

Pushing the Envelope

All the Way to the Top

by Harvey Mackay

[Fertig notes]

- If you ask the attendant at your health club what the busiest day of the year is, he'll tell you it's the day after New Year's. That's when all the New Year's-resolution types pour in. By February only a handful are left. How many of those resolutions have you kept? Maybe you could use a new set.
 1. **I will improve my listening skills.**

I can't learn anything when I'm doing the talking.
 2. **I will improve my professional skills.**

Nobody should come into the twenty-first century without being computer literate.
 3. **I will improve my reading skills.**

Instead of reading what confirms my existing prejudices, I will search out material that introduces me to new ideas and new ways of thinking.
 4. **I will waste less time.**

Use commuter time to read more or to listen to audio tapes that can help me improve my skills and broaden my understanding.
 5. **I will exercise regularly.**

Exercise not only improves my health but helps me maintain a high level of performance on the job.
 6. **I will encourage risk taking.**

Many businesses fail from lack of boldness rather than from trying something new.
 7. **I will put into practice a plan to become the sole source of supply to my largest customers.**

Treat customers as though I were their most dedicated employee and consultant.
 8. **I will be committed to growing and improving every facet of our business.**

Be on the lookout for good people to become part of the team.
 9. **I will contribute to my community.**

Try to make a difference.
 10. **I will not neglect my family in pursuit of the almighty dollar.**
- Many successful people are no more talented than unsuccessful people. The difference between them is that successful people do those things that unsuccessful

people don't *like* to do. Successful people have the determination, the will, the focus, the drive to complete the tough jobs.

- You'll never turn *try* into *triumph*...without adding the *umph*!
- Determination is what keeps us hammering away. Determined people possess the stamina and courage to pursue their ambitions despite criticism, ridicule, or unfavorable circumstances.
- Today we live in a culture of instant gratification, where the attributes of patience and determination are hard to find.
- School is about learning - learning to work a system, learning self-discipline, learning to deal with other people, learning to pay attention, learning what you like to do, learning what you don't like to do, what you do well, what you do badly.
- The only things that are truly work are the things we don't do well.
- If at first you're afraid to fail, then you won't ever succeed.
- There is more to learn today than ever. The more talents you have, the more valuable you are.
- Enjoy learning for its own sake.
- Any coach worth his salt has an emotional and psychological investment in his players that's often as rewarding as the play itself. There is nothing as ego building, as challenging and inspiring to a kid as having a grown-up treat him or her as if what he or she does really matters.
- *Whatever you do is a lot more enjoyable if you do it well.*
- *I learned not to be afraid to try something new.*
- Will Rogers once said, "Even if you're on the right track, you'll get run over if you just sit there." Knowledge is only useful when put into action.
- ★ → The best time to be creative is when it's least expected. Thanksgiving cards still pack a bigger punch than Christmas cards because they stand out from the crowd. One of our salespeople learned that a customer's new baby boy had been born that day. Within hours he had delivered a toy to their home...for his two-year-old sister, knowing she might be in need of some attention.
- Within 24 hours of receiving a first-time order, we will arrange delivery of a 30 to 40-foot telegram saying "Thank You" in 15 different languages.
- Fund-raising is crucial. If you are willing to become a fund-raiser, you will enhance your own skills in two significant ways:

1. Selling.

If you want to learn how to sell, here's how to start at the primal level: Ask people for money. I can't think of a better sales training program than several dozen rejections.

2. Networking.

No matter what you do for a living, you need customers. The best way to get them is to get to know them. That means meeting as many people as possible.

- People who do volunteer work and help other people on a regular basis have a healthier outlook on life.
- The best way to help yourself is to help others.
- Even when you're doing something unexciting, you can still take pride in your work, in your appearance, in doing things right.
- Lines on how to kill creativity:
 1. **It's not in the budget.**
 2. **The boss will never go for it.**
 3. **Great idea! Let's form a committee to tackle it.**
 4. **It will never work.**
 5. **That's against our policy.**
 6. **Who will we get to do it?**
 7. **Let's think about it for a while.**
 8. **Let's discuss it some other time.**
 9. **Why not leave well enough alone?**
 10. **It's too late to fix it now.**
 11. **It's too soon to fix it now.**
 12. **We have done it this way for so many years, and we still make a profit.**
 13. **Why fix it if it isn't broken?**
 14. **We tried it five years ago and it didn't work.**
 15. **That's not how we do things around here.**
 16. **That's the kind of idea that cost your predecessor her job.**
 17. **It will take a long time to research this idea.**
 18. **That's not my job.**
 19. **The competition already does it that way.**
 20. **The competition doesn't do it that way.**
 21. **Let's let the competition try it first and see what happens.**
 22. **That isn't in our job descriptions.**
 23. **If we do it, they'll wonder why we didn't do it sooner.**
 24. **It will create more work for the rest of us.**
 25. **Sounds like a good idea...Let's run it by legal.**
- Crowds die a thousand deaths. Unfortunately, cowards kill thousands of creative ideas before death catches up with them.
- Good managers know when to step in and use the hands-on approach and when to lay off. Are you able to delegate decision-making power downwards to the people

