

The 5 Habits of Highly Successful Slackers

[Because 7 is too Many]

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If you feel compelled to leave feedback about the book, please do so at either www.slackism.com or e-mail reviews@slackism.com. Good or bad, we'll include your comments. (Honestly: Like we care how scathing the comments might be. We have nothing to lose. It is a book about slacking, for God's sake.)

*To my hardworking and dedicated wife, the antithesis of anything
slacker-oriented.*

*To my mother, who is proud of her son regardless of how corrupted
and misguided his thoughts and motivations are.*

*To my father, the inspiration for this idea and a closet slacker who
hides his true identity like Clark Kent.*

*To my brother, who couldn't care less about the corporate world
and the entire premise of this book.*

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Inspiration

One day, while successfully slacking at work, my father called. He asked me how my job was going and I mentioned to him that work had been quite productive, as I had written my first full-length screenplay within a two-month period. After expressing some astonishment, he then asked me where I got the free time to take on such an intensive writing endeavor. “Well, I’ve got nine hours per day at work,” I responded. The astonishment multiplied. If my job was to write screenplays, then there wouldn’t be any surprise; however, my job was actually software sales. After explaining to him some of the successful slacking habits I had adopted over the three years at my company, he made a suggestion that I wasn’t expecting.

“Son, why don’t you write a book on how to slack off at work? That is obviously your forte. I mean, hell, if you wrote an entire screenplay when your job is sales, other people might be interested in hearing how you did it.”

What a genius idea my father had. I went to work immediately, at work. I blew off a few things that needed to get done. Okay, more than a few.

A second source of inspiration for *The Five Habits* came when I visited a local bookstore in order to check for similar or related publications on successful slacking. After looking in the self-help and business sections, all that could be found were books on management excellence, leadership effectiveness, executive skills

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development, how to be an effective communicator, and many other coma-inducing imitations focused on appropriate business acumen.

Virtually every book was the same exact concept packaged in a different cover design with a different author. I thought, “How refreshing would it be to have a completely *antithetical* book on slacking excellence?” It would at least stand out as something remotely original and have a chance of being purchased by a cynical corporate employee – who is far more common than most people think.

However, by far the most significant inspiration came from observing the overwhelming abundance of family and friends who have willingly become overworked corporate drones. I knew it was bad when my friend Nebby bragged to me about how he hadn’t taken a vacation in three years, but when I watched my miserable wife trudge to her car every morning to face twelve hours of what she called “hell on Earth,” I knew something had to be done.

How demented are we to rationalize that not taking a vacation is a testament to our hard-working demeanor? Why are we willing to put up with “hell on Earth” when there are easier ways to make a buck? The growing popularity of this “burnout nation” concept has been highlighted in publications like *Business Week* and *Scientific American Mind*. It has become a phenomenon – work has taken over the life of Americans, and sadly, many of these people don’t love what they do. They just put up with it because it pays the bills and they know nothing different.

Even more depressing is that although Americans take pride in working hard, and always have, with the development of communications technology like e-mail, IM, cell phones, and mobile devices, and the growing inefficiencies of corporate management hierarchy, the American information worker is no more productive than he was ten years ago. In fact, the distractions which these devices create make the modern worker even less productive; especially when not well-trained in how to ignore those digirati devices and complete the task at hand.

I wasn't working seventy-hour weeks when I realized that there had to be another way; it was the blockheaded leadership responsible for our company which made me give up and pursue a life of successful slacking. Seeing those so-called leaders stumble and fumble their way through each agonizing year was a real wake-up call for me as a corporate employee.

They mismanaged teams, pulled immoral employment tactics, lead highly productive people to quit in frustration, and fired those who refused to be "more corporate," which was a suggestion my manager actually made to my face.

The whole concept of Slackism, which *The Five Habits* is based upon, was conceived through poor leadership, excessive bureaucracy, mismanagement, infighting, and underhanded political tactics. Although this behavior advanced their executive images, it came at the expense of hardworking and dedicated employees. *The Five Habits* is partially designed as a wake-up call to those guilty

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executives and unwitting higher-ups who don't see the turbulence which happens beneath them – for they are the ones who have truly given birth to the advent of Slackism.

With the eventual publication and distribution of *The Five Habits*, my future may include excommunication from corporate society. After much struggle with this potential career-ending scenario (not really), I am sacrificing my corporate future as a successful slacker so that you, the reader, can carry on the torch and live out your profession as a highly successful slacker.

K.P. Springfield

6/10/2006

Laying the Foundation

“What most people want these days is less to do, more time to do it, and more pay for not getting it done.”

Slacker. According to Noah Webster, it is defined as “*a person who shirks work or obligation.*” What merit is there in writing a book about how to become a successful slacker? I believe that everybody, somewhere deep down inside, has a shred of interest in being a slacker. There are a plethora of corporate sloggers just like me who are not happy with either their career path or employer, and wish they could be doing something better with their lives.

Endless hours are put in day after day at the expense of personal happiness, sanity, and leisure time, simply in order to keep up with “the Joneses.” Americans toil too hard to not have wishful moments where we just drop all work responsibility and do what we want, yet *seem* to be productive and diligent. The thought is always in our subconscious, but nobody dares convert these musings into action because it is widely viewed as professional suicide.

As technology becomes ubiquitous, the ability for employees to escape the grips of work grows more impossible. Gone are the days of shutting off your computer and going home to enjoy a healthy work and life balance. WackBerries and cell phones have taken over our being, and because of these menacing tools,

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management expects a higher amount of productivity out of people. Unfortunately, in order to look dedicated and climb the corporate ladder, most workers oblige management expectations by putting in extra hours in the office while putting off essential stress-relievers such as vacation.

America has got to be the only country where employees brag about how little vacation they have taken in the past three years, as if it were a measure of dedication to their own career. The only measure this kind of pea-brained bragging proves is that Americans are whacked out of their skulls and have become overlabored corporate drones.

However, this type of behavior has not arisen because Americans don't like leisure time and vacation – it is a result of corporations which under-staff teams and put the burden of a three-person job on one individual. Because most Americans are naturally hardworking people, they don't ask questions and attack the monstrosity of work.

Throw in the stifling elements of mergers and acquisitions, bureaucracy, process, excessive management, and the distractions of e-mail, instant messaging, mobile devices, and cell phones, and it is clear to see why Americans are led into the trap of overworking. Although this phenomenon has been happening for years, it seems that the public is finally waking up to the reality that Americans need to stop wasting so much of their valuable life working, especially those who despise what they do. Millions of Americans

have been driven into an undesirable career due to expectations set by their family and peers. Eventually, they get into a situation where they make decent money, but are miserable with their career path and can't get out.

The problem is compounded when these same people try to live a lifestyle well beyond their financial means and end up having to work endlessly just to pay the bills. Couples have children, and instead of the mother staying home to care for them, the kids come out of the womb and go straight into daycare. My wife's friend just had her first child, and within a month, she was back to work so she and her husband could continue paying for their house in the Bay Area, their vacation home in Lake Tahoe, and a new \$60,000 SUV.

This vicious cycle of living to work perpetuates itself until mental health issues such as insomnia, migraines, depression, and eventual nervous breakdowns take over. Unfortunately, a work-related breakdown happened to a friend of mine, and it took him being in the hospital to realize something in his life had to change. He asked himself, "If I died tomorrow, would I be happy with the life that I lived?" His answer was no. You can't enjoy a hilltop house and a new Carrera if you're dead.

For others, the long hours in the office put a strain on family and personal relationships. Is it any wonder that America leads the charge in divorce rate and hours spent in the office? We have become so possessed with our pitiful careers that the most important people in life – family and loved ones – are left to sit around waiting

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patiently for our return from a healthy twelve-hour day of work. That hilltop house and new Carrera are also useless if you lose them in a divorce.

In the past year, articles on burnout syndrome and overworking have been featured in publications like *Scientific American Mind*, *Fortune Magazine*, *The Economist*, *Harvard Business Review*, and *Business Week*, proving the phenomenon has become rampant. In fact, the situation has gotten so dire that *Fortune* even released an article about the merits of slacking off at work. Global workforce demands, unnecessary meetings, inefficient management, and unimportant tasks assigned as “urgent” have driven people to the edge of what they can handle in a day’s work. The only option remaining is to ignore the requests and slack off. Being a slacker is no longer a defamatory term; the overwhelming work environment of Americans has made slacking a viable solution to reducing stress and establishing a realistic work/life balance.

In addition, several folks in the corporate world have already realized the benefits of successful slacking, and do quite an effective job of it. However, there is no anthem; no official bible of Slackism to reference. I have seen other slacker books and they aren’t comprehensive or detailed enough with scenarios and examples. Most discuss taking long walks at lunch, frequent coffee breaks, or making origami to pass the time, but that isn’t out-of-the-box slacker thinking; it is elementary, at best.

Some authors talk about how to slack within a culture that has a government mandated thirty-five hour work week where it is virtually impossible to get fired regardless of whether or not you work hard. How difficult could it be to slack in that scenario?

There can't possibly be any groundbreaking concepts of successful slacking when management doesn't care what their employees aren't doing. *The Five Habits* takes successful slacking to a whole new level and is designed to advance the game of aspiring slackers within companies that overwork and under-appreciate employees as well as convince the slacker non-believers to convert.

Are You Experienced?

What makes me qualified to write a book on successful slacking? Well, my corporate tenure is probably short compared to many people who might read this prose, but therein lies the beauty. Slackism can be adopted and perfected in a short amount of time with little experience. In three years of successful slacking, I received two grade and pay increases, vacations aplenty, positive annual reviews, and actually managed to get voted into a corporate "Hall of Fame" – all by doing less than three hours of actual work a day.

Wouldn't it be far more intimidating and discouraging if I were to say that this book was written after thirty years of exhaustive slacking research and development? For someone just starting their

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journey, they may think it will take more than a lifetime to achieve successful slacker status. The art of Slackism can expertly honed in a matter of two years or less, depending on how talented you are at shirking useless responsibility.

I work at a company which strives to produce optimal worker productivity through the software they sell to customers. The company also consistently pats itself on the back for hiring only the most productive talent. Somehow I managed to sneak through the productivity detector, so they should probably put the nix on any further narcissistic congratulations. The irony is blinding – a slackmeister selling software at a company that prides itself in revolutionizing employee productivity. If successful slacking can exist in my environment, then it can exist in a multitude of corporations!

I understand that there are people in this world who love their jobs. Whether it is a corporate gig, their own business, or some other occupation, they cherish waking up in the morning and going to work. For those folks, this book will make no sense and not strike a chord. However, for the remaining vast majority, *The Five Habits* will hopefully be your new anthem.

It may come off as cynical and you may think I am severely demented. You may think I am dishonest and deceitful. You may fret that co-workers share the same sentiments and viewpoints. Worse yet, you might even vigorously nod your head in approval of *The Five Habits*.

The Turbulent Acquisition

I work at a small technology startup which eventually got acquired by a larger company in the ever-trendy practice of corporate mergers and acquisitions. After the takeover, instead of being transferred to the headquarters, my job remained at a satellite campus in our acquisition group, riddled with confusion and lack of organization.

Unfortunately, on top of the satellite campus location and acquisition, our group suffers from massive reorganizations every four months or so, which makes it impossible to let employees settle into an efficient routine which is productive. Within a year, the frustration was so high that our sales team has gone from a core group of dedicated employees to a revolving door of salespeople. This unfortunate company transformation was a significant inspiration for creating *The Five Habits*.

Who knows, maybe if the acquisition wasn't so ill-conceived and lawless, *The Five Habits* wouldn't have been written and in your hands right now. I may have become a content white-collar lackey who came to work every day and did my job to expectations. Regardless, I am proud of who I've become. Being a successful slacker is nothing to be ashamed of, and for all those people out there who don't love what they do, are tired of being overworked and fed up with fighting futility, it is time to get back all that we've lost over the years – the short list starts with money, sanity, and leisure time.

Slackism and The Five Habits Defined

The term Slackism is defined as *the policy or practice of advancing one's available leisure time at the financial and productivity cost of a corporation*. It is based off of the term Careerism, which is defined as *the policy or practice of advancing one's career often at the cost of one's integrity*. As you can see, Careerism is viewed as a detriment to the self for the supposed benefit of an employer. As a counterpoint, Slackism has been conceived as a detriment to the employer for the definitive benefit of the self.

Although Slackism may appear as a completely subversive, dishonest and immoral way to help improve the lives of overworked Americans, executive leaders of corporations have brought the concept of Slackism upon themselves. If it weren't for their irresponsible behavior which has resulted in criminal prosecution, corporate bankruptcy, and the unmanageable amounts of work and stress which lead dedicated employees off the deep end of sanity, Slackism wouldn't even need to exist.

The Five Habits is a comprehensive solution focused around the concept of Slackism and the merits of successful slacking. It is a system designed to advance the perception of a hard-working employee while enhancing leisure time and mental health. Most people associate the word "slacker" with defamatory terms like goldbricker, lazybones or work-shirker, and although these may be accurate moniker parallels, a successful slacker is far different than

your vanilla slacker. Successful slackers are perceptive employees who have come to grips with the futility of being productive in a corporate environment, and have decided to do the bare minimum for the enhancement of free time while still appearing productive and dedicated to their employer.

