

STEWARDSHIP

Elevating Yourself with the Productivity Pyramid

by Frank F. Lunn

Productivity is a word that describes what businesses, managers and the world demand in ever increasing amounts... yet it is seldom understood. Productivity is about results, the purpose of all true work. Productivity is about more than time put in at the job or going through the motions while there. Rather, productivity is about successfully achieving quantifiable goals: "work" without results is really just "labor". The concept before us today is applied productivity taken to the highest level... stewardship.

Stewardship is a word that is not often heard in business circles. It represents taking care of the resources entrusted to you and utilizing them to the fullest extent, as if you were the "owner" of the task, project, or company. As you rise in an organization, your level of responsibility, benefits and compensation will essentially be based on your ability to master this principle. There is always room at the top of any organization for those that apply Stewardship principles and can learn to elevate the "productivity pyramid" (as outlined below). An effective utilization of these concepts is also the ultimate in time management training, as you learn to place higher priority on higher yield activities.

THE PRODUCTIVITY PYRAMID



OVERVIEW

Each level of the pyramid is a building block and a vital component in the entire structure. It is not possible to arrive at the Stewardship level without successfully mastering and understanding the previous levels. Moving up the pyramid does not negate the foundation below; to the contrary, you can achieve stewardship in a Task level position, or be at a Responsibility level within a project. Conversely, you can also get grounded in Task level duties while in a stewardship position.

TASK

From a job level, this is "where it happens". Tasks require a singular focus on an objective that is obvious as a "to-do" delegated item or simply "the job". The Task level is not unimportant or demeaning. It is merely a starting place or a singular transaction that is usually very definable.

Task example: Restaurant worker

Job level competency required, specific and easily quantifiable goals and objectives set by someone else. Responsible for self.

PROJECT

This level is a coordination of several Task level issues which accomplish an objective while maintaining focus on a fairly narrow scope. The Project level in a productivity model is higher than Task, as it expands the "job" through coordi-

nation of multiple tasks.

Project examples: Restaurant Shift Leader

Must not only perform and understand the job and issues of the Task level, but also needs to have some vision beyond what is at hand. For example, in addition to "doing the job", training and scheduling may be added to a list of duties. Responsible for self and others.

RESPONSIBILITY

This level is the marshalling and utilization of resources to ensure that specific goals and objectives are accomplished. It is a management level that includes the coordination of Task and Project levels with other resources and areas of the business. The Responsibility level requires a focus that is outside of just "the job".

Responsibility examples: Restaurant Manager

Must coordinate shifts and schedules, food ordering, menus, vendors and other possibly unrelated details into the smooth flow of business. Responsible for self, others and end results.

STEWARDSHIP

This is the highest level and transcends your job and/or business unit. It is about "personal ownership." Relating to and affecting others, (as well as vital and varied issues like vision and direction) are some of the components which must be "owned" by the steward. A steward is the captain of the ship; he or she chooses a destination, sets the course and is ultimately responsible for reaching that goal without excuse and without fail!

Stewardship examples: Restaurant General Manager

Must balance all levels of business need against the bottom line financial results. All needs from task level through stewardship level must be met. If adverse conditions or road-blocks to success exist, the steward must take responsibility for overcoming. Must live the motto "Whatever it takes!" For example, heading to the kitchen if the 3rd shift cook doesn't show up... owns ultimate accountability for the business.

Productivity Pyramid is More than Job Classification

Stewardship can be attained at any level in the pyramid. Does this sound conflicting? If stewardship is the highest level of the "productivity pyramid", how can it be obtained at any other level?

Using the previous examples, you could have a Task level restaurant worker who is not only doing their own Task level duties, but who is acting at the highest capacity (the Stewardship level) for that position. They do their job, train others, contribute more than asked, demonstrate initiative and vision, generate ideas and are fully engaged in the business. This person would be someone to train, develop and give additional responsibilities with an eye towards promotion. Stewardship is not just the destination; it is also how well you manage the journey!

The Corollary

You could have a General Manager who has risen to the Stewardship level of responsibility but does not act accordingly. Due to apathy, burn-out, incompetence or some other reason, the steward is not performing up to that level. With their organization on auto-pilot, good people below may be able to cover and continue to grow the business. In the long run however, this “steward” is a governor restricting the capacity of the organization and must be re-energized, re-engaged or removed!

Stewardship Litmus Test

At whatever level you find yourself (entry level employee or actual business owner), you are expected to be a “steward” for some aspect of the business. Remember that a “steward” is one entrusted with resources and responsibility as if they were the owner. How do you measure up?

Top 10 Stewardship Distinguishables (In random order)

These are characteristics that separate the Top 5% in an organization. Rate Yourself (and those around you)

1. Attitude (Positive and Affirming)
2. Integrity
3. Proactivity
4. Personal Responsibility
5. Job/Position Proficiency (Skill Set)
6. Vision
7. Followership/Team Oriented
8. Communication Skills

9. Leadership/Set The Example

10. Accountability

In every business endeavor there are multiple examples of this “productivity pyramid,” with each level vital and building upon the previous. Every business person has components of the “productivity pyramid” at every level of their “to do” list or planning calendar. No matter how high you rise in an organization, you will always have tasks, projects and responsibility issues that you will have the opportunity to work through. It is crucial to understand that the organization which employs you (especially if that is you!) truly desires that you act as if and make every decision as though you were indeed the owner. The “not my job” attitude stalls many people who never realize the self-sabotage that type of outlook brings. Stewardship is about making it happen regardless of circumstances, roadblocks or even job descriptions.

To elevate yourself in an organization, recognize, learn and master the “productivity pyramid” and your success will be assured. (As an interesting aside and for added motivation: the higher you elevate yourself on this pyramid, the more responsibility you will be given... and the more money you will make!) ■

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