actually on the firing line, or do you jealously guard power up the ladder until it reaches you?

- Fuzzy logic is just a cute, maybe too cute, way of describing the means for making more effective decisions by defining rule making to include the right to bend the rules to meet changing conditions. Fuzzy logic means hanging loose, staying flexible.
- I'm constantly asked what I think is the secret of success. At the top of my list are two beliefs: (a) you need to be a hungry fighter, and (b) a hungry fighter never quits. Success is largely hanging on after others have let go.
- Telephone tag is a time waster. I never leave my name for a return phone call without a designated time I can be reached. It's another pointed reminder that I'm a busy guy, too, and I don't care to squander my time any more than the buyer cares to squander his or hers.
- When Dwight Eisenhower was president, he insisted that any memo be limited to a single page.
- Salespeople sell and bean counters count. Smart management gets them both on the same team.
- Understandings prevent misunderstandings.
- Whatever you're selling, ya gotta know the territory.
- You buy from someone you like. The know-it-all invariably has a tough time in sales. Customers tend to get uncomfortable around someone who has all the answers. If you're in sales, it never hurts to tell a customer that you *don't* know the answer to their excellent question, but you'll check it out and give them a call...pronto.
- Customers don't expect you to know everything.
- Some people are too smart for their own good. But they're not smart enough to know they don't know.
- Humor is a critical business weapon.
- If you want them to show you the money, you better show them the reason.
- **Making a Deal**
 - * If you can't say yes, it's no. Just because a deal can be done, doesn't mean it *should* be done. No one ever went broke saying no too often.
 - * Do your homework before you deal. Learn as much as you can about the other side. Instincts are no match for information.
 - * Instincts are no match for preparation.
 - * A deal can always be made when both parties see their own benefit in making it.
 - * Don't get personal. You don't have to like your opponent, but don't let your dislike become obvious.
 - * Don't show your emotions.
 - * Don't talk out of school.

* Leave something on the table for the other guy. Deals are made between parties who seek mutual advantage, not unilateral victory. Both sides have to win something, or you don't have a deal, you have a homicide.

* Your first offer should never be your final offer.

* Don't be afraid to take a risk. Don't let yourself be bluffed. And don't run bluffs either. If you are called and you don't follow through, your credibility is shot.

* Don't be afraid to go to an expert when you're in over your head. You don't know everything.

* Don't attribute more strength to the other than they possess. Every opponent has weaknesses.

* Sometimes you can get what you want by calling it another name.

* Take your time. Don't let the other side force a deal.

* The smartest response you can make to any offer is, "Let me give it some thought."

- No computer can or ever will be able to duplicate the kind of impression one individual will have on you, another individual.
- Loyalty deserves to be treated like royalty. One of the reasons gambling establishments have become so successful is that they treat their best customers with a respect shown by almost no other retail establishment.
- What's enough? There is no enough, because there is no horizon on satisfying customers' desires.
- Are you selling them what you want to sell, or are you selling them what they want to buy?
- Everything changes. Yesterday's training will not meet today's challenges. Keep up to date.
- Courtesy is rule one. Learn a thing about hospitality from the folks at Marriott. They've preached for years the axiom "make eye contact with every guest." They know that if they focus on eye contact they'll wind up with courtesy.
- Ever wonder why politicians of widely differing ideological stripes can be such good personal buddies? Because they know that today's opponent is tomorrow's ally and cosponsor. Adversarial relationships don't work over the long run. Things change. Don't burn your bridges.
- Don't talk yourself *out* of a deal by assuming the other person won't be interested.
- Look for strengths and weaknesses in all your competitors and learn from them. What others do impacts you.
- Do what you do best. Let somebody do the rest.
- Building contacts is the key to building a successful business.
- Admit your mistakes.
- It's not how much it's worth. It's how much people are willing to pay.

