

# Leveraging Your Greatest Asset

## Excerpted from Greg Bustin's new book, *Lead The Way*

As featured in the Sunday, May 4, edition of The Dallas Morning News

Order your copy today at [www.bustin.com](http://www.bustin.com) or go to [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com)

If Memorial Day marks the beginning of summer, it also signals that the year is half over.

Do the math and you'll find that when you toss out holidays and weekends, about 136 business days remain to achieve your 2008 objectives.

What asset already in your possession will help take you where you want to go?

Is it a product or service your customers or clients love? The world is full of stuff that people say they can't live without.

What about the people on your team? Don't leaders regularly say "people are our most important asset"? Perhaps. But it's a truism that nothing is more common than unsuccessful people with talent.

Is your competitive advantage? Have you articulated this succinctly? Does your team know it? Do they believe it? If so, you've got an advantage over your competitors. But what good is an advantage that's not fully implemented?

All of these assets are important.

### Your greatest asset

As a leader, your greatest asset is time. There simply isn't enough of it in your day. And, unlike money or people or products or services, once time flies you can't get it back.

What if you could focus your resources so that both you and your business operate at higher levels of effectiveness? Wouldn't it follow that a more effective business operation should lead to increased profitability?

Everyone's got the same 24 hours in a day. How do the most successful leaders do it?

After 25 years of working with and observing hundreds of senior business leaders, I've concluded that what separates those who are most effective from all the rest is their ability to do one thing exceptionally well.

The most successful leaders win consistently because they have a plan that they work. Assuming the idea of a smoother-running, more profitable company is important to you, you'll first need to commit a chunk of time to prepare your company for its self-improvement initiative. I know – this is time that you don't really have. Too bad. As the leader, you cannot delegate this responsibility.

I've heard leaders boast that they can develop a plan for their company in an hour. They probably can. My experience has been that half of planning is intellectual and the other half is emotional. Without across-the-board buy-in, your plan will go nowhere fast. You can accelerate emotional buy-in, but you can't expect to achieve the kind of ownership you'll need to implement your plan without bringing your decision-makers together and giving them a voice in the plan. That takes time. Becoming a consistent winner rarely happens overnight.

I've also seen companies – big and small – take months to develop a plan. You don't have that kind of time, and it's not necessary anyway.

*Lead The Way* provides you with a step by step path to winning. You may be struck by the speed and simplicity of my process. Don't be fooled. Just because the process is fast and simple doesn't undermine its effectiveness. Rather, its value lies in its simplicity. The entire process is designed specifically to overcome the biggest planning and execution hurdles.

CEOs say, "Give me a fast, simple process my team will believe in and that will produce bottom-line results." The laser-like approach you'll find in this book uses a series of exercises developed from years of watching and working with hundreds of senior leaders who are committed to improving their companies' results.

### Make time work for you

Your business hits a wall shortly after leaders hit their own wall. When does that occur? When you find yourself turning from one fire to the next personally attending to every significant opportunity or crisis. Why does this happen? Because the guiding direction of a well-thought-out plan to address these issues without your personal involvement is absent. In effect, you force your company to wait until you or the leadership team can create a mini-plan for each issue as the issue arises. You are managing by exception rather than by objective. The ability of your company to grow and flourish becomes directly proportional to the amount of work you can personally oversee. Bam. You and your business have just hit a wall. You're out of time, and your company's growth is stunted.

There are three phases to increasing your effectiveness, and over the course of a year they will require a commitment of 73 hours of your time. That's not much time, but then you don't have much. Don't worry. Invested wisely, it's plenty.

In the book, I discuss the three phases and show how your investment of 73 hours over a 12-month period can be used to increase your effectiveness and the effectiveness of those around you.

*Lesson: Everyone has the same hours in the day. How you invest yours makes all the difference.*

### Take action

Ask and answer these three questions to improve your performance:

1. Am I willing to invest 73 hours a year to improve our effectiveness?
2. What single initiative will give us the greatest return on our investment in the the next six months?
3. What step am I willing to take today to begin implementing that initiative?

There's still time to leverage your greatest asset to finish 2008 strong. ■