



Management & Leadership Guide

In 2014, a short-course on Company Management was offered at Harlow University via the Institute of Leadership & Management initiative. Course leaders: Maria Ruskell and Chris Matthews. One outcome is this treatise on Management and Leadership which now forms part of Bedazzle's comprehensive set of policies and schedules covering all aspects of its business from Complaints Procedure to Student Pastoral Care.

Welcome to SMARTYPANTS

You may be familiar with the acronym 'smart' in the context of the day-to-day running of a typical business, it's a useful briefing tool for specific projects and tasks:

- S* Specific
- M* Measurable
- A* Attainable
- R* Relevant
- T* Timed

So now let's have a look at some common negative aspects of a typical business:

- Y* Why? ...Because I say so!
- P* Political
- A* Antagonistic
- N* Not my fault
- T* Terminal
- S* Start over (back to SMART)

The 'smart' model is sometimes extended as 'smarter': Evaluate and Re-evaluate, I've simplified this to 's': Start over. OK, let's have a closer look.

Specific

For every endeavour Bedazzle undertakes, the 'smart' approach begins by specifying the project. Tasks (let's call them 'projects' from now on) must be clear and unambiguous. (*"...the moment you focus on a goal, it becomes a magnet, pulling your resources towards it. The more focused your energies, the more 'magnetic' power you generate."* – Ryan Blair). A specific project will usually answer the five "w" questions: What do I want to accomplish? Why are we undertaking it and is it necessary? Who is going to benefit from the project, ('stakeholders', ie: students, teachers, parents, creditors)? Where is the project's location? Which services/suppliers do I need to use?

Key points:

- Place 'stakeholders' in order of priority (it varies, usually students are at the top)
- What, Why, Who, Where, When
- Issue clear briefs
- Issue clear Purchase Orders where money is involved
- Spend budgets wisely
- Systematic approach, don't get too distracted by outside factors.

Measurable

At all stages (not just at project end), measure the project's successes and failures. Numbers are an essential part of business. Put concrete numbers in your goals to know if you're on track and ensure everyone involved knows the time/cost/quality at all times. A common failing is over-enthusiasm resulting in cost/time factors being over-looked. A measurable project will usually answer questions such as: How long? How much? How well?

Key points:

- Keep accurate, dated, records of all stages of a project
- Get feedback and act on it
- Debrief with all personnel involved in delivery of a project
- Itemise areas of concern for next time
- Has the project been memorable or even, magical?
- Has the project motivated you to push yourself further?

Attainable

Right job for the right person, matching people to jobs, matching suppliers and contractors to the project. Far too often, projects can set goals beyond reach. By all means dream big and aim for the stars (in fact Bedazzle encourages it) but keep one foot firmly based in reality. This third criterion stresses the importance of projects that are realistic. You develop the attitudes, abilities, skills and financial capacity to fulfil your projects. Make use of previous experiences and re-visit ideas, skilled staff and suppliers that you 'parked', they may come in useful in overcoming mental blocks. Between them, Diane and Phil have experienced an enormous amount of varied management problems. Seek their advice!

Key points:

- Match right people to right task
- Be smart with your time
- Agree project key delivery points with colleagues
- Be prompt when responding to calls and emails, don't put-off tasks
- Share learning with colleagues, it empowers everyone
- Always have the 'bigger picture' in mind.

Relevant

Projects need to be challenging, yet attainable within a time-frame. You may desire to have your best year in business or increase revenue by 50%, but if a recession is looming and three new competitors opened in your market, then your goals aren't relevant to the realities of the market. This fourth criterion stresses the importance of choosing projects that matter. A bank manager's goal to "Make fifty ham sandwiches by 2:00pm" may be specific, measurable, attainable, and time-bound but lacks relevance. You will need support, resources and someone to help overcome obstacles or to boost your confidence. A relevant project can answer yes to these:

Key points:

- Is it worthwhile?
- Is this the right time?
- Does it match Bedazzle's ethos? (Our students are at the forefront of all we do)
- Are you the right person to deliver or should you delegate?
- Is it applicable in the current market?
- Will it be a rewarding experience?