- All managers should go out and walk their plants or offices and catch someone doing something right. And then in front of mother, God, and country, praise the heck out of them.
- Make sure the person you're dealing with has the authority to make a deal.
- Keep your promises. We are judged by what we finish, not by what we start.
- Smart retailers don't sell merchandise. They create an environment that motivates their customers to sell themselves on an item. You can make the sale if you know how to tell the tale.
- ★ • The basketball player who averages 20 points a game is on a longer leash than the backup guard. It isn't fair, it isn't right, but it's the way of the world in a world where results often matter more than how you get them. "If you can sell, don't worry about the paperwork. We'll get someone to take care of it." All kinds of people can fill out forms...few can really sell.
- Smart companies have come to realize that salespeople need to be rid of duties that have nothing to do with sales. Dumb companies remain enmeshed in structure, processes, and politics. They tend to be internally focused on the company culture, the company rule book, the company dress code, and the company haircut. They have meetings to see if they should have meetings.
- If you're going to be different, you'd better produce. Most managers hate mavericks, but all managers love results.
- Good salespeople make good first impressions. No one was ever sold anything by someone they didn't like.
- Every good salesperson I've ever encountered is driven. They have a strong work ethic and a high energy level. They work harder and longer than their peers.
- Good salespeople want to please their customers. It shows. It shows in the way they go the extra mile.
- Good salespeople don't sell. They listen. Carefully. They are patient, not pushy. They know that today's sale is a lot less important than tomorrow's relationship.
- Good salespeople have second sight...they can see things from the customer's point of view. They willingly go beyond their traditional job descriptions to be sure that everything gets done right...and on time.
- Everyone has problems. Good salespeople leave them at home; they don't bring them to work and lay them on their coworkers and customers.
- Good salespeople keep score. They want to be better than anyone else and when they are, they want to be better than themselves.
- Good salespeople are constantly working to become better salespeople.

- **The most important relationship you can build with a customer is trust. Establish credibility and reliability, the all-important trust factors in any relationship.**
- Greta players thrive under pressure. There's a moment in almost every game when it could go either way. It's called "crunch time." How you react when that moment comes is what really matters.
- Winston Churchill was once asked to describe the most valuable talent in a politician. "It's the ability to foretell what will happen in the future, and to explain afterwards why it didn't happen."
- Americans love quick thinkers.
- Making each day count is a tactic. Making each year count is a strategy. You need both to succeed.
- Accepting a page during lunch doesn't prove you're important; it proves you're rude.
- When you're on a ladder, you don't go sideways. It's up or down.
- Q: What is a manager's single most important task?
A: To hire people who know how to do a better job at what they do than what the manager could do, and then get out of the way so they can do it.
Managers figure they're getting paid to make decisions, so they make them. But that isn't what they're getting paid for. They're getting paid to be right. And sometimes that involves knowing when not to make a decision.
- The most valuable ability is the ability to recognize ability.
- Talent and emotional stability do not necessarily go hand in hand.
- Diversity, conflict, and contention may not be pleasant, but they can produce results. Every organization needs new ideas and fresh thinking.
- It's not always what's up front that counts. It's what's inside.
- People are willing to take on all kinds of menial chores uncomplainingly if they're asked to do them in a courteous and reasonable fashion, and they see some benefit to themselves.
- Smart outfits, huge outfits, aren't too proud to change their themes or even their names, if it means selling their goods. Kentucky Fried Chicken became KFC right around the time "fried" became a dirty word. The product, and its profits, are still finger lickin' good.
- There is no more certain recipe for disaster than an instant decision or one based on emotion. Sleep on it. Take your time. Consider all the angles. Be patient. You are paid to be right, not paid to be quick. Get all the information, get all the advice. Then act. Decisively. No one ever remembers how long it took to reach a decision, only what the result was.