The most successful of successful slackers are able to improve their quality of life, lower their stress levels, work less than three hours a day, and still somehow manage to receive pay raises and promotions. They achieve this monumental feat by adopting five key slacking elements, which are highlighted in The Successful Slacking Sphere (S^3) diagram in Figure 1.

When used properly, *The Five Habits*: Perception is Everything, Whatever!, The Team Player, Procrastination, and Under the Radar work in symbiosis to achieve a harmonious state of successful slacking.

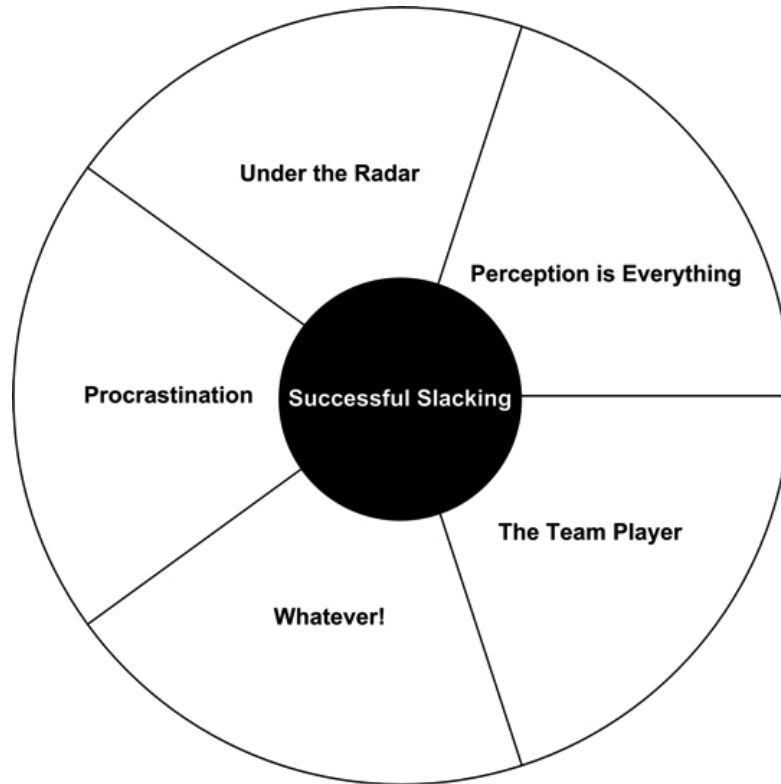


Figure 1: Successful Slacking Sphere (S³)

Perception is Everything is exactly what the title suggests. In the corporate world, it isn't what you actually do, but what others think you do which makes the difference. By crafting a grandiose perception scheme, you will create the image and aura of a hard-working and dedicated employee while you're actually out kiteboarding. Perception is Everything is the cornerstone of *The Five Habits*. Without it, you will not be able to perfect the other four.

Whatever! is a state of mind which must be adopted in order to avoid the emotional swings which naturally occur when a product launch fails, your bonus is slashed, company stock tanks, or any other blow to the psyche which can affect your mental health and work productivity. By maintaining a Whatever! attitude, nothing can phase the successful slacker, keeping them emotionally immune to the consistent moronic decisions which get made at the executive level.

The Team Player is a role which successful slackers play in order to offset their lack of productivity. Because it is widely proven that managers will put up with people who are less productive so long as they're friendly, easy to manage, well-liked and get along with the team, being a team player is a critical prerequisite for successful slacking.

Procrastination is a tactic successful slackers use in order to test the true importance of tasks and initiatives assigned to them. Because most action items are not urgent, successful slackers use procrastination to buy more leisure time. More often than not, so-called "urgent" action items which go uncompleted seem to disappear, saving the successful slacker a load of unnecessary work. In sales, procrastination can be used as a psychological tactic to bring deals in at the last minute of a quarter; continually proving the successful slacker's role as a clutch salesperson who always closes when it's most critical.

Under the Radar is the state of keeping a low profile so that management and overachievers cannot detect you when sneaking out of the office after a half-day of work. In the spirit of the SR-71 Blackbird aircraft which has stealth-like features to avoid radar detection, the successful slacker adopts similar characteristics to avoid micro-management detection and other unnecessary distractions which can keep one from leaving work early.

Before we delve into the details around these five habits, we will spend a few chapters discussing the traditional slacker profile, why you should become a successful slacker if not already convinced, and perhaps the most important prerequisite to successful slacking – securing the optimal slacker job.

I know the slacker mentality. A 300-page book that drones on and on about useless cock-and-bull does not exist here. It is short, concise, and gets to the crux of how to successfully adopt the slacker habits. If you are an especially successful slacker, at the end of each chapter is a bulleted list entitled “K.P’s Notes.” If you don’t have the time or motivation to read the entire chapter, just turn to K.P’s Notes and give yourself a quick slacking **download**.

The Lingo Lexicon

There will also be superfluous references to corporate “lingo.” If you are going to walk the walk, you must talk the talk. Therefore, every time **bold** lettering appears, it is referencing a term or phrase that

most often heard in the corporate world. Write them down on index cards. Revise them. Memorize them. Put them in a song. If people perceive you to be the corporate guy with the cool lingo, you are fitting right in. It should also be mentioned that as this book was being written, I was at work. So yes, folks, I **eat my own dog food**.

At the back of the book, instead of an index, there is a “lingo lexicon.” Each word that is printed in bold can be found with a plain English language definition and explanation, or as close as I can come to plain English (some terms make no sense).

There are some universal acronyms common across all companies that are included.

You’ll see popular ones like **ROI** and **KPI**, and more importantly, not-so-common acronyms in your specific company which must be adopted. You should already know what S³ stands for. SAA (Slacker Acronym Adoption) is another critical acronym to learn. SAA can be used to test if a fellow employee is **on the same wavelength** as you when it comes to slacking.

“How is your SAA coming?”

“Oh, it is coming along great,” *Wink* “Thanks for asking.”

Remember, perception is everything, and if you know even the most obscure of acronyms, well, you are well on your way to slacker nirvana.

Market Research...NOT!

The non-believers might now be thinking, “What kind of research has this kook done to validate these habits?” Are you kidding?

Successful slackers don’t participate in extensive research unless it is a dire situation. However, slackers somehow find a way to band together like the Mafia. Much like the overachievers club, there is also the under-achievers club.

We share stories and **best practices** to optimize our slacksterity. *The Five Habits* are purely derived from my friends and my personal successes and survival through many job cuts, transitions, and management changes. You will also read about behavior that should be avoided in your quest to become a **best of breed** slacker. Besides, do you really want a bunch of footnotes and research references? Boring! That won’t teach you word one about being a successful slacker. Instead of validated data points, we will **peel back the onion** with real-life scenarios and a “lessons learned” section after each habit highlighting a former co-worker who didn’t optimally utilize *The Five Habits* to their benefit.

Somebody once told me that 50 percent of all percentages are made up on the spot. Can you believe that? Don’t worry. This book won’t bore you to death with percentages and pie charts about control groups and other **cradle-to-grave** solutions. *The Five Habits* will hopefully provide you, the aspiring slacker, with useful real life scenarios and **value-added** entertainment.

K.P.'s Notes

- The advent of handheld techno-geek devices have increased the productivity expectations of management, despite the device's inherent ability to distract and keep people from accomplishing any real work.
- Additional elements such as combining three jobs into one, excessive middle management, frequent mergers and acquisitions, and increasing profitability pressures have resulted in endless toil that many Americans put up with.
- Younger workers are often led into undesirable careers due to family and peer expectations. Because the pay can be good, quitting to embark on a more desired path is often difficult – especially for people with exorbitant lifestyles.
- For those who work incessantly with little free time, side effects such as insomnia, migraines, depression, and mental breakdown can take over the body. Others frequently experience strained family relationships and even divorce.
- Articles on burnout syndrome and overworking have been featured recently in *Scientific American Mind*, *Fortune Magazine*, *The Economist*, *Harvard Business Review*, and *Business Week*, proving the phenomenon has become rampant.
- For many, the only remaining option to keep sanity and a healthy work/life balance is to slack off and ignore certain work requests.

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- In three years of successful slacking, K.P. has received two grade and pay increases, vacations aplenty, positive annual reviews, and actually managed to get voted into a corporate “Hall of Fame” – all by doing less than three hours of actual work a day.
- The art of Slackism can be expertly honed in a matter of two years or less, depending on how talented one is at shirking useless responsibility.
- Slackism is defined as, “*The policy or practice of advancing one’s available leisure time at the financial and productivity cost of a corporation.*”
- *The Five Habits* is a comprehensive solution focused around the concept of Slackism and the merits of successful slacking. It is a system designed to advance the perception of a hard-working employee while enhancing leisure time and mental health.
- The Five Habits are: Perception is Everything, Whatever!, The Team Player, Procrastination, and Under the Radar.
- The Lingo Lexicon is the definitive corporate speak glossary found at the back of the book. Every word in **bold** lettering throughout the text indicates a hackneyed corporate term which must be adopted in order to fit within corporate circles.

The Slacker Profile

"Que bonito es no hacer nada, y luego descansar."

– *Spanish Proverb*

Before we discuss why you should be a slacker, there are a few things you need to understand about the slacker profile. There are certain references, both movie and societal, which highlight the legend of a slacker. Knowing and referencing these pieces of information will immediately get you to the inner circle of the slacker community.

Movie References

The first time my ears ever recognized the word “slacker” was at the age of eight. Therefore, you could conclude my destiny was laid out long before my first corporate endeavor. The term was referenced in one of the greatest movies made in the 1980s, *Back to the Future*.

Another amazing movie made in the 1980s was *Ferris Bueller’s Day Off*. This was the tale of a future corporate slacker who had already perfected the art in a high school application. At the critical moment of the movie, where Rooney the school principal caught Ferris playing hooky, Ferris’s sister, Jeanie, had the option to watch his future crumble before him or step in and rescue her brother. As angry and resentful as she was at Ferris for continually

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skipping school, there was a bit of slacker envy present; Jeanie admired his skill as a successful slacker.

I firmly believe she wanted to be like Ferris in some way, so she stepped in and got Ferris out of imminent danger with Rooney. This scenario exists in real life as well. Successful slackers are usually well-liked by their peers. Overachievers and people who play “by the book” may have some animosity against them, but in the end, overachievers admire the successful slacker’s **skillset**.

On the topic of student slackers in film, who could forget Jeff Spicoli from *Fast Times at Ridgmont High*? Although not as tactful as Ferris Bueller, Spicoli brought an air of freshness to slacking (or maybe it was an air of cannabis). Either way, it was an approach we can all appreciate as developing slackers. I definitely do not recommend you adopt Spicoli’s behavior, because it draws too much attention, but it makes for good conversation at slacker networking conventions where the phrase, “He pulled a Spicoli” is usually heard.

There are two more movies which are widely considered to be the anthem of the common slacker. *American Beauty* and *Office Space* are to the slacker as *Wall Street* and *Boiler Room* are to the stockbroker. Keep in mind, though, that the character behavior portrayed by both Kevin Spacey and Ron Livingston are not **appropriate protocol** for the successful slacker. To blackmail your boss regarding an alleged blowjob, and knocking a cubicle wall down to get a window view while playing Tetris draws excessive

attention. Characters like these are the modern-day workplace James Dean rebel: the Clint Eastwood of the corporate space.

Successful vs. Unsuccessful Slackers

There is one common misconception in society regarding slackers that must be cleared up immediately. Many non-believers of our practice feel that all slackers are lazy. The same people who don't do anything at work also go home and become armchair jockeys watching endless reruns and football games. They drive their spouses crazy with incessant lethargy, don't help with household chores, and they definitely don't do anything that involves strenuous physical activities.

This misunderstanding is quite common, as overachievers and other non-slackers fail to recognize the difference between an unsuccessful slacker and a successful slacker. When one is successful in a specific discipline, it breeds further success in other activities. Excellence begets more excellence. Successful slackers work hard at more than just slacking in the workplace. It is especially true when the slacker actually has an interest in a particular pastime.

Ask any successful slacker about their leisure activities (or true interests), and you will be amazed at their accomplishments. You may find that they are reigning champions in their softball league, an Ironman triathlete, an accomplished musician, or even an

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aspiring writer who has created many published works. Never underestimate the successful slacker. They are far more focused, driven, and disciplined than you think, and refuse to deal with fighting the futility of corporate work environments.

The successful slacker frequently gets confused with the unsuccessful slacker. The unsuccessful slacker is the individual everyone identifies at work as lazy, non-responsive, and unpopular. They are largely reclusive or just have an attitude. They're not personable and aren't well-liked by peers. Just like with Ferris Bueller, you must be able to develop slacker envy. This is done through being a likable and fun person. You have to do people favors and tell jokes. It is quite simple, actually. It is especially simple to be jovial and altruistic when your life is free of stress and responsibility.

