

How to tell if you are driven by FEAR or PASSION

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Many business owners feel busy... however are your busy days, weeks and months giving you the results you hoped for when you started your business?

Whether you are driving your business or your business is driving you comes down to one question - are your decisions and actions driven by fear or are they driven by passion?

For those of you familiar with Stephen Covey's 'First Things First,' you'll recognize his four time quadrants from his time management matrix. Quadrant I represents those tasks that are both Urgent and Important. Quadrant II represents those tasks that are Important, but not Urgent. Quadrant III represents those tasks that are Urgent, but not Important and Quadrant IV represents those tasks that are Not Urgent and Not Important.

At ActionCOACH, we describe those Quadrants as areas of our Time Target as follows:

Quadrant I = Demand Activities (Deadline driven projects, Last minute preparation, Crisis, Pressing problems)

Quadrant II = Zone Activities (Preparation/planning, Prevention, Skill building, Relationship building, Thinking)

Quadrant III = Delusion Activities (Interruptions, some Emails, some Meetings, Fire fighting, many Popular activities)

Quadrant IV = Distraction Activities (Trivial busy work, Junk mail, Emails, Escape Activities, Surfing the Internet)

To be proactive and drive your business, your time management plan needs to invest 20% of your time in the 'Zone,' 60% of your time on 'Demand' activities as these are the activities that make you money, or position you to make money. Leave 20% of your time open as buffer time for zone and demand tasks that take longer than you plan for, or for problems or opportunities that come up that you did not anticipate. Never schedule time for 'Delusion' or 'Distraction' activities as these are a waste of your time and actually cost you money.

In my experience, most business owners believe that their busy time is spent in the 'Demand' area of the Time Target. If you are truly spending 60 - 80% of your time in this area of the time target, you would be seeing the results you desire and return on your investment of time and money in your business. If you are busy, yet not getting the business results you desire, I can almost guarantee it's because 60 - 80% of your time is spent being deluded and distracted. The problem that I see with many business owners is they don't really know how to identify whether a task is a 'Demand' task or a 'Delusion' task and work on 'Delusion' tasks believing they are 'Demand' tasks. So, how can you tell the difference...

There are two key questions you can ask yourself: "Am I executing this task because I am excited about the activity and its outcome or am I doing it because I'm scared of the consequence of not doing it?" If you are doing an activity because you are scared of the consequence of not

doing it, you are working in the 'Delusion' area of the time target. Some examples include spending too long talking with customers, fixing problems created by your employees, responding to every email in your inbox. Or, "Am I doing this task because it's easy for me when there are other things I don't really like to do that I know I should be doing instead?" If you are avoiding doing an activity because it's uncomfortable to you, then you are working in the 'Distraction' area of the time target. Some examples include responding to every email as soon as it arrives, surfing the internet, catching up on reading, organizing your office or paperwork, making personal phone calls.

If you choose to get better results in your business, then you need to choose to invest your time working on 'Zone' and 'Demand' activities that are fueled by passion, instead of 'Delusion' and 'Distraction' activities that are driven by fear - and this includes fear of not being able to pay the bills. Instead, focus on where you add value to all those that you serve, your employees, your customers, your community and enjoy doing it. And if you don't enjoy it, it's time to do something different. Remember, "Find something you love to do and you'll never have to work a day in your life." Harvey MacKay.