- Everyone knows you should deliver more than you promised. What happens when you can't? Have the courtesy and the guts to give out the news as promptly, accurately, thoroughly, and honestly as possible. That creates trust. Delays and foul-ups are annoying, but tolerable. Lies and deceptions are not.
- "Everyone wants to win on Saturday afternoon when the game is played. It's what you do the other six days that decides the outcome. Lou Holtz
- Agreements prevent disagreements.
- The quality of your people is the most important element in building a successful business. I asked the CEO of Redmond Products, Tom Redmond, what differentiates his company from the competition. "TGIM," said Redmond. "What's that?" "It stands for Thank God It's Monday." "Attitude?" "That's right. When our employees go home on Friday, I want them to feel they just can't wait to get back here on Monday. I'd like every one of them to really love what they're doing and not just work for a paycheck." "How?" "First, by hiring right. Second, by creating a work environment that's safe, clean, collegial, challenging, exciting, and rewarding." It was the people we didn't fire that made our lives miserable.
- You never want to burn your bridges unless you're a mighty good swimmer.
- The greatest trick in marketing is to convince people that they actually need it.
- Chicago department store tycoon Marshall Field once indicated the following 12 reminders that can be helpful in obtaining a sound sense of values. These time-honored principles never change:
 1. The value of time
 2. The success of perseverance.
 3. The pleasure of working.
 4. The dignity of simplicity.
 5. The worth of character.
 6. The power of kindness.
 7. The influence of example.
 8. The obligation of duty.
 9. The wisdom of economy.
 10. The virtue of patience.
 11. The improvement of talent.
 12. The joy of originating.
- We value lots of things here: humor, honesty, fairness, the ability to get along with others, business judgment, product knowledge, motivation. Most of all, we value results.
- Rarely does a group of unhappy people achieve success, and I have rarely seen a company with happy employees that was not successful. Companies that concentrate

just on satisfying their and whipping competition to a pulp miss the easiest audience of all: their own employees. Focus on them and the rewards are huge. Here's how.

1. Build team morale.

Inject a sense of fun into the daily grind.

2. Listen to your team.

Everyone has ideas about how their own job can be done better. Success is about thinking, not just working. Tactical skills can get you through the day, but they won't help you plan for tomorrow. Thinking is the hardest, most valuable task any person performs. Don't stifle it...encourage it.

Mistakes? Every company makes them. Ford had the Edsel. Coke almost abandoned its franchise product. IBM overemphasized mainframes. But that's all part of the game. You'll never stub your toe if you walk backwards, but you'll always be moving in the wrong direction. Better to take an occasional wrong turn. Vince Lombardi got it right when he said, "If you learn from a mistake, it wasn't a mistake after all."

3. Hold team meetings.

4. Build teams within the team.

- Leadership is the art of determining whether they're chasing you or following you.
- Leadership is not authority. Authority is compelled obedience. Leadership requires persuasion. You follow, not because you have to, but because you want to. It certainly requires a lot less effort to tell someone what to do than to inspire them to do it.
- Leaders create scenarios that persuade others to follow them.
- Leadership is not just knowing what you stand for, but what you're willing to stand against. Example: George Bush's war on drugs. Instead of trying to inspire others to join the cause, Bush took the traditional, "top-down, follow me," approach. He had General Noriega arrested, appointed William Bennett as his "drug czar," and got him \$9 billion to use to end drug abuse. Result: Drug abuse became worse than ever. By saying, in effect, "I'll take care of it," Bush never convinced us *we* had a problem. *He* had the problem. Sound strategy. Weak tactics.
- Leadership does not mean getting people to do their job. It means getting people to do their best.
- Never chew out a subordinate in front of anyone else. When a third party is present when you lose your temper you have made it impossible for the floggee to save face and to correct their mistakes. Do it in private. You know what was said. They know what was said. That's enough. (But keep notes. It's a litigious age we live in).
- Popular wisdom is a contradiction in terms. If it's popular, it's popular, but it isn't wisdom. Wisdom involves seeing beyond what is popular.