Unfortunately, if you are an unsuccessful slacker and reading this book, it will be a long and arduous road. It is hard to switch mentality and behavior once someone is in the unsuccessful camp. Many attempt, but only a few special people make it. Most of the time, a slacker hater has an easier time **transitioning** out of their mindset and joining our team, as compared to the unsuccessful slacker. The reason is because they may hate slackers, but they are good people who work hard in their corporate job. They are likable, but are just too naïve, gullible, or submissive. They drink the **company Kool-Aid** almost as much as their beloved Starbucks.

These people can be saved; we just have to show them the light, which is the goal of *The Five Habits*. It is okay to be a hardworking and dedicated person, but if you are in a workforce culture that is severely dysfunctional and futile, your employer doesn't appreciate or take care of you, and you would rather be doing something else, it is time you consider adopting the philosophy of Slackism.

My Father, the Slacker

Halfway through my creating *The Five Habits*, my father confessed an amazing tale of slacking which I had never heard before. It was at that moment a monumental epiphany struck me – successful slacking may be a genetic predisposition.

Years ago, as a junior executive at a major advertising firm, my father needed a way to get out of working late on a Friday to complete a client project. He had already finished it days before, and wanted to use this advantage to further his hardworking image within the team.

At his company, there was a universally understood symbol that if there was a ball of crumpled paper taped to the office door, it meant one was busy as hell and should not be disturbed. The offices had no windows looking in, so if the door was closed, one could not tell if somebody was actually in the office.

My father had a reel-to-reel tape recorder, and made a ten-second loop of constant typing – *clackety, clackety, clack, clack... ..ding...clackety, clack, clack, clackety.....ding*. He turned the loop on, put the paper on his door, and left early on Friday afternoon while the rest of the team toiled long into the night.

The artificial sounds of typing rang throughout the office all weekend. On Monday, my father bumped into his manager in the bathroom.

“Boy, you really were hammering away in there, weren’t you?” remarked the manager.

“Oh man,” replied my father. “Well, you know, I had to get that damn copy done for the client, no matter how long it took!”

“Well, I appreciate all of your hard work.”

When he revealed this amazing tale of slacksterity after more than thirty years, it was enlightening — a moment of clarity and self-realization. Thank you for the gift, Father.

K.P.’s Notes

- Successful slackers must adopt a cunning, jovial, and carefree personality (like Ferris Bueller) in order to develop slacker envy with colleagues.
- *Office Space* and *American Beauty* are the slacking equivalent to *Wall Street* and *Boiler Room*, and must be referenced to identify fellow successful slackers.

- There is a common misconception between successful and unsuccessful slackers. Unsuccessful slackers are generally lazy, reclusive, and not liked by peers. They are the traditional slacker which most people are familiar with. Successful slackers are the exact opposite. They're active and popular, and slack only when their efforts are futile and have no worth or benefit.
- Overachievers and slacker haters are easier to convert than unsuccessful slackers because they aren't habitually lazy and inactive.

Why Be a Successful Slacker?

"Each success only buys an admission ticket to a more difficult problem."

- Henry Kissinger

We have defined the profile of a slacker, but there may still be some uncertainty. For some people, this chapter may conclusively determine whether or not the practice of successful slacking will be the right mantra to adopt. Let's get to the point. Why should you be a successful slacker?

The Old Adage

There is a wise saying which states, "Figure out what you love to do, and then figure out a way to make money doing it." Many have solved the first portion of the equation, but the second half continues to elude a distinct majority of people. In addition, activities we love to do usually don't make enough money to sustain lifestyle expenses. Have you ever tried to make a living by being on the Pro Shuffleboard Tour? Try being a professional camper sometime.

My buddy and I started *procampers.com* after our dream to be full-time campers, but we haven't figured out a way to make it pay the mortgage yet (although you don't really need a mortgage as a pro camper).

However, the successful slacker realizes that depending on the opportunity and one's experience, a handsome sum of money can be made working a slacker job which allows them to collect pay for doing leisure activities like pro camping. Therefore, the successful slacker can definitively claim they get paid to do what they love.

For example, I am being compensated a decent amount of money to write this book. Even though I am technically a salesperson, based on how much of my time is spent writing each day, my title should be "author." It is quite annoying that I have other responsibilities like selling in order to keep my job, but at least this slacker job is getting me to the ultimate goal: to be a full-time writer. Therefore, if you wish to get paid for doing a job you love, and you are currently in a less-than-ideal role, the successful slacker ideology should be adopted.

Leisure Activities

Another reason to adopt the successful slacker lifestyle is if you are a hobby fanatic. Because I am a Gemini, it is a serious affliction. There are numerous interests and only so much time in a day. When the work week goes from Monday through Friday, it really cuts in on hobby time. Just for a little perspective, my obsessions include competitive bicycle racing, musical composition, writing, reading, martial arts, tinkering with cars, surfing, skimboarding, skiing, and

playing tennis with my wife. How am I supposed to work and get all of my hobbies in? Work simply impedes leisure activities, which is not acceptable. Priorities have to be established.

Fortunately, my wife lets me have freedom to do these activities. We don't have children yet, and for many people, family is the number-one pastime, which is terrific. If your spouse is as understanding as mine, then you have all the more reason to be a successful slacker. It is amazing what you can accomplish in the leisure world once you've perfected the art of Slackism. Before long, most of your hard-working friends will wonder if you even have a job.

Hobbies and free-time activities are mainly why we are alive and happy. Whether your pastimes are raising children, athletics, music, reading and writing, Trekkie conventions, collecting arrowheads, staring at a wall in a dark room all day, or going to dog show competitions, they should be more of a priority in life. We, as Americans, do not nearly spend enough leisure time away from work.

If work makes you happy, then by all means, don't be a slacker. If you like going to work every morning and cannot wait to get there, I and millions of other people envy you. One of the greatest gifts in the world is to be paid money for something you love doing. Most of us struggle for a lifetime to find that kind of situation, but very few get the privilege to live it. If you have found

that in your work, there isn't much reason to continue reading this book. I may potentially warp your pure and unencumbered mind.

Misguided Career Path

Regardless of your age, stop and project yourself into the future — to the twilight of your existence. Will you be happy looking back at a long forty years of working in a profession which you may have despised but did because it was good money? Will you be proud of your achievements or regret that you didn't pursue your dream of being a television weatherman?

Will your excessive hours at the office and family neglect turn your kids into juvenile delinquents who appear on the six o'clock news? Will you be proud of bragging to friends that you're the only person you know who has been divorced four times before the age of forty? Are you looking forward to a midlife crisis where you grow a ponytail and pierce your ears in some feeble attempt to regain your youth? These are the kinds of questions you must ask yourself now versus later.

Whether or not one realizes it, we are all in a constant state of transition and change. Even as this book is being written at work, I am making strides toward personal freedom. Working in a corporate environment for all eternity is not my goal — it is merely a means to an end. But in order to get to that end, a lot of pro-level slacking must occur so that I can get this book written!

Don't let work be the excuse as to why you cannot do something you want. If you aren't happy with how things are going, and not happy with your employer, start taking control to make more slack time at work and focus on what you love. If there is one thing a successful slacker never wants to hear, it is when someone says, "Aw man, I would love to go do that with you, but I have to work." Where's the gong mallet? You're gonna get biffed upside the head. The successful slacker never, ever mutters those words. There is always a solution; just convince yourself to figure it out.

Diminishing ROE and "Slacking Shangri-la"

Even if you love work, there still may be a valid argument to become a successful slacker. The concept of diminishing ROE (return on effort) is something that exists within any corporation riddled with bureaucracy, politics, and red tape, whether you like work or not. The fattening of companies with multiple levels of unnecessary management have only exacerbated the concept of Diminishing ROE and "Slacking Shangri-la", which is a terrific development for those who understand and practice the concept.

My wife, a visionary genius, came up with this mind-blowing revelation one afternoon, and it makes quite a strong case as to why successful slacking should be adopted. If there is only one reason why you should successfully slack, this may be it.

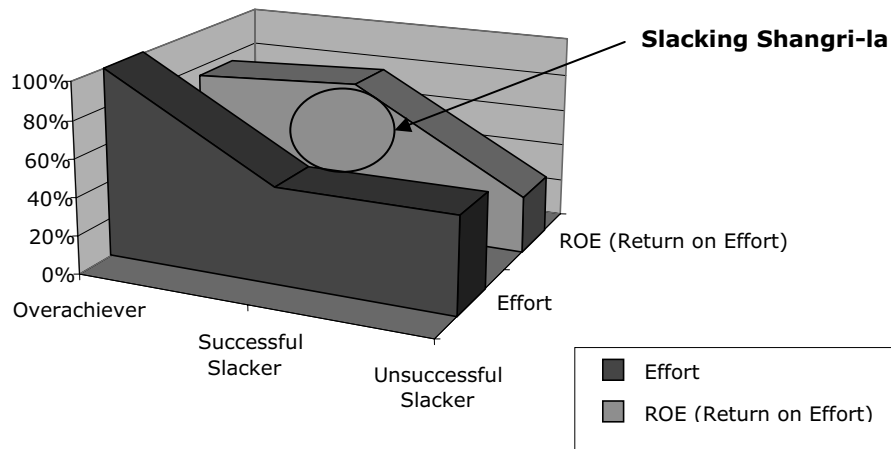


Figure 2: Diminishing ROE and “Slacking Shangri-La”

As you can see from Figure 2, there is a distinct point at which effort does not produce any greater return, and excessive effort (most often by overachievers) actually has a diminishing ROE. The successful slacker always aims for “Slacking Shangri-la,” the point at which minimal effort produces maximal ROE. Unsuccessful slackers put in about the same amount of effort as successful slackers, but their lack of practicing the Five Habits prevents them from netting a positive ROE.

Overachievers put in roughly 50 percent more effort than a successful slacker, and usually only get equal or even less ROE than a successful slacker! ROE can vary greatly depending on the level of bureaucracy within a corporation. We haven’t done enough research

yet to determine the specific statistical significance, and probably never will, so let's just say the more politically befuddled the environment, the bigger your potential "Slacking Shangri-la" can be.

Corporate America

For many, weekdays are spent inside the grips of a major corporation. In the last ten years, with the controversy of companies like Tyco, Enron, WorldCom, Arthur Andersen, and Wal-Mart, white-collar crime and employee exploitation have become rampant. (Whoever came up with the idea to change Andersen Consulting to Accenture is a marketing genius. Can you imagine the negative impact that would have had on the company when the whole Arthur Andersen debacle went down? What foresight. What vision. What luck!) In addition, corporate buffoonery and unqualified leadership have turned many would-be dedicated employees into cynical and guarded individuals who despise their employer.

What about these corporate disasters in the last five years which ruined thousands of people's futures? Was it responsible and dedicated leadership that led those businesses to self-destruct? As a leader, you have the accountability of being a moral and honest individual who makes good decisions for the health of the company and its employees. What happened to those poor folks at Enron was an injustice of epic proportions. I cannot imagine how they must have felt when their entire life savings and equity in the company

went whirling down the toilet bowl. Looking back, did those people have the right to slack?

Unfortunately, in today's corporate society, a growing number of companies don't take interest in your personal situation and development. They employ a **churn-and-burn** philosophy, especially in an aggressive industry where growth needs to be blistering and technology is on the **bleeding edge**.

For them, priority number one is **revenue optimization**, not your personal development. If your employer fits this persona, then priority number one for you should be leisure-time optimization. If the company does not take a genuine interest in your development and skills, then why should you put forth a genuine effort?

Alternatively, good companies understand the only way to a turn profit consistently is to take good care of their employees with terrific management, which is refreshing. This concept has been an essential ingredient behind the investment decisions of Warren Buffett in building the Berkshire Hathaway empire. Invest in good management and you will always prosper, because happy employees make for a profitable company. Organizations of this nature are usually the exception rather than the norm.

If your employer doesn't take steps to advance your career, how much of an impact are your individual efforts going to make day to day? If the company is riddled with bureaucracy and politics to the point that it hinders productivity, why try to fight it? Unless you are in some extremely high-profile position, chances are the job

will eventually get done regardless of your effort. Why work so hard for a dishonorable employer when you can achieve the same end result by working half as much or less? The successful slacker understands the concept of futility and doesn't bother resisting.

Some unfortunate souls are afraid to slack, in fear of losing their job. They may be the family provider and cannot afford to be unemployed, so they keep their head down and work hard, no matter how bad the environment. On the other hand, some find themselves in a situation where losing their job might be a good thing; however, they still decide to hang around. Why? They've figured out the political game in their organization and don't want to move to a new company where it has to be re-learned. Instead of taking the risk in trying to find a new job, these people choose to take advantage of disjointed **synergies** within a corporation and work them to their advantage; which is exactly what gave birth to the concept of Slackism.

Contrary to what some think, I have a conscience and am not completely anti-establishment. However, I know when someone is trying to dupe me, and you probably do, too. If you feel guilty about putting The Five Habits to work, then you either work at a company that takes really good care of employees, love your work, or love to be manipulated and taken advantage of all the time. If you fall under one of these three categories, then successful slacking probably isn't the right move.

