

LESS IS MORE

How Great Companies Use Productivity as a Competitive Tool in Business

JASON JENNINGS

JASON JENNINGS is a consultant and keynote speaker. He is the coauthor of *It's Not the Big That Eat the Small . . . It's the Fast That Eat the Slow*. Mr. Jennings began his career as a broadcast journalist, was the world's youngest radio station group owner and the founder of USA's largest media consulting company.

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MAIN IDEA

Everyone in business wants to be more productive – to achieve more with less. So why is it some companies actually achieve that and become “highly productive” while others seem to go around in circles trying to achieve the same goal?

“As I crisscrossed the United States and traveled the world identifying a group of the world’s most productive companies, hanging out with the customers, workers, managers and leaders of companies where ‘Less is More’, a single indisputable fact kept confronting me: Unlike other companies, productive companies know the difference between tactics and strategy. That difference is the foundation that allows them to stay focused and build remarkable companies. They have institutionalized their strategy.”

– Jason Jennings

More than anything else, productive companies work hard to keep everything clear and simple. Frequently, there is a tendency in business to inadvertently seek complication, or to try some management theory which is currently in vogue and attracting loads of attention. As a result, the average company bounces from one new idea to another without ever really getting down to the real work of getting the job done better. Highly productive companies avoid that by focusing everyone’s attention on the job at hand.

In all, what highly productive companies do differently can be summarized in twelve basic rules. These rules buck conventional wisdom. They also require single-mindedness and dedication before they can be embraced, but those companies which do apply them will begin an exciting journey into greater productivity.

“As I came to the end of my in-depth interviews with the CEOs, I was struck by the fact that each shared this in common: the ownership of and fierce loyalty to a very simple big objective. The big objective was the strategy and it became the culture; everything else was tactics on how to achieve it. While having everyone in a company share this simple, big objective might seem to be simply common sense, as the age-old maxim goes, the most common thing about common sense is how uncommon it is.”

– Jason Jennings

12 Rules for Doing More With Less

Rule #1	Keep things simple. In highly productive companies, the culture of the company is the strategy. Everything gets organized around one BIG objective, which everyone understands and aims for.	Page 2
Rule #2	Build an open culture, not a business model. The best companies are authentic and genuine as they are built on a foundation of truth, not hype.	Page 3
Rule #3	Have managers that believe and practice what they preach. If managers can’t do what they are suggesting their staff should do, it’s better to get rid of them.	Page 3
Rule #4	Always ask one key question – “What’s the good business reason for doing this?” If you do that for every decision, you’ll find you’ll avoid many of the mistakes others make.	Page 4
Rule #5	Get rid of any special perks for executives. They’re paid enough to afford whatever they want, so eliminate all class distinctions.	Page 4
Rule #6	Never use lay-offs to cover bad management decisions. Enter into an agreement with staff this will never happen and you’ll earn their cooperation.	Page 5
Rule #7	Teach everyone the real financial drivers of the business. That way they make a connection between what they do and what the firm earns.	Page 5
Rule #8	Put everyone on a team, and pay teams for what they achieve. This will encourage people to work together rather than competing needlessly against each other.	Page 6
Rule #9	Systematize everything – and constantly look for ways to improve each system. By constantly asking people to avoid waste and achieve more, the organization will move forward.	Page 6
Rule #10	Implement new processes quickly. Perform them over and over, looking for ways to optimize each.	Page 7
Rule #11	Have fun – by being competitive and keeping score. Not only does that create a bit of atmosphere it’s also genuinely productive.	Page 7
Rule #12	Embrace new technology – but realize your competitors will do likewise. Therefore, never count on technology alone to deliver you a sustainable competitive advantage.	Page 8

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