just 4% are prosperous
- 15% are doing well
- 60% sustaining only mediocrity – in financial terms, heads above water but barely and
- 20% are doing poorly or failing

Or, put another way ...

- 80% of businesses in your sector are achieving mediocrity or worse.
- The only people with the BIG ideas are in the 1% and the 4%.
Therefore, when you decide to follow what others in your sector are doing, be VERY careful who you model yourself on.

People who 'play to win' take brave decisions, embrace change and are prepared to stand out from the crowd.

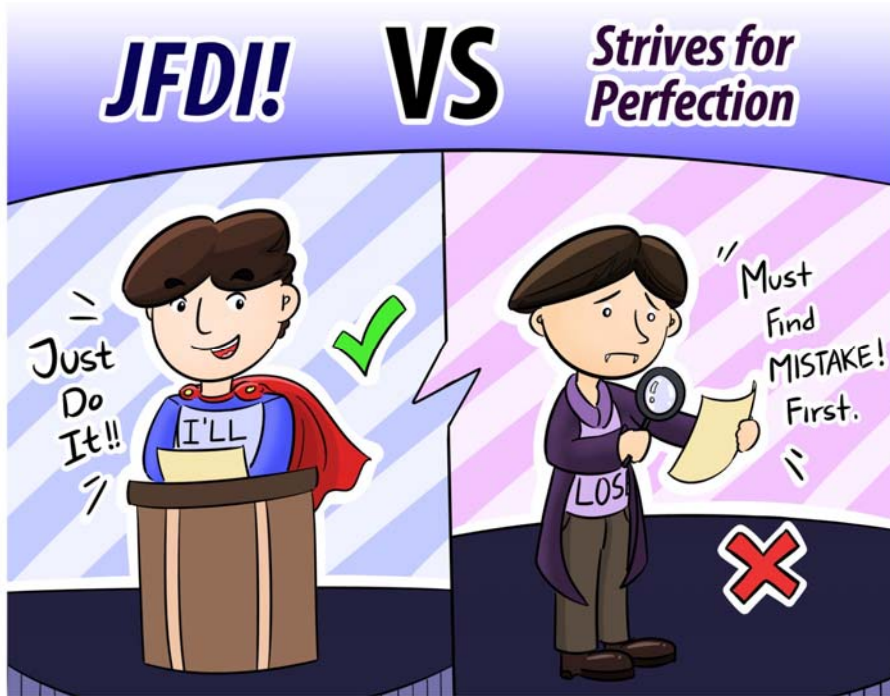
People who 'play not to lose' are afraid of standing out and prefer to conform and prefer the feeling of 'safety in numbers'.

Our 'winners' and our 'playing not to lose-ers' are both defined by the phrase ...

"No-one has ever done that before!"

... it's simply a matter of how they respond.

Habit Seven



People who play to win are DOERS!

They just ffff...flippin' do it in fact (if you'll excuse the polite-ism!).

That's not to say it's OK to send stuff out that's badly thought through, or full of errors. It just means you need to get on with it. After all, the 'not as good as it could be' sales letter that's landing on doormats is 100% better than the 'ever-so nearly perfect one' that's still sat on your desk.

The trap of perfectionism

Ask someone who 'plays not to lose' for their thoughts on your sales copy and they'll point out your grammar errors. Ask a 'player to win' and they'll suggest ways you can tweak your offer to make it even better.

Perfection is not all it's cracked up to be – it's often an excuse for procrastination and delaying tactics. After all, the brilliant campaign that hasn't quite been finalised can't ever fail and you can continue to tell yourself that you are onto a winner.

People who play to win would much rather know they've got it wrong so that they can learn from the experience and make the next version more powerful and effective.

Being mega-powerful with your time

People who play to win simply get more done in the time. To the outside world they are prolific ... 'how do they get it all done?'

They just think the way they behave is normal :

- they know what they want to do
- they know why they are doing it
- they know when it is needed
- they J.F.D.I.!