The Five Habits communicates that it is okay to slack if you feel it is justified. There are a lot of people out there who try to take advantage of others. Corporations are no different. In my brief professional tenure, I have seen some cold and unjust actions taken by management against people who definitely did not deserve it. I pity those who do not know better. They are either too naïve or honest and hard working to be a successful slacker, and they get canned anyway.

Unfortunately, hard-working and productive people do get the heave-ho. A lot of it has to do with politics. If a successful slacker gets cut, I don't feel as bad, because at least that person was able to work a stress-free job and coast through the entire event. Plus, if a successful slacker ends up in a **RIF**, it is a far easier gut blow to absorb and forget about. Whatever! At least the person was having fun and getting paid to spend time either doing nothing, pursuing a new career path, or working on leisure activities.

Successful slackers are never found teetering on the edge of a forty-story high rise threatening to jump because they lost their job. Most times, they are the person across the street at the café watching the entire incident (while on the clock, of course).

Societal Pressure and Expectations

Working a corporate job is the default for most people. It is the societal standard after graduating college because Dad said so, or

because the career counselor said my skills would be a good match for this job, or because that is what everyone else is doing. The bandwagon effect is probably the most common culprit. Did you take a job at a corporation because you really wanted to work there? Be honest with yourself: How much of it was your personal ambition, and how much of it was societal pressure? I know a lot of people who stepped into the corporate world because it was expected of them. They wanted to build a career as a successful corporate employee; a career.

Careerism vs. Slackism

Career - a field for or pursuit of consecutive progressive achievement especially in public, professional or business life.

Notice that it says “progressive achievement,” but only in a professional or business life. All throughout our lives, we are told that “this is good for your career,” “this is bad for your career,” “you need to be more career-focused,” “taking this job will be a step back in your career.”

Career is a hackneyed word which is used to help scare people – usually the submissive – into keeping their head down to work hard for the company. It is a euphemism to make the word “job” sound more sophisticated and sexy. People who love their work do not go around telling everyone about their **career advancement**; they lead through example *by just doing it*.

The people who most often gab about their career – which we couldn't care less about – are usually those who live in denial. These unfortunate souls can't come to grips with the fact that they dislike work, so they try to con themselves into thinking the daily fourteen-hour work schedule is “advancing their career,” somehow justifying all the time and effort wasted.

In addition, there is positive reinforcement given by superiors to continue down this path and be a good employee. People working in the corporate world for dysfunctional employers don't own their career and cannot steer it where they want to go; management does. They hold career development in front of an employee's face like a piece of marinated steak in front of a drooling German shepherd.

What is even more interesting is the word that follows career in Webster's. *Careerism - the policy or practice of advancing one's career, often at the cost of one's integrity.* Wow! There it is, in black in white inside *Merriam Webster's Collegiate Dictionary*. It says, “... at the cost of one's integrity.” Does that unnerve you as much as it does me? The mere definition of the word *career* includes a reference to the reality that it will come at some cost to your personal integrity.

Now that we understand the definition of *career* and *careerism*, let us review what Slackism means. Slackism is defined as *the policy or practice of advancing one's available leisure time at the financial and productivity cost of a corporation.* Being a

successful slacker is a statement. We are sending a message: “No more will employees be forced to toil long hours for leadership stifled by dishonesty, bureaucracy, and politics.” If the merits of Slackism start a groundswell, we might see a reformation in how corporations behave and treat their employees. Profits can’t be made without productive employees, and if nobody is productive, then the corporations who treat employees poorly will start to suffer. In an age of unparalleled worker productivity through the advent of technology, the successful slacker will be the proverbial “wrench in the works” of corporate profitability and **cost efficacy**.

Oh yeah, and if you do adopt Slackism, one of the stipulations is that you can’t drink Starbucks coffee anymore (unless someone gives you one of those gift certificate cards. This is the only permissible scenario). I’m sorry, folks, but them’s the rules. I’m not some anti-corporate Nazi, but really, the whole Starbucks thing has gotten out of hand, don’t you think?

Corporate Victim - Scooter

Scooter was a prime example of how deceitful leadership will fire hard-working and dedicated employees for their own benefit. Scooter was like me – a pre-acquisition employee who lasted nearly three years through the turbulence and change. Of all the people on our team, he was by far the most energetic, happy, team-playing, and

outgoing rep we had. He was the MVP of the championship softball team and was a friend to everyone in the group.

The mere fact he made it through the difficult acquisition proved his worthiness as an employee. However, one challenge Scooter continually faced was his anemic Michigan territory. Now some may think that Michigan is fruitful with opportunity, but for our specific technology and targeted customer, it wasn't.

In order to do well in our job, a sales rep had to bring in consistent small deals and occasional larger ones. Scooter had few smaller ones, but would usually do well bringing in mid to larger deals due to the nature of customers in his territory, but they were infrequent. For three years Scooter only hit his number a couple times, but always stayed employed because of his good attitude and commitment to the company.

About a year ago, Scooter, along with a group of other salespeople, were put on **PIP** because of poor sales performance. The action was more a scare tactic than anything, but Scooter complied and did everything management requested of him. After a few months, the PIP issue seemingly disappeared, and Scooter's manager ceased to meet with him to discuss how he will improve his performance to get off of PIP.

Six months ago, Scooter had cold called and uncovered an extremely large opportunity within his territory that was going to be sold in conjunction with a partner. He conducted numerous presentations for executives in the company and negotiated a six-

figure contract. At the end of the quarter, he brought it in and sprinted down the hall to clang the sales bell, signifying that the deal was done.

Everyone was ecstatic not only because of the deal size, but because Scooter had finally landed his big fish. It felt good to see him win, because after his three-year struggle to stay employed, he had gotten what was deserved; or so he thought.

After quarter end, company revenue numbers for the quarter were off by over \$100,000. The operations team looked into the issue and found that for some reason, Scooter's deal was not booked in time for quarter-end credit. It turned out that somebody in order entry forgot to process Scooter's deal. Scooter was about to go on a planned vacation with his family to celebrate the victory, and would be gone for over a week. He was reassured by his manager, Mr. Congeniality, that the issue would be taken care of, and not to worry.

The deal went off the books and Scooter had lost his big fish. Even though he was told that everything would be okay, Mr. Congeniality did not cover or stand up for Scooter. Because of his historically poor sales performances, Scooter was on Mr. Congeniality's shit list. Mr. Congeniality was an extremely political, image-conscious, and sneaky manager who could never be fully trusted. Scooter was bringing his overachieving sales numbers down, and this botched behemoth of a deal did nothing to help Mr. Congeniality's paycheck.

Because of Mr. Congeniality's disdain for Scooter, the botched deal, and the convenient fact that Scooter was on PIP no longer than six months prior, it all made for a perfect setup scheme to have Scooter fired. The day Scooter returned from his week-plus vacation (he actually came back a few days early to get work done), Mr. Congeniality broke him the bad news. After finding out Scooter had gotten canned, I was flabbergasted. How could he get fired for someone in order entry forgetting to book his deal in time? How in the hell was that his fault?

He did everything in his power to make sure the deal was completed, yet management had no mercy and used the situation to get him ousted. Losing Scooter was a huge blow to my psyche and colleagues alike because he was such a great teammate and personality.

The worst part of Scooter's story was what happened after he got fired, and is a key reason in the argument why you should be a successful slacker if it is justified. Three weeks after Scooter's dismissal, the deal in which he cold called, negotiated, and closed was quietly brought back in by none other than Mr. Congeniality. Do you think he picked up the phone, called Scooter, and told him that a commission check was in the mail?

Mr. Congeniality not only took full revenue credit for the deal, but also publicly downplayed Scooter's efforts in originally working and closing the opportunity. It was one of the most underhanded, dishonorable, and deplorable actions I had ever seen

committed in my professional tenure. Scooter was a good man, and did not deserve to be treated the way he was. Anybody who works for an employer that behaves in this manner has every right in the world to make Slackism their mantra.

K.P.'s Notes

- Most people can't make a comfortable living off of doing their hobbies or leisure activities. Therefore, by adopting Slackism at work, successful slackers can definitively say they get paid to do what they love.
- Successful slackers usually have a plethora of hobbies and interests outside of work. While the average American works ten or more hours a day, successful slackers can put their leisure activities at the top of the priority list while doing less than three hours of actual work per day. Unless one loves his or her work, Slackism should be adopted to achieve this state of euphoria and stress-free living.
- Many Americans have embarked on a misguided career path which they despise yet put up with. Many are driven into it though societal pressure from peers and family. By adopting Slackism, one can get paid a salary while refocusing his or her efforts to get their career moving in a more desirable direction.
- The concept of *Diminishing ROE (return on effort) and Slacking Shangri-la* is perhaps one of the most appealing reasons for non-

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believers to adopt Slackism. Because genuine effort in most corporations is usually is futile and produces low ROE, the concept is perfected when minimal effort produces maximum ROE. Therefore, successful slackers put out less effort than overachievers, yet produce higher ROE and far more leftover time for leisure activities.

- The growing white-collar crime, unqualified leadership, and indifference for employees in Corporate America have spawned disenfranchisement with many perceptive employees. By adopting Slackism, it numbs the blow when executives eventually destroy the company and leave employees with worthless stock and no pensions.
- Careerism is defined as *the policy or practice of advancing one's career often at the cost of one's integrity*. Therefore, Slackism is defined as *the policy or practice of advancing one's available leisure time at the financial and productivity cost of a corporation*.

Finding a Slacker Job

"Be irreplaceable; if you can't be replaced, you can't be promoted."

Don't worry; we're almost to the habits. However, before you can learn and put them to use, you first have to have the right job. If not, you're setting yourself up for guaranteed slacker failure, so take detailed notes.

Lowest Responsibility Possible

There was a memorable scene in *American Beauty* where Lester Burnham decided to apply for a job at a burger joint after blackmailing his corporate boss for a full year's salary and then quitting. When the burger joint manager told Lester that they had no jobs available for management, he replied, "Good. I'm looking for the least possible amount of responsibility." Obviously you don't outright ask for something like that in a corporate interview, but that is essentially the goal in finding the perfect slacker job.

If you are like my wife, a finance manager who reports billions of dollars per quarter in revenues to executive management, it is hard to be a slacker, due to the excessive responsibility – there is no place to hide and build the façade of productivity and dedication. Therefore, in order to be a successful slacker, start with a job that

has relatively little responsibility, yet has some kind of importance within the organization. It helps to work within a large company.

If you are in a role that has too much responsibility, apply for a new job right now! Waste no time. The Five Habits cannot be adopted if your job does not allow at least three hours a day to slack. Three hours is a starting point. This book will show you how to double it **across the board**. The most talented individuals may even be able to successfully slack an entire day. Before long, a whole week will go by, and there will be nothing but leisure activities to show for it. However, after adopting The Five Habits, perception to peers and management will be that you had a relatively productive week.

Translating Job Descriptions

The first thing in understanding how to secure a slacker job is reading between the lines in the job description details. Companies always seem to make the job description more intense and serious than the role turns out to be, so don't get worried the first time you read through.

If it says five to seven years' experience, you can get the job with only three to four, especially if the position has been open for a while. When the job description says that the *ideal* candidate will have knowledge of a certain technology or concept; it means you don't have to know word one about any of it.

If the job description has a lot of vague skill sets that include words like “defines,” “good communication,” “team player,” “analyzes,” “interfaces,” “demonstrates,” “listens and positions,” “converses in a knowledgeable manner,” “achievement oriented,” you are on the right path. Because the **bottom line** is each one of these terms equates to one skill – can speak and communicate like a normal human being. You can do that, right?

Also keep in mind that the fewer numerical figures there are in the job description, the more vague and better it is. A successful slacker does not get pinned down by numerical commitments like **performance metrics** and **hard dollar** data. There are some situations where this does occur, particularly in sales. This makes it a little more difficult to slack; however, my job is in sales, and I have been able to slack quite easily.

Always find out how long the job has been open. Do not apply until it has been open for at least a month. The more desperate someone is to fill the job, the better off you are, but be careful. You don't want to fall into a backfill job.

No Backfill Jobs!

If there is one thing the successful slacker does not do, it is apply for a backfill or replacement job, unless you know the person being replaced. What happens here is that if you get the job, you will inherit all of the work and backlog that the previous person left

behind. If that person got fired (potentially an unsuccessful slacker), then it could be really bad. You don't want to be responsible for all the wrong or unfinished work of someone else. Not only will you have to work in excess, but you will also run the risk of not being well liked in your group due to constantly being **behind the eight ball**. These two factors combined equal the kiss of death in Slackism.

Look for a recently created position, in a new team, hopefully in a new division of a quickly growing company. It is optimal for slacking because the rules and expectations are not clearly laid out yet. Usually a manager has an idea or a project to **kick off**, but does not have the time to **drive the initiative**. Therefore, they create a new team and hire people to fill it out.

There is a ton of potential ambiguity, change, redirection, and management flip-flops in this scenario, and ambiguity is the successful slacker's greatest ally. The less definitive goals and expectations are, the better your chances of slacking and falsely attaining something tangible. At the end of the day, be able to point the finger at something besides yourself as to why an expectation was not met.