- Whoever it is you're in business *with* will do more, a lot more, to determine your success than the business you are *in*.
- Relationships require constant monitoring, feedback, communication, and fine-tuning.
- Throughout life most of our preparations are for disasters, not for success. Don't fantasize about success, prepare for it. It's the surest route there is to achieving it.
- Ten Steps to Effective Leadership
 1. **Leading is not managing.** "You manage things, but you lead people." A manager wants to be liked. A leader wants to be respected.
 2. **Leaders have a sense of purpose.** Leaders have a sense of where the culture is going to be.
 3. **Leaders have courage.** They make the tough calls.
 4. **Leaders are forceful.** They have a point of view, and they express it clearly. You don't have to guess where they stand.
 5. **Leaders are consistent.** They inspire trust and confidence because they don't change horses – or courses – in midstream.
 6. **Leaders are truthful.** Even when it hurts. Followers accept honest mistakes. They don't accept lies and cover-ups.
 7. **Leaders concentrate on a couple of big themes.** They don't try to do it all.
 8. **Leaders don't have to pretend they thought of everything themselves.**
 9. **Leaders are made, not born.** They have climbed over obstacles that have held back lesser people. One thing leaders have in common, they all have followers.
 10. **How do you spot a leader?** Look at the people around the leader. Are they hacks or gofers? Or are they achievers, people with talent and good moral character, people who can stand as leaders in their own right? Leaders are not threatened by being surrounded by people of quality; they are energized by them.
- Good advice is never cheap. Cheap advice is never good.
- A happy customer usually tells three other people. An unhappy one tells 11.
- Managers spend from 25% to 80% of their time in meetings. And 53% of this time is unproductive.
- When asked, "does your advertising get results?" a jeweler said, "You bet! Last week we advertised for a night watchman and the next night we were robbed,"
- Workers who behave old will always face discrimination. Acting "old" means being a closed system which doesn't take in new ideas. Some of us get old and some of us, despite the years, stay young.

- Nothing dates you like going on and on about how things have changed. Yawn. Yawn. Give the world a break and talk less about your own values, and focus more on understanding why others think differently from you.
- Don't act your age, act the age you're in.
- The best idea is the best idea, no matter where it comes from or who thought of it.
- Of all the human failings that can destroy a business, arrogance is the deadliest. It is the most readily acquired, the easiest to justify, and the hardest to recognize in ourselves. It's different from greed, laziness or dishonesty. These faults are usually individual flaws, not contagious to entire companies. We know them when we see them, and we know they are wrong. When they are detected, correction is usually swift, certain and severe.

But arrogance? When we're successful, we reason, don't we deserve a bit of special consideration? No one is "entitled" to be dishonest or greedy, but a bit of smugness, well, that's just natural in a leader. We accept it. We even nurture it as a sign of success.

- The disease that felled IBM wasn't technological incompetence. It was arrogance. The people at the top had lost their ability to communicate. They were unwilling to work the trenches. That was for the grunts. Executives don't have to bother with that sort of thing.
- The higher up you go, the more important it is for you to stay in touch, both with your customers and your employees.
- How do you know when you're getting arrogant? When the only people you care to listen to or deal with are either at your own level or above it.
- Bill Gates emphasizes how incredibly important it is for companies to make work "as fun and interesting" for new employees as possible.
- "Question the way you manage and reward people," says consultant Lynne Lancaster. "Generation Xers is a group that very much wants to succeed. Ask them questions. Listen. Rethink your concept of motivation. Not everyone in the workplace is motivated by the same thing anymore. To get the most out of this talented new workforce, you have to be willing to change, to become more flexible. For managers and companies that learn to do this, it will be incredibly rewarding."
- Look through your mail. Every scrap of paper in the heap is either printed or word processed, isn't it? You're lucky if your kids sign your birthday cards. A hand written note in real ink on real stationery stands out a bit, doesn't it? It says the writer cares. It says you are special. It says it in a way no computer-crunched message can. The real pros have known that for a long time.
- The more technologically festooned our lives become, the more important the personal touch becomes.

- Only a computer wants to do business with another computer. People respond to people.
- Aristotle, in describing how to improve oneself as a human being, “Hang with good people.”
- When someone says, “It ain’t the money but the principle of the thing” ...it’s the money.
- We hear talk about service. Not much about performance.
- Believe me, there is a place in the world for any business that takes care of its customers – after the sale.
- If you’re not making significant efforts to continually improve, you’re not staying the same, you’re falling behind. Why? Because your competition is continually raising the bar.
- We can’t always be the best...but we can always be the best we can be.
- They don’t pay off on effort...they pay off on results.
- People begin to become successful the minute they decide to be.
- Good habits are as addictive as bad habits and a lot more rewarding.
- People always remember two things: who kicked you when you were down, and who helped you up.
- It never hurts to let the other person feel they’re smarter than you.
- If you win, say little. If you lose, say less.
- If you want to triple your success ratio, you have to triple your failure rate.
- Your day usually goes the way the corners of your mouth turn
- If you don’t know where you’re going, any road will get you there.
- When a person strikes in anger, he usually misses the mark.
- On the day of victory no one is tired.
- You will never get ahead of anyone as long as you are trying to get even with them.
- A pat on the back accomplishes more than a slap in the face.
- Nobody’s attention ever wavers when someone pays them a compliment.
- Nothing will improve a person’s hearing more than sincere praise.