About the author: Vanessa Lanham-Day

Vanessa founded OnTrack Marketing, a Surrey-based marketing consultancy in 1988. She now works primarily as a business growth mentor and Mastermind leader.

"I'm all about helping business owners to become inspired to fulfil their business dreams by mastering the art of business growth and marketing.

"Most business owners are simply too close to the problem and often want some support being pointed in the right direction; whether it's for the core components of a powerful marketing plan, or the structure and organisation needed to ensure systematic implementation.

"With over 30 years as a professional marketer and business mentor, I have an outstanding record for helping business owners achieve exactly that.



"I'm often told that my approach is inspiring – clients leave me knowing what they need to do – and with the energy and commitment to do it!

"Most business owners struggle with a lack of accountability. I seem to have earned the name of **The ButtKicker** and I'm happy to play my part!

"My passion is '**Inspiring and empowering you to fulfil your marketing and business growth potential**' and it is certainly what I love doing most."

Your personal call with the ButtKicker for FREE!

Vanessa is passionate about helping you and your business to succeed - and the best way to find out if she can help you is with one of her FREE trademark 'ButtKicker Marketing Focus Calls' ...

"I guarantee I'll leave you with a fistful of 'lightbulb' moments that you can apply to your business straight away."

To book your ButtKicker marketing Focus Call, simply go to www.talk-to-vanessa.co.uk



What people say about Vanessa ...

Vanessa was the first marketing professional I had heard who spoke the same language as me. She has a great imagination when it comes to helping a business stand out from the crowd and be seen - which is exactly what I was after. She has really focussed me and helped me get and stay on track with my own marketing. Just a few months in and I now know exactly who my target markets are and more importantly WHY they are and what messages will help me reach them.

Louise Boardman-Rule, Director at Ten2Two

Working with Vanessa was probably the biggest turning point for me in over 18 years of business. Whilst I may have spent many of these years pouring over figures and coming up with various ideas with no real direction, Vanessa managed, in one day, to cut through the clutter that's bogged me down for so long and give me 20 – 20 vision. I left knowing what was important, what I wanted to achieve, how I was going to achieve it and in what timescale it was going to happen; I was bloody knackered afterwards but felt so positive that I now had a direction.

Chris Stone, Director, Bushy Business

Yesterday I spent a hugely inspiring day with Vanessa. I came away with clear goals on where I want my business to go, a smart marketing strategy and an action plan to get me there. It was the most productive and motivating time I've had in years. I can't recommend enough. Just do it.

Martin Frise, Managing Director Mailbox Etc. Wimbledon & Putney

Vanessa is the most valuable asset ... challenging, inspiring, motivating and supporting you on your business journey.

Debbie Walker, Passport to Change

Vanessa's help has been invaluable – she has a refreshingly down to earth approach to marketing by cutting out all the industry jargon. On a one-to-one basis she skilfully and patiently analysed with me the underlying problems my business was facing at the time. Vanessa then helped me to decide on practical solutions and gave me confidence to put them into practice. The Super Success Accelerator was a key turning point for me and my business.

Patricia Ellis, MD Wizard Video

Vanessa is one of the most dynamic people I know ... with the energy, commitment and skills to drive any project forward to a successful conclusion. To top it all, she's great fun! I would happily put my trust in Vanessa for any project; if she doesn't have the answer she will go and find it, learn it, or create it.

Keith Thomas, Sightline

Vanessa's enthusiasm plus high energy creates a very positive atmosphere. She is very effective at influencing people to think through their business challenges and options.

Lyn Etherington, Cape Consulting

Vanessa's input has had a significant impact on our business and we'll continue to tap into Vanessa's knowledge to help take us forward. Well worth the investment.

Jean-Claude Vacassin, Forme & Function

Vivacious, interested and interesting, Vanessa's impressive list of contacts and network brings extra value to any project which needs additional support as well as the creative services that she provides. You have been warned. If you work with Vanessa it is almost inevitable that you are going to have a thoroughly enjoyable time in great company and achieve outstanding results.

Adam Workman, Wheelers Solicitors