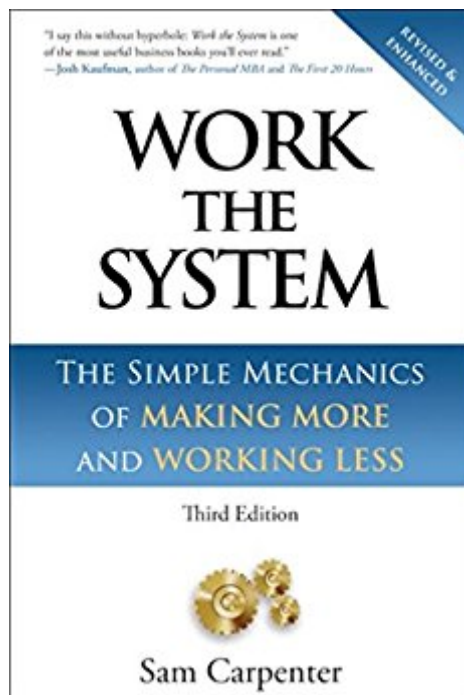


The book was found

Work The System: The Simple Mechanics Of Making More And Working Less (Revised Third Edition, 4th Printing, September 1, 2014)



Synopsis

Work The System aims to convince people to change their fundamental perception of the world around them from a vision of an impenetrable, amorphous conglomeration, to one made up of individual linear systems, each of which can be improved and perfected. The reader is guided through the process of "getting" this new vision, and then through the specifics of applying it. It's simple, believable, and mechanical; not mystical or theoretical. Work the System will show business leaders and professionals how to achieve a positive macro result by looking at their business and work on a micro level - by analyzing and refining each of the systems that are already in place. Readers will learn how to tweak this network of systems to maximize profits, create client loyalty, and develop autonomous employees. The strategies will also help individuals improve their performance and decrease the stress of being overtaxed or disorganized.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I realized early on that the book probably wasn't a good fit for me, but skimmed through the rest to try to get some insights. Here's a quick synopsis and perhaps some takeaways. The author starts

out by talking about how his general views on the universe have shifted from a "we're all one" free-love view to an understanding that the world generally operates in predictable ways. The author worked 100+ hour weeks for an extended period of time, and in a time of desperation realizes that he must systematize his business. This takes sixty pages to develop. Next, he explains the process of how to create principles, vision statement, and working procedures for a company from scratch were well laid out and clear. I liked the fact that the operating rules that he set out are open for revision at any time by any employee, and generally immediately revised. It lent a feeling of continuous improvement to the process that he laid out. He discusses figuring out when you work best and work then on second quadrant items (of the Covey sense.) The author continually cites Occam's Razor, but uses it in a very loose sense. You will hear of "fire-killing" and the "Work The System method" and being "outside and slightly elevated" probably about a hundred times each throughout the book. Very little attention is paid to lifestyle design throughout the book. I thought it might contain a little more based on the jacket summary. One of the irritating things was that the book focused only on one business, the author's business. It is a call center business, one that has a well-established business model and client interaction pattern.

I read the first edition of this book several years ago and just finished the third edition. I don't know what Sam updated but he didn't blow the lid off of his method, like I was hoping he would. It turns out there is a very good reason for why you can't both read AND apply this book - Sam sells his methods as a separate item. I won't quote his prices but let me just say that he's making too much money training people on his method to simply give it away for free. Have no fear - I'll help you out. First, if you read this book you'll probably find yourself agreeing with Sam about a lot of things. He makes good points - we are too busy NOT to systematize, and systematization reduces lead time by reducing both planning and rework (plus mental costs). Sam doesn't actually say this, nor does he detail how he went from working so many hours down to do few. If I had his data leading to this conclusion, I could determine how much work he eliminated, how much he delegated, how much he automated, and how much he processes (and processing methods - cadence, synchronicity, etc). Since I cannot judge the benefits of Sam's system based on Sam's data, I have to use and measure it myself. Fair enough, that's the point anyway, right? So the first thing I did was boil the premise of this book down to one point: processes are better when they are written down and followed than when they aren't. I don't have to agree 100% to agree that it's not a bad place to start. With that out of the way, I was able to move past this book and get to work.¹ I wrote down every process I have to follow in my job. The list was impressively long and extremely overwhelming

just to look at.2. I mapped each process, listing every action in sequence.

I think everybody who's read a few business books has heard about "working ON your business instead of just working IN your business." However Sam Carpenter drives the point home in a way I've not seen done before. Most importantly, he shifted the questions I ask myself. Because of this book, now every time I find myself putting out a fire or reacting to a painful situation... being confronted by an unhappy customer about a ball that's been dropped... I ask, "What broken or non-existent system allowed this to happen?" The most persuasive part of this book is the contrast between Carpenter's frenetic life before vs. the serenity after. And the efficiency. Temperamentally, I'm not the type of person who is going to spend hours and hours perfecting logistical details and documenting things. I am a creative person, a visionary and an alchemist. But it still must be done. What that means for me is that *I* of all people need to craft the core manifestos, the guiding documents that comprise Sam Carpenter's system. Then I can see to it that the more methodical people on my team are in fact working the system. Most business owners don't fully appreciate how many of their employees will, so to speak, mount the toilet paper roll with the front side facing back until the very end of time. Stupidly and unthinkingly. UNLESS AND UNTIL SOMEONE MAKES THEM DO IT RIGHT. Most employees will stumble and bumble through broken systems and it will never, ever occur to them to stop and fix them, let alone create new ones. Only an enlightened owner will ever see to it that that happens. Carpenter does what so few other books had ever done, which was SELL ME on the benefits of giving this my attention.

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