Timed

Realistic Time/Budget/Quality; can you minimise one of the three factors in this classic business triangle? The consensus of opinion is that in almost every case one of the three factors has to be sacrificed in whole or in part in order to reach a conclusion; so you need to prioritise. Experience with our own Bedazzle projects has almost always prioritised quality over budget; for example, some of our after-school courses have had to be offered at lower cost to maintain attendance, on the other hand, 'Pop School' workshops have exceeded our expectations in all three factors – so it can be done! Always, always, always allow

more time than you first thought! This fifth criterion stresses the importance of grounding projects within a time-frame. A commitment to a deadline helps team focus. This part of the SMART criteria is intended to prevent goals from being overtaken by the day-to-day crises that invariably arise in any business, so remember to build-in a contingency plan that will cope with unforeseen issues. (Perversely, I like to call this ‘mop & bucket’ contingency ...if you have a stage show full of children, sure as eggs is eggs, someone will throw-up! If you don’t have a mop & bucket at the ready, this can severely cut into your time and staff resources ...oh, and by the way, build-in flexible snack breaks to counter unplanned interruptions). A time-bound project needs to be broken-down into sizeable parts to avoid being swamped. Keep an accurate diary and plan of action. You’ll note some useful internet links as well as book references at the end of this document; have a look at a variety of time-line graphs (sometimes referred-to as Gantt charts) – even the simplest project would benefit from planning a time-line for delivery.

Key points:

- Never underestimate time-consuming details
- Nearly all Bedazzle projects are time-critical – avoid over-running
- Be prepared to be flexible and re-schedule without penalties
- Think ahead at all times
- Stay even-tempered – a fraught frame of mind will consume you!
- Don’t underestimate fresh air and diet – it really does affect your performance.

Y – Why?

Because I say so! (I know it’s a bit tenuous, but there is a serious point). How many times in your working life have you come across an over-bearing manager who – knowing full well he/she has made a poor decision and passed-on the problem for you to sort-out?

This is a typical bad management trait. When someone is given some authority, it can engender some negative as well as positive outcomes. Often, it can bring-out a tendency to ‘dictate’ to other members of staff resulting in resentment (on both sides) which can be difficult to resolve.

History is awash with many extreme examples – typically in ‘empire-building’ scenarios and you’ll see it from the Israelite tribes of the Old Testament through to the constant shifting of power in Europe (2014 – the Crimean referendum). You may have heard of the ‘Peter Principle’. Named after Laurence J. Peter who co-authored the 1969 humorous book *‘The Peter Principle: Why Things Always Go Wrong’*. It’s essentially about promoting individuals beyond their capabilities and in almost every case the ‘boss’ has the final say “Do it my way because I say so, or you’re fired”! It has formed the basis of many TV sitcoms, perhaps best personified in David Brent, created and played by Ricky Gervais in BBC’s ‘The Office’. If you haven’t seen it, it’s worth checking it out as it accurately (and hilariously) portrays a typical office where David Brent is an incompetent, bumbling, ill-educated senior manager in a paper supplier company. It’s not just him who miss-judges situations, his second-in-command Gareth (played by Mackenzie Crook), is perhaps even worse at delegating – no one pays attention to him except to constantly ‘wind him up’ such as setting his stapler in jelly!

Key points:

- Learn to delegate, be honest about your own strengths and weaknesses
- Stay respectful even when someone else doesn’t
- Never be afraid to speak-out if you consider your boss is wrong
- If you lose your temper – go home! Come back when you’re settled
- Be open when you make errors, never try and cover them up
- Phil’s law: “I only employ those who are better at their jobs than I am”.

Political

This leads nicely into politics. Staff shenanigans to discredit others in an attempt to climb the ‘ladder’ is so common, it’s a wonder any business survives – so much so that you may ask if this behaviour is a necessary part of working life. It tends to be more common in large companies but it does happen in small ones too – even ours, thankfully not often and

even then it's a small issue, easily resolved. This may have more to do with the fact that all Bedazzle staff is freelance – therefore have less of a 'company' agenda.

Politics is a factor we need to be mindful of in other companies though. For example, we have witnessed more than once how other similar companies to ours see us as rivals and this has led to problems when sharing venues. Bedazzle's view is simple – there are many clubs, groups, courses, dance & stage schools plying for trade. Students of all ages have a free choice where to spend their free time just as their parents are free to choose where to spend their money. The fact that there are so many suggests the need is there; so celebrate the fact that performing arts is so popular – don't be tempted to criticise our competitors, it's unnecessary and pointless, conversely, don't gloat when students migrate to Bedazzle (which they invariably do ...oops! I nearly gloated there)!