Seek Out Turbulence and Acquisitions

Unfortunately in sales, successful slacking cannot be attained unless you truly are a good salesperson; because in the end, your

performance is pretty evident, based on numbers. There are ways to get around this, however. The perfect slacker job is one inside a very turbulent startup or recently acquired company. As was mentioned before, there is an inverse relationship to level of slacking and workforce culture; the more disheveled the culture, the more likely successful slacking will work.

I've been lucky enough to work in a small startup that got acquired by a 50,000-person company. Talk about turbulence – in three years, we have had four different VPs, and I have personally had four different managers. None of the co-workers I had two years ago is on my team any longer. Yes, it has taken a bit of a toll, and the successful slacker has to be adaptive to change, but that is also the key to staying employed. The successful slacker uses the disruption and change excuse to justify why “metrics” and “quota performance” are not **on track**. If you can provide evidence via e-mail or printed documents as to why quota or metrics were not achieved, your future looks bright.

Just like in a court of law, you must prove to management beyond a reasonable doubt why the numbers and goals have not been attained. If your company is organized, turnover is low, and everything is laid out neatly, it will be hard to slack successfully. You, as a slacking protégé, need to find a new job. Think either big, profitable company, or small, profitable startup that may get acquired. Look for disruption and constant change. This is where the successful slacker can thrive.

If your goal is to become an overachiever and climb the ranks of a company, do not hang around if your employer gets acquired. From my experience, employees from an acquisition are identified by the new company and blacklisted from getting any new or better opportunities. Corporations normally do this in much the same way that some stepfathers or stepmothers do not like their newly acquired children. Acquirees, like stepchildren, are often viewed as being excess baggage, and usually treated as such. However, for the successful slacker, this may be the perfect scenario.

Public versus Private

Another critical part of finding a good slacker job is deciding between a public or private company. There are pros and cons for both, but I feel working at a successful private company is a far better deal. At a private company – so long as it is profitable – the pressures of hitting a **revenue target** are far less than a public company. If a public company misses a target, the stock and value of the company will suffer, which brings massive amounts of pressure down on the **powers that be**, which in progression will somehow find its way to you.

If targets are missed at a private company, it isn't nearly as big of a problem. Yeah, the investors will be upset, but the pressure of Wall Street will not come down on management. Therefore, your

potential level of stress is far lower. Now, if you work in a public company which is so large and profitable that poor earnings will not directly affect your group, that is the optimal situation.

The company has to be well-established. It has to have significant market share, a lot of cash in the bank, and a product/service that is in demand, so overachieving is easy. It is much easier to successfully slack when you are on a team that overachieves. Remember, there are always overachievers out there. Be on this team, because when it does well, critical eyes look elsewhere. Management looks at unsuccessful teams and makes cuts, especially in sales. As a successful slacker, you can consistently under-perform while the team overperforms, and everyone is perceived as an all-star.

Organizational Logistics

When applying for a new job, make sure there are enough levels of **management buffer** to be optimally sheltered. Any closer than three levels between yourself and a VP, you must reposition yourself. Ideally, your manager reports to a director who reports to a VP. This is enough of a buffer that if played properly, the VP will hardly ever know who you are. It's especially true within a large organization where VPs are usually located in a different part of the country. The more geographically dispersed management is, the more successfully one can slack. If you can do better than three levels,

well, maybe I will have you write a foreword in the next edition of this book! Knowing the direct manager you will work for is important as well. Not always will you be so lucky, but even having a friend who may know the manager's personality is a huge advantage. The last thing you want to do is take a job at a company with a brain-donor or a possessed nutcase for a manager.

An example of having a stark raving lunatic manager was when the director of our business unit, Achoo Bleseu, hired a friend to manage eight sales reps. We will refer to him as Kim Jong Il, due to his Korean descent and rigid Communisticesque management style. He got the job purely because of the **buddy system**. Kim Jong Il had absolutely zero qualifications for the position, but still got the job because he used to work with Achoo. Granted, he was an extremely intelligent guy and had engineering degrees from prestigious schools, but he never had a sales management job in his life. He was a technical marketing guy, not to mention the fact he was a slave-driving lunatic.

He lasted only six months before quitting, but in the process, led six of the eight people on his team (who happened to be amazing salespeople) to bail because of his inappropriate behavior and brash management style. He wasted a half-year's salary and cost the company a number of highly productive and successful revenue producers. However admirable that may be, avoid being on a team with a corporate commie like Kim Jong Il. His existence will make it impossible to successfully slack.

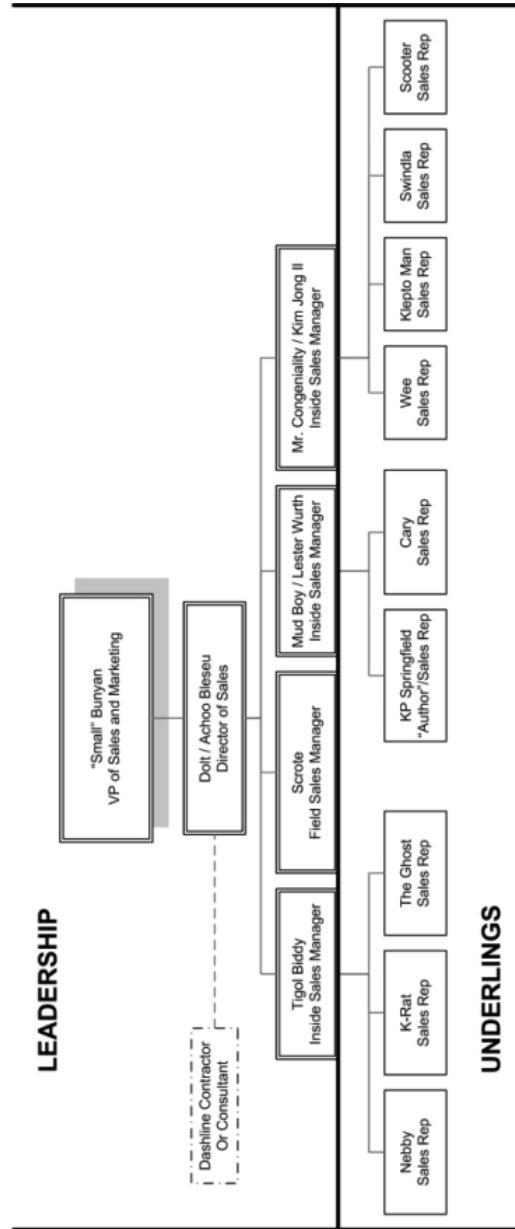


Figure 3: Corporate Org Chart

In order to give you a better idea of how the organizational logistics were within my company, Figure 3 is an org chart of all the zany characters described throughout the book. Anytime you read about a character and are confused about where they fit in, use it as a handy reference.

Achoo Bleseu and the Buddy System – Update!

Late in the creation of The Five Habits, another development occurred in reference to Achoo Bleseu and his buddy system network. Achoo recently announced the hiring of a new director (which makes five in three years) for the inside sales team.

After finding out the news, I did a little research and discovered the new director is coming from the exact same company that Kim Jong Il used to work for; further proving it isn't what you know, but who you know. If Jong's past performance is any indication of the new director, our team will go from barely running on one jet engine to a corkscrew nosedive freefall into the blazing depths of hell.

Slacker Sales Jobs 101

If you are in sales and need a temporary slacker job while looking for a better one, find a company that pays a **non-recoverable draw**. For those not familiar with this term, a company will pay new sales

employees their full commission as if they were hitting their quota for the first three months of employment. It is done to help motivate the rep as they are **ramping up** in the new position.

I have seen successful slackers bounce from company to company – especially back during the dot-com era – and collect sizeable commission paychecks for doing absolutely nothing. My co-workers Klepto Man and Nebby, who you will learn about later, did this successfully at a few different dimwitted startups.

There are a lot of good salespeople in the world who start at a company and don't sell squat for months. Management begins to doubt their performance and questions why they hired this monkey dump in the first place. It is a common situation that the successful slacker always avoids. The main reason why good salespeople end up failing is because they did not demand good territory before starting. I don't care if you can sell 3-D glasses to a blind man, you will not be successful if you are trying to sell software in Wyoming, Montana, and *parts* of Colorado. It ain't gonna happen, bub!

The successful sales slacker always makes territory part of the negotiation beforehand. Make sure it is prime territory and get it in writing! If they do not deliver once you start, walk. Your success as a slacker depends on it. There are a lot of great people who could be very successful sales slackers who miss this important element. In sales, territory is everything. Do you want to be cold-calling some five-person horseshoe supply company in Thermopolis, Wyoming,

or do you want a **mid-market** software account in Boston calling you?

The sales scenario I have going is corporate Shangri-la. At my company (for tax and legal ramifications), inside sales representatives are paid on an hourly basis, yet they are full-time employees with full benefits. I cannot imagine a better deal (short of being a consultant) for the aspiring slacker. Not only do I get paid hourly and receive overtime any days I work more than eight hours, but I am also getting some great perks. Not to mention the fact that commission gets paid on what revenue I bring in (which is usually not that much). Also, because of my hourly status, I get eighty hours of sick time a year. This is “use-it-or-lose-it” time, so every last hour is consumed by the end of the year. On top of the fifteen days of vacation time and holidays, I am getting about another ten days of sick time. Vacation is extremely valuable to the slacker. It’s worth more than money.

The Pinnacle of Slacker Jobs: Consulting

For the more-senior **executives** who have crossed over to the dark side and are reading this book, I have a potentially outstanding slacker job for you. Regardless of background, if you have any expertise in something specific, look into corporate consulting. Consulting has got to be one of the most useless yet prestigious jobs in the corporate world. I still do not understand it. Many have

experiences where consultants were brought into a company to make some changes, and underlings often wondered, “What the hell kind of qualifications do these jerks have?”

If you don’t have an experience like that, and have seen *Office Space*, then you probably remember the “Bobs,” two consultants named Bob who were hired to cut the workforce down and make it more productive. Essentially, that is the role most consultants play in corporations – they come in to do the dirty work because management cannot.

Even though I think corporate consultants provide little **value add**, these folks have it figured out. Here is a job where you are hired by a company to walk in the door, sit around, look at its operations, and then give your opinion on what should be done. Wow! Genius! They pay people for that? If you haven’t jumped on this gravy train yet, please, buy a ticket.

In addition, consultants don’t have to pay for anything. They usually have the company pay for it. That is why when I follow up on sales leads, I never call consultants. They are cheap. They don’t buy anything. They don’t have to! As much as I am knocking consultants, it is due to an extreme case of jealousy. Can you believe a successful slacker has slacker envy? It’s true! Obviously to be a marketable consultant, you have to have some credentials on an impressive resume. But much like a job description, resumes are complete fabricated bullpucky. Ever wonder why a lot of consultants

are full of it? Because most of these people were successful slackers throughout their corporate career and discovered the perfect job.

Consultants are nothing more than former corporate slackers who have gone independent. Why do you think that the Bobs loved Peter Gibbons so much? Because Peter was a slacker just like them, only younger! Is it starting to make sense? There is a lot to be learned from consultants.

Contractor Jobs

Another excellent slacker job is any position that is contract-based. The downside of being a contractor is that you usually don't get amenities like health benefits and 401K, but what you do get far outweighs those silly extraneous items. First, being a contractor means getting paid hourly. When you are an hourly employee, the pay is much higher than someone who is paid on a salary basis. Second, if there is a lot of extra work to be done, a contractor will get paid overtime. Salaried employees don't leave the office until work is done, and they don't get paid anything extra either. If the successful slacker is going to work overtime, God forbid, then he or she better damn well get paid for it!

Companies don't want to pay hourly people overtime if not absolutely necessary, so guess what? You get to work nine to five. Usually you can clock those hours and work even less. Also, as a contractor, there is very little responsibility. Technically, you do

report to a manager, but they are far more concerned about direct employees who are salaried. A contractor can blend into the environment like an unused printer in the copy room. If your name shows up on an **org chart** with a dashed line reporting to a manager, you are in the catbird seat.

The goal of a successful slacker is to stay a **dashline** for as long as humanly possible. Dashline employees, whether salaried or on contract, often have very light workloads with little responsibility and accountability. There are plenty of examples which can be referenced, but the most common response people give when seeing a dashline employee is, “Oh, that guy still works here?”

Dashline slackers are usually referenced as “that guy” or “that girl” because people cannot remember their name. As a dashline contractor, you don’t have to get to know people all that well, because the contracting company is paying your salary, not the company you are contracting at. If you choose to go down the contractor avenue in the quest to becoming a successful slacker, just be sure to have a good relationship with the contracting company. Therefore, when the contract runs out at one employer, they will call you up to go work at another.

A tactic I have seen other masterminds pull out of their slacker toolbox is either quitting or taking a severance package, working at a different company for about a year, and then returning to the original company as a contractor. This is a checkmate move in the practice of Slackism. The individual left on good terms, went

elsewhere, yet kept in touch with the company. Later, the two negotiate a deal for the person to return, but the company wants to limit its risk, so they take the person on as a contractor which is more than okay to the successful slacker. This aforementioned scenario is why you, as a successful slacker, must be the “Team Player.” People have to like you so it is easy to return as a contract employee and reap the benefits of ambiguity and low accountability.

