



HUSTLE FOR A LIVING

By Scott Charlton

At a recent coaching meeting I was facilitating, the group experienced a breakthrough moment. It seemed the light came on for participants, illuminating a previously gloomy area in their businesses. This area is a murky world where WIP days blow out, deadlines are missed and a siege mentality often sets in.

The source of this beacon? Let me introduce you to the 'Hustle Factor'.

This hustle is instrumental in creating a tangible 'Zing' in your office. It is all part of a culture where there is an eagerness to take work on board, do it really well, get it finished (under budget!) and deliver a great outcome for the client. It also leads to everyone taking a keen interest in the team targets, making a contribution to meeting the goals set and celebrating results achieved.

Let us look at some examples where hustle makes a world of difference to your outcomes:

- Ensuring every week counts. After all, if you meet (or exceed) your target for each of 52 weeks, then your annual target has taken care of itself
- Ensuring progress is on track as a big project is coming due
- In the lead up to Christmas - the team commits to getting all open jobs completed and out the door before the office closes for the holidays
- Doing what it takes to get information from clients so jobs are completed on time
- Team members working back to ensure that a proposal gets to a prospective client when it was promised
- Following up invoices the moment they're past the due date

In some firms, you simply have to walk through the front door and you can feel this energy. So, where does the hustle come from?

It **starts** with leadership, setting the standards by which the firm will be run, but it **happens** with a designated champion - someone whose role it is to ensure that **things get done**.

So, who should be the 'Chief Hustler' in your firm? Well, let us start by identifying who it will not be, Partners, Directors, Principals. The members of this esteemed group within your firm are notoriously unreliable when it comes to hustle. One reason is that they are too often tied up in meetings to keep tabs on what is happening in the engine room. Also, Partners are frequently most in need of hustle themselves. If you do not believe this, consider the following - not passing on client information, incomplete memos from meetings, sitting on files to be reviewed, making exceptions of overdue debtors to be followed up. Undoubtedly you can think of other examples, but you get the idea.

However, the main reason is that invariably firms have a team member who is better suited to this role. It might be the Business Manager or a senior member of the team. In fact, the choice of 'Chief Hustler' in your firm may be self-evident.

One of the first things that this person should do is to incorporate hustle into your regular routines:

At the start of the week, ensure that the team not only know the target revenue, but have a list of client assignments that is needed to be completed to reach it.

Each team member must know what projects they are responsible for in order to meet the weekly goal.

Nearing the end of each week, team members must be consulted, encouraged, reminded, assisted, flattered - whatever it takes - to get these jobs completed.

Also look at adopting stand up meetings – for example your weekly team WIP meeting should not be a drawn-out affair. Cut to the chase and then get back to work. There are deadlines to meet and targets to reach!

How to create 'extra hustle':

- Wrap a juicy team bonus around making the target for the month and remind the team regularly.
- Have the team set performance standards for work turnaround and quality.
- Set times during the week for Partners to (a) answer team member queries and (b) get files reviewed.
- Track the progress to target each day – a graph on a prominent whiteboard works well.

So, there you have it, enough to get started with **'Project Zing'**! The implications of implementing this in your firm will be profound.

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