Here's an example of how politics from an external source can impact on us. Diane and I offer personal tuition to SEN students as part of their 'Individual Curriculum' packages. We work in college environments and there's one in particular where there's some internal upheaval going-on; as part of their appraisal process, we have been asked to provide an account of a member of the college staff. This could potentially be tricky as this particular individual is seconded to us and is under-performing but we have a duty to be honest about the situation. Naturally, this could lead to some animosity and possible back-lash where it could impact on the viability of Diane and I continuing without college staff support.

So how did we deal with it? Well, reminding ourselves that our students are at the forefront of all our decisions, we sought feedback from the student's parents and support workers (in this case, the 18-year old student, with a mental age of 2 can only express his 'feedback' through the obvious enjoyment and progress made during Bedazzle sessions). We also asked for their feedback on us. The report we submitted therefore appeared impartial (but corroborated our own observations) and independent of our own views.

If you find yourself in such a position, remember to keep your personal feelings out of it, issue your report based entirely on facts.

Key points:

- Maintain friendship within Bedazzle – we are a 'people' service
- Share your personal problems if they begin to affect your work
- Don't get sucked-in to others' arguments by taking sides
- Understand others' agendas, can you help them achieve?
- Be ambitious without trampling-over others' aspirations
- Courtesy opens doors more than any other personal trait.

Antagonistic

Bullying, back-stabbing, gossip, 'Chinese whispers' dealing with difficult students, over-bearing parents, poor suppliers, bad debtors, staff in-fighting... all part of the rich tapestry of day-to-day business! Remember always that our students are at the forefront of our business. Their well-being is paramount and Bedazzle has a number of documents to guide you through most of these issues. (Listed at the end of this document and available in the staff area of our website). You're advised to re-read these documents from time to time, particularly our Safeguarding Students Policy which includes detailed instructions on how to deal with abuse of all kinds, along with pro-forma Incident Reports and Risk Assessment Procedures (venues as well as individual projects and shows).

Bad payers: Fortunately not a huge problem, but we have had a few instances of consistent bad payers. As much as you consider this annoying, dishonest, selfish and damn rude! Bear in mind that constant badgering for payment rarely leads to a positive outcome. Remember we're always able to help in some way, either by offering easier stage payments or in some circumstance applying for one of our Bedazzle Projects' bursaries. How to go about minimising the problem of late payers is covered by a step-by-step guide in Bedazzle's Operations Manual,

The Bedazzle Key Information Form (which all students' parent/guardians need to complete), serves as our contract, you'll note that it commits the signatory to at least one full term's fees. Although payable at term start, naturally you can allow a few weeks grace, however, our policy now is that students are asked to leave if payment is not made by half-

term. We haven't had to put this policy into action to date.

If you are really intent on pursuing bad debts, go to HM Courts, Small Claims Procedure < <https://www.gov.uk/make-court-claim-for-money/> > for a full guide. Our experience shows this is not worthwhile unless the debt is over £1,000; even then you'll be lucky to recover half.

Key points:

- Don't get along with someone? Work on it, you know what to do
- If you don't know what to do, ask
- Be wary of gossip, it builds-up uncontrollably like a snowball down a hill
- Emails: Never press 'send' when you're in a bad mood
- Say 'sorry' a lot – have you ever counted your daily mistakes? It'll surprise you!
- Maintain an even tone when chasing bad payers, avoid 'badgering'
- Aggression closes doors, be confident and assertive without being aggressive.

Not my fault

Hiding your own mistakes or blaming others. Who doesn't make mistakes? All too often, and you'll find this with suppliers from time to time, you will be offered lame excuses for non-delivery. Our policy is that it's not the number of mistakes that one might make, it's how they are rectified that matters.

As an example of how bad it can go, we hired the prestigious Shaftesbury Theatre in London's West-End for an annual show. It was an ambitious step for what was then our fledgling company (the hire charge was over £12,000 for the night). It was a disaster! Transport, technical sound & lighting, stage management, front-of-house, chaperoning ... worst of all, we had to cut performance numbers.