Work Attire

Another piece that must be evaluated before taking a job is the work attire. To further prove my optimal work scenario, I get to wear shorts and sandals (yes, sandals) to work every day. A requirement highlighted in my quest for the perfect slacker job was no dress shirt, no dress shoes, and without a doubt, *definitely* no necktie. It serves no purpose beyond cutting off blood circulation to the brain and making one feel uncomfortable. The necktie is nothing more than an expensive silk leash that corporations use to yank and drag employees like a rented donkey.

In most corporations, the tie is a dress code requirement, which is an inconvenience for the successful slacker. What the hell are you supposed to do if you have a noon Frisbee golf date? You can't wear a shirt and tie to that! You have to bring a change of clothes. What a frigging hassle. A lot of people try to convince themselves that ties are a symbol of accomplishment and maturity. I

wonder if that is what these poor brainwashed fools think while walking to the office on a scorching hot ninety-five-degree day. Short of a trip to the proctologist, nothing is more uncomfortable than wearing a suit and tie in the middle of August. That is like putting a dog in a car which sits directly in the sun, with the windows cracked less than half an inch. Just say no to the necktie.

Networking in the Slacker Community

Successful slackers tend to band together in a tightly knit group like the Mafia. If you do not know other slackers who work in your community, start reaching out and talk to people. Landing the very best slacker job is no different than landing a top-notch corporate overachiever job: it's about who you know, not what you know.

My buddy Hooptie just secured a potentially superior slacker job at a similar tech company. He found it through talking with a manager who was in his MBA program at school. (I know, I know: You well-trained slackers are probably thinking, If this buddy is such a great slacker, why in the hell is he working AND enrolled in an MBA program? It's a valid question. Hooptie was doing it only because his old employer was paying and would allow a bump in his base salary. Seems to me like too much work for very little gain, but Whatever!)

Hooptie got the job because he became tight with the manager. The job is a new role, in a new team, supporting a new

technology that he has never laid eyes on before. In addition, Hooptie has never even touched the company's technology in his life and he has a finance degree. This is a sales support job! Do you see the beauty here? Lots of ambiguity, a support role with poorly defined performance metrics, and a position in which the selected candidate has little relatable experience.

Work Remotely

Another strategy Hooptie enlightened me with was the concept of **working remotely**. Every time we talked on the phone during the week, he was at home. We all know that when one works from home, far less work gets done. It seemed odd because he was in finance at a huge corporation. I figured that his manager must be really lax or not there at all.

Well, it turns out that the manager he directly reported to was based in France. That's right, *France*. This goes back to what I mentioned earlier. Figure out where your manager will be located. If he or she is at another location or even across one of the seven seas, you get a gold star.

Then there are the people who work at home because it is in the job requirements. Most times, they are field sales account managers. Talk about a cush job. These folks usually manage less than a handful of accounts, work from home, and maybe go to a few appointments per week (which most often involve a game of golf, or

lunch). It is even better if the job doesn't involve being required to hunt for new customers.

There is one field rep I know who sits on her keister, does nothing, yet collects a monstrous paycheck. Actually, she has so much free time that she's got a side business going. When you call her voicemail, she prompts you to "push one" for her day job or "for my real estate properties, press two." If you have the time to do real estate in addition to your corporate gig, and actually enjoy it, I am jealous – extremely jealous.

Avoid Stress and Anxiety

Have you ever worked past quitting time? For instance, let's say your day is over at three in the afternoon. If you are still there at twenty after, do you ever get this nagging sense of anxiety like you missed the last ferry off an island or you may not make it to your train in time before it leaves? I freak out when it is three thirty and my day should have been over a half hour ago.

Usually the only reason for still being at work is because I am busy hammering away at numerous literary works, which is the only acceptable scenario. However, if it is work-related, the anxiety can eat away at me and cause undue stress. It is scientifically proven that stress has been linked to cancer. Nobody wants cancer, so that is why the perfect slacker job will never keep someone at work past quitting time. Everyone has a rhythm, and it is extremely rude to

expect another to break their rhythm just because management has an **action item** which needs immediate attention.

HR Policy – the Recipe for Slacker Success

Successful slacking always requires understanding the HR handbook. It is equivalent to the Bible, and should be referenced wherever possible. Think of HR as the teacher to hide behind when the schoolyard bully is threatening to beat you up. Regardless of what happens between you and management or co-workers, HR is there to mediate and get certain people into trouble. It is especially true within my company, which cannot afford to have any more lawsuits filed against them; they already have too many with their own customers.

As a minority successful slacker, the protections of HR are even greater. The advent of affirmative action and equal opportunity employment has given minorities significant leeway and freedom in the workplace. In addition, if you are a disabled veteran or have been in the service, it would behoove you to understand the details of company HR policy surrounding your particular rights.

I have seen the race card played occasionally, and it works every time. Most recently, there was a woman who did not get along with our manager, Lester Wurth (who you'll learn about later on). She parlayed a legitimate medical condition along with her complaint to HR about Lester in order to get permission to work

from home three days per week, and her job was inside sales. (In case you aren't familiar with inside sales, nobody works from home!) Before long, I started asking questions as to where she was. Because of her medical condition, her complaint to HR, *and* the fact she was a minority, she had the hat trick going. She was untouchable.

For jury duty situations, some companies will pay for the entire tenure should you ever be called to serve. Jury duty does suck canal water, but it is still better than being at work. Plus, you can usually get out of it early and tell Mister Manager that you have one more day to report, so long as you have the paperwork to prove it.

Also look into HR policy regarding sick days. There is a term which some companies refer to as "sick events" which is one continuous, horribly bad string of sickness. Some corporate policies regard a sick event as only one day of sickness. That means you could be out an entire week and only get docked one sick day. Obviously, if there are a certain number of sick days allotted in a year, the successful slacker uses those days up first. It is not acceptable to have leftover sick days at the end of the year.

Not only does understanding HR policy protect slackers in a defensive sense, but it can also be used in an offensive way. If you are at odds with a direct manager or co-worker for whatever reason – whether personal or not – and they act in violation of HR policy, use it as a blackmail device. At work, asinine behavior abounds. Most people have no clue their actions are a grave violation of HR policy.

By pointing out their folly, you get the upper hand and the leeway to slack even more. Obviously, you must approach this with extreme caution and only use it in a last-case scenario, but it is there in a pinch.

Missouri – the Slacker State

For those thinking about not only changing jobs, but maybe also moving to a new part of the country to get a fresh start, look into Missouri. According to a recent online poll done by American Online and *Salary.com*, The Show-Me State is number one at “wasting time” when it comes to working on the job. Apparently, three hours and twelve minutes per day is what the average worker in Missouri wastes, as opposed to the national average of two hours (not including lunch breaks). Now mind you, this is an average.

What I want to know is who are those jerks keeping the average so low? I am slacking at least six hours a day. It isn't encouraging to see people slacking on slacking. At least Missouri has the average above three hours, which means that there are probably a fair number of people at or around the six-hour mark. After adding in about an hour for lunch, that leaves about one hour per day of solid work because successful slackers dare not work more than eight hours.

The best part of this survey was when they broke down what people are actually doing instead of work. Forty-four percent of all

respondents said that they waste time with personal Internet use. Activities such as reading e-mail, instant messaging, playing online games, and get this, responding to online *polls! Touché!* AOL and *Salary.com* were only adding to the lack of productivity within the workplace, which is commendable.

I think we can attribute the relatively low slack hours per day in the poll results to the fact that successful slackers are too busy with leisure activities. They don't spend free time filling out online polls about how much they slack. You might as well be working if you are filling out online polls about slacking. That is not what a successful slacker considers fun. Plus, by doing this poll, there is actual documentation certifying the practice of Slackism, which is like writing your own confession of guilt. Successful slackers never incriminate themselves.

K.P.'s Notes

- Seek out a job with the lowest possible amount of responsibility while still retaining some kind of importance to the company. These types of jobs are most commonly found in larger corporations.
- Read between the lines with job descriptions, as they always sound more intimidating than they actually turn out to be. Look for job descriptions which contain words such as *the ideal candidate*, *good communication*, *analyzes*, *interfaces*,

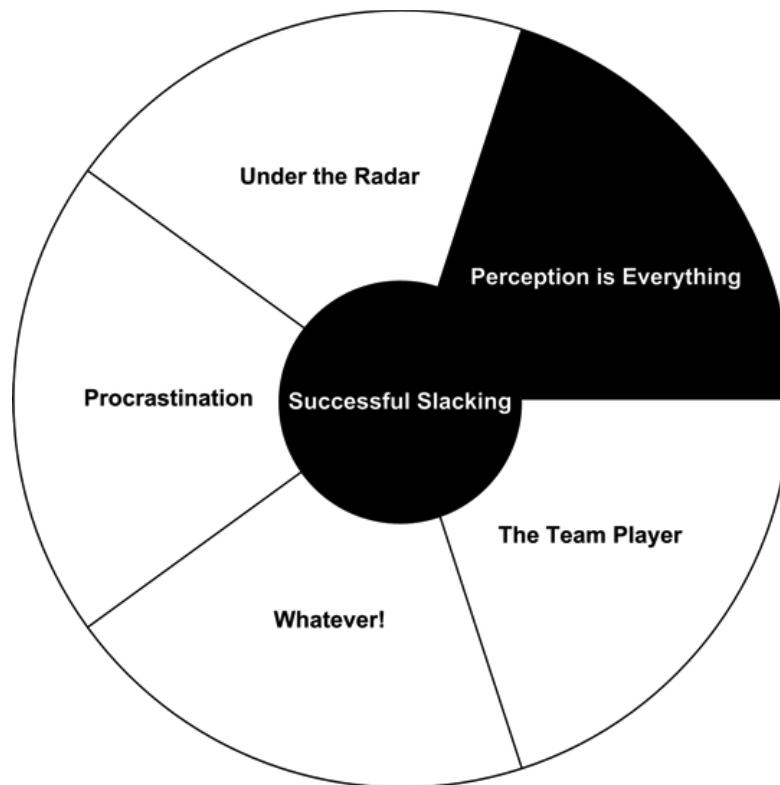
demonstrates, defines, listens, and team player. Because all of these equate to one skill: the ability to speak and communicate like a normal human being.

- Unless you know the person who worked the job before you, do not take a backfill job. The person leaving may have gotten fired and will leave a mountain of unfinished work, putting you in a precarious situation doomed for failure.
- Seek out a new position in a new division of a growing company. The ambiguity and lack of defined processes will leave plenty of room for successful slacking.
- Despite its downtrodden environment, seek out recent acquisitions and turbulent workplaces so you can point the finger of low productivity elsewhere.
- Large private companies are a better shelter for successful slacking due to the lack of performance pressure from Wall Street and shareholders.
- Position yourself at least three levels below a VP in order to maintain low visibility and avoid unnecessary pressure from executives.
- In sales, always demand territory in writing before accepting a job. Successful slacking in sales cannot exist without having a territory filled with easy deals.
- For the more experienced, consider going into consulting, which is the pinnacle of successful slacking. Many consultants are

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former corporate slackers who have discovered the gravy train and low responsibility of going independent.

- Contract jobs are another lucrative option filled with high hourly pay and low responsibility. Because most managers are busy micro-managing their salaried employees, contractors are left alone to collect far more money and leisure time.
- Understand the work attire rules. Any company which requires a suit and tie is not a viable option for successful slacking. Changing clothes in order to attend a three-hour midday Frisbee golf game is unacceptable.
- Jobs which enable people to work remotely equate to one thing – effective successful slacking. The further away your direct manager is located, the better.
- If you are a minority or have a health condition, understand and use the HR policy to protect you from management scrutiny like a teacher from the schoolyard bully.



Habit One: Perception Is Everything

"Don't just do something, stand there!"

If it looks like dung, and stinks like dung, it is most likely dung. Note that I said *most likely*. Perception is everything in the corporate world. If you look like a hard worker and act like a hard worker, it is most likely you are a hard worker. In the absence of tangible results, the successful slacker relies heavily on using perception to build pseudo-success. That is one of the main

observations made in my brief tenure as a corporate employee and why “Perception Is Everything” is the first and most important of The Five Habits to understand.

Politics

It is amazing what can be accomplished if the mirage of a dedicated corporate employee is well-structured. There are lots of moving parts in building a really solid foundation of perception. At the center is the ever-present game of corporate politics. Unfortunately, if you really want to perfect the art of successful slacking, a good understanding of company politics is a **key** objective. You do not have to be the grandmaster politico guy, but it will really help to understand who holds the influence in the organization.

Title means less than influence. Just because someone is a director or a VP does not automatically make them influential. I have seen some real dunderheads in high-level positions.

