

HITTING YOUR STRIDE

A QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER FOR YOUNG PROFESSIONALS

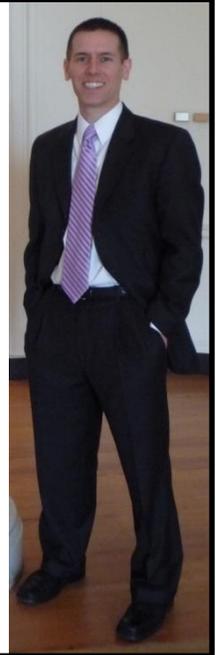
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In the fall 2014 issue, I wrote about weeding out certain activities from one's life to move beyond average in those that remained. Jim Collins refers to this process as creating a "stop doing list." While people generally don't like to discontinue things—whether daily habits, low-performing schools, or charitable programs (the March of Dimes still exists 50+ years after the Salk vaccine effectively wiped out polio)—sometimes it is necessary to do so.

After reflecting on where I wanted to move beyond average, I determined that the bulk of my time and energy should be directed to three areas: my new role at work, my new book (which should be released next year), and my health and fitness (better cooking and more time at the gym). My stop doing list included *Hitting Your Stride*, so this will be the final issue. It's not easy to give up something I've enjoyed so much, but the time is right.

Thank you for reading over the past two years. Please stay in touch via e-mail, LinkedIn, Twitter, and Facebook. And, as always...

Stride On,
Michael



STAYING IN FRONT

"In reality, knowledge is a very dynamic universe—and what is most valuable is not the body of knowledge, but the leading edge of it."

- Bill James, baseball historian & statistician

Books to Read This Quarter

[*Overwhelmed: How to Work, Love, and Play When No One Has the Time*](#)

- Brigid Schulte

[*Zero to One: Notes on Startups, or How to Build the Future*](#)

- Peter Thiel

[*Work Rules! Insights from Inside Google That Will Transform How You Live and Lead*](#)

- Laszlo Bock

Articles to Read This Quarter

[*How Charles Darwin Used Rest to Be More Productive—and How You Can, Too*](#)

- Brigid Schulte & Alex Pang
(*Washington Post*)

[*How to Be Emotionally Intelligent*](#)

- Daniel Goleman (*New York Times*)

[*The Price We Pay for Sitting Too Much*](#)

- Sumathi Reddy (*Wall Street Journal*)

[*When You Act Too Manly at Work*](#)

- Danielle Paquette (*Washington Post*)

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CATCHING UP

Being on the leading edge of knowledge is important, but it is vital to be familiar with thinkers and ideas from past years as well. This will help you to be more innovative when creating and problem-solving, and also can prevent older colleagues from patronizing you about your age or inexperience.

Books to Read This Quarter

[Outliers: The Story of Success](#)

- Malcolm Gladwell

[Steve Jobs](#)

- Walter Isaacson

Articles to Read This Quarter

[Becoming the Boss](#)

- Linda Hill (*Harvard Business Review*)

[Best New Year's Resolution? A 'Stop Doing' List](#)

- Jim Collins (*USA Today*)

REFLECTING

“The single biggest danger in business and life, other than outright failure, is to be successful without being resolutely clear about why you are successful in the first place.”
- Robert Burgelman, Stanford University business professor

When venture capitalist Ann Miura-Ko was young, her father pushed her to [“adopt a world class work ethic”](#) in everything from calculus homework to making photocopies at work. Miura-Ko listened, and she attributes her current success to that work ethic and the opportunities it brought her.

I have been lucky to work with talented people in respected organizations for most of my career. However, when everyone around you is talented and your organization runs well, it can be hard to stand out as a high-performer or difference-maker. In these situations, I recommend reflecting on your work ethic. Are you doing all you can, or simply what is expected of you? For example, do you search out and correct inefficiencies in current processes, find novel ways to view problems, ask for additional responsibilities, and come in early/stay late/work weekends? (One rule of thumb when “climbing the ladder” is to never let your boss see you come or go—when she arrives in the morning, you’re there, and when she leaves in the evening, you’re still there.) Can colleagues claim to be working harder than you, or to be taking their work more seriously? In other words, are you truly displaying a world class work ethic? If you aren’t, you should reflect on why that is and attempt to make adjustments. And if you need some motivation, watch [this](#) and [this](#) and [this](#).

WEBSITE TO KNOW

join.me (www.join.me)

About: Software that allows you to share your computer screen (and control of it) with someone in another location, or to see (and control) that person’s screen.

Usefulness: Great for troubleshooting tech issues, editing/practicing a presentation, or giving a tutorial on those occasions when people can’t be on site together.

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PERSONAL PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

In college, most people take part in extra-curricular activities—things not necessarily related to their majors or classes, but that help them develop skills and grow as people. In today’s global economy, where one is likely to change jobs numerous times and even switch careers, I believe it is crucial during the start of one’s professional life to gain experience and build a network outside of one’s everyday work by engaging in what I’ll call “extra-professional pursuits.”

Extra-professional pursuits may include writing a serious blog on a topic of interest, volunteering, joining an organization’s board (or junior board), presenting at conferences, using social media to learn and find one’s voice about a particular issue or field, consulting for another organization, or taking a college class on campus or via [Coursera](#). Whatever you engage in, the important thing is to make yourself a more versatile, well-rounded, connected professional.

That said, it also is crucial to know when to scale back your extra-professional pursuits. Generally, this will happen as you take on more responsibility in your full-time work and need to direct your night/weekend hours and energy there.

BEING (AND STAYING) INTERESTING

During a professional dinner last year, I realized that the people around me were making statements, and other people were making statements about themselves in relation to those statements, but no one was asking any questions! I remember feeling bored about halfway through the meal, and my fellow diners became less interesting to me because they appeared to be interested only in themselves.

Whenever you’re in a group setting, be sure to tap into other people’s interests and experiences by asking questions (and follow-up questions). And if you end up in a situation like the one above, come up with a fun question and suggest that everyone in the group respond to it. You might just inspire a great conversation, and those in the group will walk away thinking you’re a pretty interesting person.

DID YOU KNOW...

In addition to signing in to your Gmail account, you also can [sign in to Google](#). When you do so, your bookmarks and settings will be accessible when you sign in on another computer. This feature comes in especially handy if your computer crashes (as I learned firsthand last spring).

WORDS ON WHICH TO RUMINATE

“Nothing in the world can take the place of persistence. Talent will not; nothing is more common than unsuccessful men with talent. Genius will not; unrewarded genius is almost a proverb. Education will not; the world is full of educated derelicts. Persistence and determination alone are omnipotent. The slogan ‘press on’ has solved and always will solve the problems of the human race.”

- President Calvin Coolidge