**Steal, Cheat, and Delegate**

**How to get ahead in business!**

College Taking a class in college has several common features that are independent of college and subject matter. There are bookd and classes; the instructor has an agenda and only asks questions that have a known answer. Sometimes creativity can count, but not usually. There are examinations. These are usually limited in time and Internet access is not allowed. Asking your neighbor for the help, or looking over at the answers on another paper is considered cheating. The student is expected to do all their own work. Sometimes, a group of students work together to the detriment of the best student in the group. The class usually ends with a final exam and a grade. I wonder how much work would be done in the class if the professor guaranteed an “A” to all participants. I think they would try, but the pressures of other classes to get the grade would supersede good intentions. In my interview process for college graduates, I asked if they had taken Calculus or Chemistry. The answer was generally yes. Their knowledge of the subject was generally non-existent. Even basic questions could not be answered (or worse, the wrong answer).

The Almighty GPA For those that have forgotten, that is Grade Point Average. Students generally study long and hard to get the best possible GPA. The best ones might get the student into graduate school, but professor recommendations are more important. The first job applications from school may ask for it, but it is generally ignored in favor of experience. After the first job, the GPS becomes totally irrelevant. Why do students work so hard for the grade instead of working hard to improve their skills and interests? Extra-curricular activity is valuable as is meeting new friends.

Steal So now you are on the job, usually because somebody has recommended you. The job assignment comes your way, and you do not remember a thing that you learned. Don’t worry, college education will not solve the problem, but knowing the language of the subject and looking it up on the Internet is certainly a good first place to start. The odds are that someone else has seen that problem and has published a detailed solution on the Internet. They also might have a more sophisticated method of solving the problem or suggest alternate more efficient approaches. Many times I have found the type of solution where you type the numbers in boxes, and back comes the answer. Life is an open Internet exam, you are free to explore anywhere. Exploration skills are key.

Cheat The assignment is difficult, you do not know the subject very well, and the Internet was not helpful or led down too many unfruitful paths. However, you are working with a group of people (or have friends) and somebody in that group is a complete whiz on that subject matter. Why waste your time, when you can ask that person for help on the subject. If you choose wisely, that person will either tell you the answer immediately or direct you to the location where the solution can be found. If the problem is really hard, the person may tell you about someone who will gladly help you with a solution and even have fun doing it. Knowing who to get information from is a valuable skill.

Delegate So the steal failed; the cheat did not work; then, refuse the assignment. Get someone else to get it done or tell the manager to find someone else. This is like being in school and telling your professor that you refuse to accept the assignment or exam. Does that thought horrify you? You have been mis-trained. That is exactly the route to success. Do not get caught up in a project where you can not get it done and done well! A proper assignment history allows upward mobility.

Succeed Successful managers delegate everything! There is always someone better out there to help solve any problem. If you can not find the right person, hire someone or some company who can. The valued management skill here is to get the right people at the right price. Of course, the company structure must allow successful people to do this. Frequently, government agencies are structured in such a way that bringing expertise into the situation is so difficult and time-consuming that the need has passed and an inferior product remains present for a really long time. A profit-making organization tends to be more efficient and make better use of resources.