They had about as much impact as a shopping cart careening into a brick wall. Lower-level managers with some major political game can easily set their direct boss up for certain death. In one instance, a manager by the name of Tigol Bidy single-handedly ousted another woman who was the director of the business unit. This was after the director demoted Tigol Bidy in the hopes she would quit. Well that didn't happen.

Payback is a bitch as they say, and because Tigol Bidy understood the business way better than the director did (remember, dunderheads do get high-level jobs), she was asked to a large executive leadership meeting. After positioning the director as incompetent in a politically savvy way, within two weeks, the director packed up her belongings and got redeployed to wreak havoc in a different business unit. The successful slacker identifies this political superiority and automatically befriends a person like Tigol Bidy. If you succeed in getting tight with this person, they will **go to bat** for you in all situations.

I can remember a few times where my performance was sub-par (one time due to my ineffective slacking, and another time out of my control), and **the leadership team** was having discussions about possibly **letting me go**. Tigol Bidy went to bat and was convincing enough to keep me employed. If a dunderhead had represented me, the leadership team would not have listened to the argument, and I would have been escorted out by security.

Be selective in choosing an upper-level voice, because if you choose the inferior influencer, it will be more difficult to slack successfully. Therefore, the scouting process has to be long and thorough. It will probably take at least three months or so before you can make an educated decision on who will be the best prospect. It is a crucial step in building up perception, so be diligent.

Once the proper manager, director, or even a VP (if that is the case, you are my superior in Slackism) is selected, the

foundation is laid. Now go for visibility, but only to those influential people who you've befriended. Do not become close with too many political masters. Stick with the one who you think is the best. Worst-case scenario, if the person gets fired, and you are well-liked, you'll get a job with them at a new company.

Peer Groups

Identify who the biggest overachievers are in your group of peers. Make sure that you are either on their team or know them personally. Hang and be seen with them – it doesn't matter whether you like them or not. As soon as the work day is over (which is usually far earlier for you than for the overachiever), you don't have to call or talk to them. They're going places, and by gum, you are too! Well, at least that is what people think.

Be careful in this situation because an overachiever is often highly intelligent. Sometimes they are gullible and overachieve because they like to be ruled by fear, but on average, they are sharp. If you are not completely honed in the successful slacking department, they will pick up a scent of slacking. If this happens, they will distance themselves, or worse than that, blow your cover as a slacker to upper management, which is a huge setback. Approach the overachiever with caution as you would a poisonous snake. They do not want you to get credit for all their hard work.

Just as cautious and selective the process should be in finding an influential manager and overachiever; the same is true in selecting who not to be seen with. Every company has the disgruntled employee group or the unsuccessful slacker clan.

There may be some interesting characters and personalities you identify within either clique, but resist the temptation to be seen with them; it will ruin your perception. Go ahead and call or hang with them after work, but don't eat lunch at the café with them every day. A specific example came from my co-worker known as "The Ghost" because he was virtually invisible at the office and personified the fifth habit "Under the Radar." The manager I mentioned earlier, Tigol Bidy, had a conversation with him about how he was being viewed as a grouchy employee due to his association with a few folks in the disgruntled **legacy** brotherhood. Even though he was very quiet and a hard worker (at least that's what you think), his image was being tarnished because of who he was hanging out with.

Tigol followed up with an e-mail to The Ghost about his conduct. She was excellent at the game of **CYA**, and her favorite thing to do besides bore people to death with her horse riding analogies was to send out e-mails with unbounded words inside quotations. The e-mail would read something like:

Dear 'The Ghost,'

In follow up to our 'one on one' today, I really want you to adopt a 'refuse to lose' attitude so that we can continue our 'pitch to switch' campaign and win customers. In

order to do this, we need to have our 'ducks in a row', so please make the necessary efforts to 'refocus' and be 'in it to win it'.

'THANKS!'

Tigol

Tigol Bidy, the superlative politician, made sure that The Ghost realized his folly – and if The Ghost ever quit or scrutiny was placed on Tigol Bidy, she had documentation to prove he was a **management problem**. Unfortunately for The Ghost, he still suffers from negative perception through fraternizing with **bad apples**, and once in the pit, it is very hard to climb out.

Identify Overachieving Partners

If you work in a sales organization where it is encouraged to team with partners, do everything possible to take advantage of the situation. Employ the same process described above to find overachievers with the partner channel. You will quickly find that by teaming up, your sales numbers will skyrocket, and you'll be spending far more time with Arturo drinking *cervezas* down at the boat dock.

Executive leadership from both the partner organization and your company will praise your efforts of teamwork and selflessness. Depending on the company, you may not get list-price credit by letting the partner bill your customer, but who cares! Would you

rather get paid 100 percent of list price and do 100 percent of the work, or get paid 75 percent of list price and do little to zero work?

I was recently introduced to a sales rep at a partner company who brought me in on a rather sizeable deal. This guy gave me a background on his experience, and when he said he did over 300 percent of his number the last few quarters, I started doing the gold digger dance. Not only will this guy help me hit my number, but I will also achieve it by coming into the office four days a week and working on this book each of those days. It can be exhilarating to have a partner who is so successful, but just like the overachiever in your direct team, the partner may get a whiff of slacking if you do not give him something back.

If you have any prospects, bring the partner in on your deals so that there is no animosity or suspicion that you aren't giving back to the relationship. In my situation, I am throwing this guy most of my deals. I am completely okay with not getting full list credit because of billing through the partner. I figure that by passing him deals, he will work harder and close more than I would going direct. So far, it has been quite a successful venture. Arturo at the boat dock also appreciates all the extra time I am spending there drinking Dos Equis with him.

Shameless Self-Promotion

Now it's time to make wins known to everyone. Whether it is acquiring a new customer for big money, completing an important project ahead of schedule, or successfully urinating with no hands, make sure the entire organization knows about it. How do you achieve this without being overtly annoying or braggadocios? If it is a sales scenario, and you've won a big deal, ask the customer if he or she was satisfied with the experience. If they say yes and you have a good relationship (most successful slackers do), then have them write an e-mail of satisfaction to you and your direct manager and pass it up the **chain of command**.

Have the customer write accolades like "above and beyond expectations," "was patient and extremely understanding," "took the time to listen and cater to our needs." This kind of stuff is worth more than you think with management. When they see you are superior with handling customers, expectations in other areas such as call volume and revenue are far lower.

If you work at a company like mine where there are superfluous budgets to make internal videos and other unnecessary marketing material for the group, get involved. For instance, a co-worker of mine (who is an uber-overachiever) closed a large deal with a new customer. The marketing team did a case study on the customer, and the sales rep was involved in the video that was produced. He was filmed using the technology to communicate with

co-workers. One of the technologies was instant messaging, so what did he do? He used my name in the video as the person he was messaging with.

In addition, he showed an e-mail I sent him and the subject which says “lead for you.” Executive leadership watches that case study, sees my name with a reference to a lead, and subliminally thinks I am productive. Now I must admit that sending the lead to my friend was strictly coincidental. I was just doing a personal favor (as most successful slackers do), but it paid off with far more benefit than originally anticipated.

In our group, there is the “Hall of Fame” for sales reps who win a certain amount of customers by switching them from a competitive solution. Only about ten reps have achieved this stature, and once in, you get your picture on the wall in the hallway for everyone to see for all eternity. Talk about the perfect image booster and self-promotion tool — man, this is the zenith! By complete surprise, somehow my mug shot made it up on the board. It may have been because every single deal I ever closed was reported as a competitive win, whether it was or not. Eventually, all those modest deals got me in the annals of corporate history. Having “Hall of Fame” on your résumé is like having an all-access VIP pass at a rock concert. You enter the interview, flash your résumé and say “HOF, baby. When do I start?”

“Excuse me?” says the interviewer.

“HOF, man. I’m in the hall. How much is my signing bonus?”

“You haven’t even interviewed yet.”

“Look, bro, do you want a HOFer on your team or not?”

“Well, okay,” he responds. “Can you start tomorrow?”

“Tomorrow?! Hell no. Two weeks. I’m going on vacation first.”

“That should be fine,” says the interviewer.

“You damn right it’s fine. **IYF!** HOF, baby!”

If a successful slacker makes it onto the “Hall of Fame” board, it is like being elected to the supreme court. Unless you decide to quit, you are there for life. Nobody is going to fire an employee in the “Hall of Fame.” If they do, you can sue them and win. Just tell the judge that they retired your keyboard.

The Myth of Quota

I am sure there are some people reading this and scoffing right now. “No way” they say. “It is cut and dry, if you aren’t selling, you aren’t producing.” Baloney! Trust me. Out of the thirteen quarters at my company, I have hit quota about three times, if that. Therefore, with some quick **back-of-the-envelope math**, that comes to hitting quota only 23 percent of my entire tenure. But somehow, out of the thirty-five salespeople who started with me three years ago, I am one

of only about eight salespeople left. How did I do it without hitting my number? I came somewhat close.

I would usually hit between 70 and 85 percent of the number. In a really bad quarter, I may come in at about 50 percent. There is a lot of room to slack successfully when you are only hitting 75 percent. However, please keep in mind that I found the right slacker sales job. It was a startup acquisition that was made by a 50,000-employee company. There has been a lot of turbulence and unrest.

Not only do I have e-mails from customers saying how good I am, but I can also point the finger at a myriad of problems which prevented me from hitting the number. See how perception can work? It is easily good for making up a 30 percent gap in quota attainment.

Ambiguous Goals and Commitments

Another key to building positive perception is setting very ambiguous goals and **commitments** in annual review meetings. There is that word again: ambiguous. Ambiguity is the successful slacker's greatest ally. If management cannot pin you down to something specific, there is no accountability. Therefore, the parameters set have to be easy to achieve. "Commitment" is the term that my company recently used to replace the word "goal." I guess goal did not have as much accountability weight in it.

In light of this, it is even more important now to make my commitments as vague as possible. Actually, my annual review is supposed to be done by tomorrow, and instead, I am writing *The Five Habits*. Slackism is a beautiful thing. Be vague with goals and commitments. If management tries to push and put more accountability into goals, just say you will put forth the best effort possible, but “There are **interdependencies** with other team members which may potentially hinder commitments.”

That will automatically open the door to ambiguity and gives you the ability to point the finger at someone else if commitments are not met. A successful slacker must know his limits. Do not go beyond them, or you will be spending way more time at the office than previously anticipated.

Numbers are a successful slacker’s worst enemy because of their inherent exactitude and lack of blurriness. My buddy who is in finance once told me that if someone asked him for a figure, he’d give it to them but further mention that it is a **high-level number**. This is corporate lingo for “guess a number between one and a million.”

However, because he included that disclaimer, he was not accountable for validating it. If there is exactitude, there is no room for fudgery. That is why I was so good at English. With words, everything is open for analysis. One can paint a far better picture of ambiguity with words than numbers. Unless you can confidently

back the numbers up, well, avoid them as you would a mullet-head in a 1988 Camaro IROC.

Artificial Performance Metrics

Employees in call-centers all over America – especially inside sales and customer support – are held to **KPIs**: parameters such as calls per day, hours of **talk time**, activities in the **CRM** tool, and number of demos or presentations in a week. There are numerous ways the successful slacker overcomes the obstacle of fulfilling daily requirements. As was mentioned in the chapter about finding a slacker job, the ideal company must be turbulent or in a state where systems are all discombobulated. If this is the case, then fudging phone calls and demos is not a problem. Here is the strategy.

When you first start calling or prospecting in a region, make note of all the companies that have automated voice answering. Write these phone numbers down. Be sure they are in or near your territory. Even though my company is pretty disorganized, it is easy to run a phone report and see what area code is being dialed. I have actually seen some boneheaded unsuccessful slackers dialing phone numbers in California (where they live) when their territory is on the East Coast! The successful slacker knows better and makes calls in their own territory with a list at least thirty numbers long. Do not dial the same phone numbers on the list in the same order. That behavior will blow your cover and management will confront you.

Mix the numbers up. Go top to bottom, then bottom to top, then middle, etc.

Talk time can be a little more difficult. In this scenario, you actually have to be on the phone for a period of time talking to somebody (or so management thinks). Once I stumbled upon a talk time gold mine. I dialed our customer support hotline (a 1-800 number, which is acceptable), and when the automated voice said “goodbye” after I had not selected any options, guess what? The phone number never hung up on me. The voice stopped, but the line was still connected! “Eureka!” said the successful slacker. I call this number at least four times a week for an hour of quality talk time. It’s been going on for two years and management has never said a thing.

However, on one occasion, my boss, Lester Wurth, did walk into my office and asked “Hey, are you on the phone?” after seeing I was connected.

“No, what’s up?” I totally forgot I was still on the line. He looked at my phone and seemed confused.

“Your phone line is still connected,” he said.

“Huh, that’s strange! They never hung up!” and I quickly hung up the phone.

“Weird,” Les responded.

“Yeah, really weird.”

It was a close call and an uncomfortable moment. The worst part of this story is that it has actually happened on three separate

occasions! Hey, even the best of us make mistakes. However, if he tried to bust me, I'd just say that I was on the phone with our tech support. It was a very lucky find that still works to this day. The perception is that all my metrics are met, when in actuality, I am writing this book!

