

## The 7 Habits of a Highly Effective Advertising Sales Rep

This is the final article in a series of Link and Learns on applying the principles described in Stephen R. Covey's best selling book "The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People" to our business. To read the Link and Learn articles on Habits 1, 2, 3, 4 & 5 you can go to [www.PaperChainNetwork.net](http://www.PaperChainNetwork.net), click on "PaperChain Material Download" then scroll to "Link & Learn Tip Sheets".

Dr. Covey's "7 Habits of Highly Effective People" is one of the most successful and practical business books ever published. This article is intended to give an overview of the basic concepts of Dr. Covey's program as they apply to our business. My purpose is just to stimulate interest in the 7 Habits. To gain a better understanding of this powerful material, I strongly recommend that you read the book or attend one of the seminars presented by the Covey organization.

### Habits 6 & 7

#### "Synergize" & "Sharpen the Saw"

This article combines 2 of Dr. Covey's 7 Habits. This is not because these habits are less important than any of the others. I have combined them because they are the capstone of the 7 habits program and, as such, contain many elements of the other habits.

### "Synergize"

#### The whole is greater than the sum of its parts

This is the simplest definition of Synergy. Habit 6 is about cooperation. It is the habit that catalyzes, unifies and unleashes great power within an individual or within a group. Where synergy exists, the relationship between the parts of a whole becomes a part in and of itself. Someone once told me, "None of us knows as much as all of us together." Synergy is the art of bringing together the intellects, the energy and the spirits of a group of people and applying their combined force to solve problems and create new opportunities.

#### Valuing other people's opinions

Synergy can only exist in an environment of trust and respect for the opinions and ideas of others. If I am convinced that I have "the" answer, I have no reason to listen to you. People who have not built a strong inner core equate considering other's ideas as an admission that their own ideas are wrong. It is entirely possible that I have one solution to a problem and that you have another and very possibly that a combination of our solutions will be better than either on its' own. You may want to change the design of a special section to increase revenue and I may want to change the section's circulation to the same end. The synergistic answer may be to deliver the redesigned product to the new circulation, significantly improving sales.

**Accepting new ideas**

Equally as important as accepting the ideas of others is entertaining new ideas of our own. It is necessary to silence our inner censor that tells us, “I’ve never done it that way” or even more powerfully says, “The old way is safe, if I try something new I may fail.” Having the strength to think over new ideas and take risks is what raises us to a new level in our lives. Only people who risk failure can be innovative.

**Valuing diversity**

In order to get the maximum benefit from synergy it is necessary to combine as many points of view as possible. In an organization, this means recruiting people with varying skill-sets and from diverse backgrounds. Alfred P. Sloan who led General Motors to world dominance in the 1930’s once told a conference full of executives: “If we are all in agreement on the decision - then I propose we postpone further discussion of this matter until our next meeting, to give ourselves time to develop disagreement and perhaps gain some understanding of what the decision is all about.” On a personal level, it is important to expose ourselves to a variety of ideas from both inside and outside our industry. The circular saw was invented not by a carpenter but by a woman who was watching two men with a hand saw while she was working at a spinning wheel.

**Final Thoughts on Synergy**

Synergy is the habit that drives personal, professional and organizational growth. Innovation is not based on developing completely new things or ideas. It is based on combining existing things and ideas to create new products and a way of doing things. Only by remaining open to new concepts can we make ourselves, our companies and our world better.

## “Sharpen the Saw”

“Sharpen the Saw” is the habit that makes all the other habits possible. It is the habit of constantly seeking personal renewal. The rather odd title Dr. Covey assigned to this habit comes from a story: A man was walking in the woods when he came upon a man working feverishly to saw down a tree and asked,

“What are you doing?”

“Can’t you see I’m sawing down this tree.” the man replied

“You look exhausted. How long have you been at it?”

“Over five hours, and I’m beat. This is hard work!”

“Why don’t you take a break and sharpen the saw,  
I’m sure it would go a lot faster.”

“I don’t have time to sharpen the saw...I’m too busy sawing!”

“Sharpen the Saw” is about the importance of setting time aside for personal renewal. Its preserving and enhancing your most valuable asset—you.

**Four dimensions of renewal**

Dr. Covey teaches that we should continually focus on the following four dimensions of our life:

1. **Physical** – If you neglect your health little else matters in your life. Sufficient sleep, regular exercise and proper nutrition are necessary to maintain the energy needed to accomplish your life goals. Monitoring your stress level and reducing it is also a vital part of a healthy lifestyle
2. **Spiritual** – Spiritual renewal is closely related to Habit 2 (Begin with the end in mind.). It concerns the clarification and a renewed commitment to your personal values. For some this involves prayer while others may find renewal in nature or literature. Spiritual renewal is simply slowing down long enough to take a fresh look at the core principles of your life and if necessary making a mid-course correction in your chosen path.
3. **Mental** – Mental renewal means becoming a lifelong student. It is more than packing one's brain with facts; it is about learning how to think more effectively and exercising your mental capacity. Like physical exercise, mental exercise requires stretching and challenging your brain. Reading and studying widely and deeply in a variety of subjects and engaging in stimulating conversation enhances ones store of knowledge and problem solving abilities.
4. **Social/Emotional** – By definition we are social animals. Renewing the social and emotional links that bind us to other people makes our lives richer. To renew these bonds it is necessary to reflect back to others the positive behaviors we see in them. It is refusing to label people by their previous behaviors and to be open to their potential. By treating others as the people they can become, rather than as they are today, allows them to grow and rise to meet your expectations.

### **Balanced Renewal**

The four dimensions described above are found in equal portions in a truly mature person. To maintain this balance it is important to invest time in renewing and developing these aspects of your personality. Each of the four dimensions supports the others synergistically. Physical renewal burns off stress making spiritual renewal possible. Physical and spiritual renewal increases the ability to concentrate, which is needed for mental renewal. Renewal in all of these areas gives us the confidence needed to engage others in social and emotional renewal.

### **The upward spiral**

Renewal is the principle and process that empowers us to move on an upward spiral of growth and change. It is the principle of continuous self-improvement. As we grow as human beings we begin to reject anything that is not in alignment with our principles. This phenomenon means that our rate of personal growth increases, moving us ever upward toward realizing our full potential.

### **Conclusion**

I've read the allure of golf is that it is an easy game to learn, but can take a lifetime to master. The same can be said of Stephen Covey's 7 Habits of Highly Effective People. It is a book that is easy to understand, but deserves a lifetime of study. Applying Dr. Covey's principles will not only make you more effective in business, but will add richness and meaning to everything you do in life.