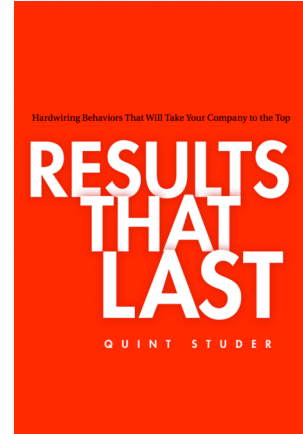


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**The Accidental Saboteur:****Three Small Sins That Undermine Your Company in a Big Way**

Quint Studer, author of the new book Results That Last, says even the best leaders and employees fall prey to a few common mistakes—and the damage can be devastating.

Hoboken, NJ (October 2007)—Whether you’re a leader or an employee, you want your company to succeed, right? *Of course* you do. After all, your paycheck depends on it. But according to Quint Studer, the vast majority of companies—even vibrant organizations that operate with little noticeable dysfunction—are filled with saboteurs. That’s right. Employees at every level do small, seemingly insignificant things to sabotage their own success.

“Even the best leaders and the most dedicated, hardworking employees do these things,” says Studer, author of the new book *Results That Last: Hardwiring Behaviors That Will Take Your Company to the Top* (Wiley, October 2007, ISBN-13: 978-0-471-75729-0, \$24.95). “They may not seem like major sins, but their cumulative effect can be very destructive. One chocolate here and there may not blow your diet, but when you grab a handful every time you walk by the candy dish on your way to the water cooler or the restroom, well, the bill will eventually come due.”

Studer identifies three common sins committed by accidental saboteurs:

1. **Relentless negativity.** The next time you’re having lunch in a restaurant, listen in on the conversations at nearby tables. Chances are, you’ll hear people griping about their workloads, difficult clients, annoying coworkers, or the ridiculousness of corporate policy. Everyone does it, but if they realized how harmful it is to their company, perhaps they’d think twice. The solution, says Studer, is to hone the fine art of *managing up*.

“Managing up means positioning your people, products, or company in a positive light,” says Studer, who teaches clients how to hardwire the technique into their corporate leadership practices. “Managing up doesn’t just happen; you have to *make* it happen in a systematic way. Help employees understand what can happen when negativity is allowed to breed—good people quit and customers leave—and they’ll be more likely to stop doing it.”

- 2. Creeping we/theyism.** Studer says most leaders inadvertently foster what he calls the “we/they” phenomenon—as in, “Well, Rick, I fought for your pay raise but you know Human Resources makes those decisions”—which has a divisive effect on company culture. This is rarely a deliberate choice but rather the natural fallback position of someone who hasn’t had formal leadership training. (After all, you don’t want Rick to be mad at *you*, right?) Problem is, you’re sabotaging your own culture.

“Instead of blaming HR in the above example, a leader might say, ‘When I talked to Denise over in HR, she pointed out that health insurance premiums have risen 23 percent over the past year so pay increases must be postponed,’” says Studer. “‘The company is working really hard to maintain the best possible coverage for all of us.’ See the difference? You’re managing up HR and, simultaneously, you’re positioning the company as a united entity.”

- 3. Giving low performers a pass.** Let’s say your employee Carol consistently comes in late, gets “headaches” every other (non-payday) Friday, and spends more time cheerily chatting up coworkers than she does working. Others *will* notice—and they *will* be resentful. But worse than merely causing contention in the ranks, turning a blind eye to the “Carols” in your organization squelches profitability. Why? Because middle performers get pulled down to the low performer level, while high performers either a) disengage or b) leave.

“This is a sin of omission, not commission,” says Studer, whose remedy involves implementing a structured series of high-middle-low performer conversations. “It’s easier *not* to confront low performers, and trust me, a leader can find a thousand other things to do instead. But until you move them either up or out, your company will never advance beyond short-term gains. The low performer is an anchor holding everyone else back.”

Recognize anyone you know in these examples? Heck, recognize *yourself*? Don’t despair, says Studer. Work on stopping (or at least minimizing) these three sins inside your company and you’ll be amazed at the improvement you’ll see.

“It’s not easy to change these acts of subtle sabotage because they are natural to some extent,” he reflects. “After all, it’s human to want to vent your frustration. It’s human to avoid conflict. That’s why these three sins are so prevalent in the business world. But change *is* possible. And the results feel so good that you’re motivated to keep working toward excellence. And it’s that ongoing will to improve—combined with the right hardwired behaviors—that creates a high-performance organization.”

About the Author:

Quint Studer not only teaches it, he has done it. After leading organizations to breakthrough results, Quint formed the Studer Group[®], an outcomes firm that implements evidence-based leadership systems that help clients attain and sustain outstanding results. He was named one of the “Top 100 Most Powerful People in Healthcare” by *Modern Healthcare* magazine for his work on institutional healthcare improvement. Studer was named “Master of Business” by *Inc.* magazine. He is the author of *Hardwiring Excellence: Purpose, Worthwhile Work, Making a Difference*, *101 Answers to Questions Leaders Ask*, and *Results That Last: Hardwiring Behaviors That Will Take Your Company to the Top*. For more information, visit www.studergroup.com.

About the Book:

Results That Last: Hardwiring Behaviors That Will Take Your Company to the Top (Wiley, October 2007, ISBN-13: 978-0-471-75729-0, \$24.95) is available at bookstores nationwide, major online booksellers, or directly from the publisher by calling 800-225-5945. In Canada, call 800-567-4797. Copies also can be purchased online through the Studer Group website at www.studergroup.com.

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