The key factor was that not one supplier accepted responsibility, the blame was always the other guy! Naturally Diane and I took full-responsibility. But we've learned from it and now we ensure that key tasks are noted, clear briefs and purchase orders issued and key emails saved – particularly those concerning money!

Key points:

- Accept that we all make errors, be open about it.
- Don't hide mistakes, they will re-surface and you will end-up lying!
- Taken-on too much? Act swiftly and discuss the issues so they can be sorted-out
- See others in trouble? Offer your support, don't be confrontational
- Prepare to be flexible at all times, we all have to clean toilets sometimes
- Problems by their very nature are unpredictable, no-one sets-out to create them.

Terminal

The example above will forever serve as a lesson to Diane and myself. It was 17th December and Bedazzle was just two-years old and on a 'high', we had exceeded our targets for the company and we had over twenty stage schools and over 160 students, we had also set a firm course for setting-up Associate Partnerships (...never say franchise!) as well as beginning to establish our charity arm.

As a result of the performance and chaperoning fiasco, we spent the Christmas break re-inventing the company. We brought-forward some of our long-term plans: opened '4th Wall Theatre' for aged 14-plus (who had out-grown the Saturday Theatre course), we introduced LAMDA exam options to entice students to stay with us, we instigated thorough Pastoral Care policies and took-on a dedicated Pastoral Care Manager. We committed Bedazzle to new opportunities in the Special Educational Needs area. All these factors combined to strengthen Bedazzle and it was back on track within a few months.

Key points:

- Choose your team wisely
- Always, always have a plan B
- At key events, be extra-methodical and keep referring to your checklist
- Power-cut? Do it in candle-light (that's a metaphor for 'adapt')
- Don't dismiss errors, 'dis-assemble' them and learn
- Too late? Have you lost this one, then...

...Start over

Re-visit 'smart' and see how you can learn from the experience to minimise future problems. The 'smart' acronym itself is also subject to scrutiny – you might find it useful to create a specific set of attributes that fit your working style.

Key points:

- Maintain the Bedazzle ethos, our mission to students and staff is to:
Increase Confidence
Inspire Creativity
Improve Communication Skills
- Make time to maintain and read the Bedazzle 'Passport' documents (listed below)
- Never underestimate the Pastoral Care of our students
- Stay on top of the management and accounts of your work
- Be time-smart, don't waste it on tasks others could do better
- Take care of the details and the main project will take care of itself.

Apply 'smartypants' principles to see where improvements can be made. Very little in business remains static. We are in constant development and as individuals we need to remain flexible and dynamic, share learning and above all – keep communicating. Open, Undeterred, Together; (but that's 'out-smart' of course!)

References:

Darrell Zahorsky – (2001) 'The 5 Steps to Setting Smart Business Goals'
George T. Doran – (1981) 'There's a s.m.a.r.t. way to write management's goals and objectives'
Larry Richman (2011). 'Improving Your Project Management Skills' ISBN 0814417299
Frey, Bruno S. Frey (2002) – 'Successful Management by Motivation' ISBN 3540424016
John Lawler, Andy Bilson (2013) 'Social Work Management and Leadership: Managing Complexity with Creativity' ISBN 1135247056
Graham Yemm (2013) 'Essential Guide to Leading Your Team' ISBN 0273772449
Albert Humphrey (2005) 'SWOT Analysis for Management'
Albert Humphrey (2012) 'The father of t.a.m'

Useful internet links:

ILM: <i-l-m.com>
Smart: <sbinformation.about.com>
Tam, leadership tool: <tamplc.com>
Swot, humphrey: <sri.com>

Key 'search' phrases:

smart, business model
gear diagram
swot analysis
timeline diagram
Gantt analysis
Bedazzle passport documents' titles (below) also serve as useful search 'key phrases'.

Bedazzle 'Passport' documents:

Please refer to the documents and, if you are a Bedazzle course leader, remember to keep your folder with you at all your courses and events along with DBS and insurance documents.

- Complaints Procedure
- Confidentiality and Data Protection Policy
- Public & Employers Insurance
- Environment Policy
- Equality & Ethnic Awareness Policy
- Feedback Documents and Archive
- Health & Safety
- Operations Manual
- Recruitment & Succession Planning
- Risk Assessment (Staff & Workplaces)
- Risk Assessment (Student & Venues)
- Safeguarding Students
- Uncollected Students Procedure
- Database & Student Information (Bedazzle access only)