Looking back, I should have pulled the "I'm on the phone but not really" move on Les. That occurs when someone you don't want to speak with appears at the door or cube, and looks in to see if you are on the phone. When they do this, give them the universal "one minute" point, or point to the phone and start cryptically talking with someone. This skill takes some practice. It isn't very easy to have an artificial phone conversation with an automated attendant or dial tone. It happened to me just this morning when my director, Achoo Bleseu, knocked on my door. He hadn't said a word to me in over a month, and I liked it that way. He looked in my window, I pointed at the phone, and the talking magically happened.

"Uh, yes, that's correct Seymour. The demo is scheduled for 9:30 tomorrow," I said.

"If you'd like to make a call," replied the automated attendant. "Please hang up and try again. If you need help, press star now."

Achoo nodded, saw me in the middle of negotiating a demo, gave a thumbs-up, and walked away. I successfully avoided an entire conversation with him by faking a phone call. As a bonus, Achoo

perceives me as a true phone monkey who is “in it to win it” with my “**game on.**”

As much as I enjoy dialing numbers and hanging up after a minute or so, sometimes I wonder if it is more work to actually dial a company number, navigate through their name directory system, and hit random buttons rather than actually talking with a person. Regardless, I have uncovered some rather entertaining names from the phone directory system such as Greg Doody, Karina Dooder, and Ravisharma Balaswamarathimarzipan. It is hard work dialing forty fake numbers every day. Try it sometime. It is also quite challenging to surf the Web and hunt through a phone directory simultaneously, which is the successful slacker’s interpretation of **multitasking**.

A co-worker of mine once mentioned that at his old company (which was a chief competitor) they were so paranoid and obsessive that management would actually track the demos one did by the IP number (Internet address where a connection is coming from). Therefore, if you log a completed demo in the CRM, they cross-referenced the demo tool to see if you were actually logged in. Not only that, but they also checked to see how many others were logged in and what their IP addresses were. This is not the ideal company to be working at if you want to successfully slack. I am sure a really good slacker could figure out a way around this, but damn, if you can’t, well, remember the mullet-head in the Camaro IROC? Yeah.

Résumé Perception

If you are a successful slacker and are applying for a new job internally or looking outside the company, start building up that résumé so people perceive you as an all-star hot prospect. Like I had mentioned earlier, job descriptions and résumé are at least 70 percent bullpucky. The remaining 30 percent is heavily twisted truth. I know this because I also used to be a recruiter.

This section is not meant to be a “how to” on fudging a résumé, but maybe something which is covered in a future volume if these couple ideas **strike a chord** with a broad audience. Just like in a job description, include vague words like “mentored.” *Mentor* is a great word because it means you have leadership experience without formal recognition. If you say you were a manager and the employer checks your job history, you will be called on it if you weren’t. As a “mentor,” though, it is open for opinion. My manager might not consider it mentoring, but I sure do! Ambiguity, there it is again.

If you did some formal training on a technology or a process, include that in your achievements as being “officially certified.” It sounds really good even though it means virtually nothing. Because if you are a successful slacker, the training received probably went in one ear and out the other, or better yet, you weren’t even there in the first place!

Lessons to Be Learned from Klepto Man

Numerous lessons in perception can be learned from the successful slacker, however, there are more which can be acquired through aspiring slackers who aren't quite there yet. A colleague of mine, let's call him Klepto Man, is in this camp. How can we identify him as such? Well, there are several behavioral characteristics which tarnish his perception. Although he tries really hard, Klepto Man has not established perception of his productivity. He has been busted for the repeated phone calls to his home area code to have hour-long conversations with his wife. He has also been heard calling different companies, then quickly saying, "Oh, I'm sorry, I must have dialed the wrong number," then hanging up.

Worse than all of that, he has built a reputation as being a guy who loves tits and ass. Don't misunderstand; I love T&A as much as the next straight man, but the successful slacker does not make it known at work... ever! Klepto Man will take a two-hour lunch, have some beers, and go get a five dollar "strip" steak at the local titty bar. After a while, word gets around. You do not want to be the "strip" steak guy.

If that isn't enough, Klepto Man would sit all day and surf the Web, looking at porn. In addition, he would get on personal sites and pick up chicks with his Webcam. Just yesterday, my co-worker Nebby caught Klepto Man pulling his shirt up for a girl with the Webcam. Surf for porn and do virtual strip shows all you want when

you get home, but don't dare do it at work! Your perception and image will be compromised.

Another sad fact about Klepto Man is he believes he's pulling a fast one on everybody. He actually thinks he is successfully slacking, but in reality, everyone knows Klepto Man's game. He is the type of guy anyone with half a brain can see right through. I pity him, really; especially when Klepto Man runs around the office all day claiming booty like Blackbeard the pirate.

When someone either quit or got fired (which happened at least once every two weeks), before the person even hit the pavement, this grubby devil went into their old office and took things like their flat-screen monitor, television (yes, we had TVs), wireless gadgets, Webcams (for multiple-angle strip shows), and anything else he could get his hands on. Walking into his office was like walking into a Chinatown thrift store, packed to the ceiling with junk. What he could not use, he usually took home to his family, consisting of five children.

One morning, I went to the break room to get some coffee. The pot was empty, so I made more and went to the bathroom while it was running. I left this really nice coffee mug on the counter. I came back two minutes later, and the mug was gone. Lo and behold, Klepto Man was standing nearby, hiding the mug.

“Hey, how's it going, man,” I said. “Is that my mug?”

“Oh! Uh, yeah. I knew it was yours, I was just hiding it from you,” he chuckled.

Now, how the hell did Klepto Man know it was mine? He’s never seen it before, and he didn’t see me enter or leave the break room. Klepto Man was plotting to steal my coffee mug! If you want to be a successful slacker, hooking your colleagues’ items is not a great way to achieve your goal.

He did a similar thing with food. If we had a catered event, he would pile up his plate, eat, and then hang around like a vulture waiting for an animal to die. As soon as everyone was done eating, he would start to pack up the food (usually without asking first), and take it home. He even collected aluminum soft-drink cans and piled them up on his desk so that when he accumulated enough, he could go recycle them for a few measly dollars. It was a sight to behold.

This behavior in and of itself is not a bad thing. I don’t hold it against people if money is tight and they do what they can to make ends meet, but honestly, this guy made decent money and had great benefits. Also, the “strip” steak and Blackbeard behavior didn’t help the situation. His perception was already tarnished, and anything else that he did just made things worse.

Klepto Man had also gotten other people into trouble with his stealing of company property. Recently, Klepto Man went in to the office of my buddy K-Rat after he quit the day before. Klepto Man notified Nebby that there was a wireless headset in K-Rat’s old office, and that if he wanted it, he should grab it. Nebby never took

items out of other offices, but for whatever reason, he listened to Klepto Man and took the headset.

The following day, our group admin sent out an e-mail asking who had taken K-Rat's phone headset and other random items. Nebby couldn't believe it and confessed immediately. The admin got extremely angry with Nebby, and his image suffered because he heeded the advice of Klepto Man. Nebby had never taken anything up to that point, and since Klepto Man had historically confiscated so much property without getting in trouble, Nebby thought it would be okay just to take one item that he really needed to use. Don't let a guy like Klepto Man ruin your image.

Klepto Man used to work on the same team as the infamous manager Kim Jong Il. Klepto Man kissed his ass quite a bit because he knew that Jong was a lunatic and hated all of his direct reports because he thought they were inferior. Klepto Man was trying to get on Jong's good side. A co-worker of Klepto Man was working a sixty-thousand-dollar opportunity and had repeatedly told Jong that it would be closing within the month. She suddenly quit, and after Klepto Man raided her old office for any good loot, he told Jong that they were both working the opportunity and that it was close to closing. Klepto Man wanted to continue working the deal so he could get full credit. Jong was not convinced, knowing that Klepto Man was a con artist of massive proportions. Klepto Man insisted that he had been on multiple calls with the customer. Jong **took the initiative** to call the customer and find out the truth.

The customer told Jong that he had never spoken with Klepto Man. Jong then asked if the opportunity was still set to close by month end. The customer was taken aback and replied that they weren't planning to make a decision for another three months. The opportunity was used to simply buy time before quitting, but even better, Jong caught Klepto Man in one of his numerous lies.

"Hey, Klepto Man," Jong said. "I talked with Veracity Corporation and they mentioned that they've never heard of your name, and that the deal is nowhere close to closing."

"Oh, yeah, well, uh, you see..."

Klepto Man was busted. Even better, Klepto Man kept lying to cover up his lie, thinking that Jong would somehow believe him. It did nothing for his positive perception and killed all the ass-kissing efforts that he was previously involved in. When I heard this story, it was poetic justice. As much as I despised Jong, that guy was a smart and resourceful communist.

Despite Klepto Man's flaws, and my conclusion that he is a severely lacking successful slacker, he has lasted for over three years due to his successful politics, moderate sales performance, and monumental bullshitting. He is a top-gun bullshitter, no doubt; one of the best I've seen. You almost want to believe him, even when you know he is full of it. He also got in good with Tigol Bidy, who is the grandmaster politico, and it has benefited him greatly. Even though he has made it despite the behavior, if it came down to firing either Klepto Man or a true successful slacker, Klepto Man will most

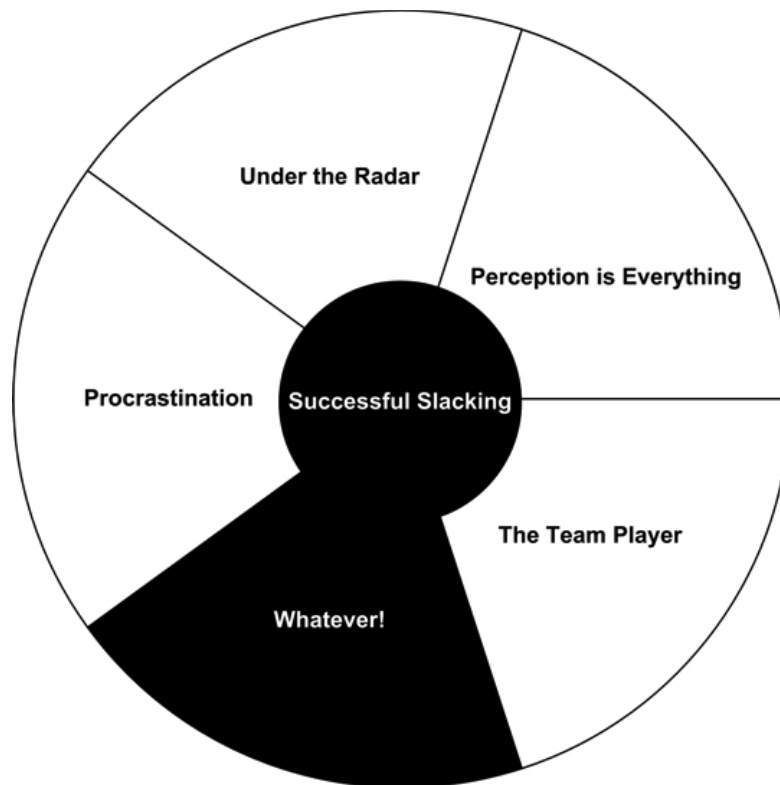
likely take the walk. Learn from his mistakes. Perception is everything.

K.P.'s Notes

- Unfortunately, successful slackers must understand the game of corporate politics and play them in order to befriend the most savvy of political manipulators so they can protect you from scrutiny. Obviously, the higher up the better.
- Do not befriend more than one political guru; stick with the one you feel is the most influential and stay loyal to that person.
- Identify the highest overachievers in your peer group and associate yourself with them. However, approach with caution, because if your successful slacking game is not honed, they will sense it and blow your cover to management.
- Avoid being seen with unsuccessful slackers or disgruntled employees. Although they may be cool and anti-establishment, they will tarnish your image.
- In sales, seek out overachieving partners in order to boost your sales revenues and perception as a team player. Pass them deals to work and close so you can take long and uninterrupted breaks from work.
- Have customers who you've established good rapport with send e-mail messages highlighting your stellar customer service and worth to the company.

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- In organizations which are disorganized or turbulent, sales quotas never have to be attained. A successful slacker's adjusted quota is normally between 70 and 85 percent of the quota established from management. The remaining 15 to 30 percent shortfall can be commonly blamed on a myriad of company problems.
- Establish ambiguous goals and commitments during annual reviews to maximize your likelihood of attaining them. If management presses for more accountability, tie your goals to the group so if you fall short the finger can be pointed elsewhere.
- KPIs (Key Performance Indicators) and other measures of worker productivity can be overcome by developing an intricate list of fake phone numbers in your territory and ones which stay connected until you hang up. On paper, you'll look like a hard-working employee, when in reality you're out riding your bike while the phone is still connected.



Habit Two: Whatever!

"The key to life is adjustment."

My physical education teacher back in high school was a drunken, uneducated, and gullible woman in her late fifties who wore pink jogging suits and had those huge circular bifocals that were ever so popular in the mid-1970s. She never really taught me much beyond the fact that a teacher should never swig a handle of Wild Turkey before coming to school.