

## Increasing Productivity in 2012

### History

Over the last 20 years, Franklin Covey has educated over 25 million people in the area of human productivity. In today's fast paced, technology driven world we are asserting that extraordinary productivity is no longer defined by *time management* alone, but also by *decision management*, *attention management* and *energy management*.

With 2011 coming to a close and 2012 on the near horizon, many leaders will be thinking about increasing their team's productivity in the coming year. We recently launched a new program, [The 5 Choices to Extraordinary Productivity](#) that answers the 21<sup>st</sup> century productivity problems that are plaguing many organizations. This week we will explore this content by interviewing 3 of my colleagues that are Client Partners for Texas and Oklahoma: Matt Jarmon, Will Smith and Kellie Edmundson.

### Interview

**John - Q:** I know the three of you meet with leaders regularly to discuss their needs for improving team performance. When it comes to individual productivity, are there some common themes or challenges that you see that are affecting individual performance?

**Will - A:** I constantly hear frustration from leaders around three key areas: 1) there is a lack of focus and clarity between important and non-important work, 2) there is a belief that busyness equates to productivity, which is absolutely not true, and 3) people are being asked to do more with less without having a framework as to how this can be achieved and what the 'more' is that needs to be achieved. Many unintentionally believe that 'more' means to become 'more reactive' instead of 'more productive'.

**Kellie - A:** The common theme that most people express is a feeling of being "overwhelmed" with the amount of work that they are asked to complete. They say that they don't feel they give their best because of tight deadlines and too many interruptions.

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**John - Q:** As the three of you know, FranklinCovey has been the market leader in Productivity training for many, many years. Why would we change the formula now with The 5 Choices?

**Matt - A:** Great question! It's no secret that the world around us has changed. Our attention is under attack like never before. When's the last time you heard your smartphone "ding" and immediately jumped to see what the message was in regards to? Not passing judgment on anyone, as I've found myself doing this in the middle of the night at times! We simply have more coming at us than ever before, and we have to evolve to make sure that we're not losing sight of what's truly most important.

**Will - A:** The universal principles of productivity are constant yet their application has evolved as the workplace has evolved. Technology has created an environment where access to information is at our fingertips; this same environment enables work and personal life (and their supporting roles) to be melded if we are not careful. The world of the 'knowledge worker' has evolved and is evolving at a dramatic pace; our approach to productivity, its definition and achievement, has also had to evolve.

**Kellie - A:** For the same reason that Apple comes out with new versions of their technology; times are quickly changing and so is our culture. We know that we have to stay current with the needs of the market and the vast amount of information that comes our way every day.

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**John - Q:** So, let's explore the basic principles for each of the 5 Choices. Choice 1: *Act on the Important; Don't React to the Urgent*. Many people know FranklinCovey's work around "The Time Matrix." Can you explain how organizations use this to help build a common language?

**Matt - A:** In my opinion, this is what makes The 5 Choices powerful and truly transformational. When you empower a team with the skillset from The 5 Choices, and then have frank discussions around what Q3 activities or tasks can be minimized, this allows for more time spent in Q2, where truly strategic activities, both in work and life are done. It's interesting to talk with clients about what the financial gain could potentially be when this is accomplished. The answers are always staggering!

**Will - A:** A common language has to be built around a common framework and the Choice 1 and the Time Matrix present a universal framework that can be applied and 'spoken'. Understand what a Q2 Culture is and how it can be achieved enables leaders and their teams to effectively navigate their days and shift through the activities that are important and those that are not. This evolved approach also tools the team members with a way to have a Q2 conversation with their boss or others they support.

**Kellie - A:** We can't get away from the vast amount of emails that come our way every day, so having a "common language" helps people rank their priorities in their day. For example, if one's boss sends out an email, one might feel it is urgent and important to respond to it immediately but if the boss doesn't mean for it to be urgent and important, it would help to know that it is not a Q1 (urgent/important) and it can be done when time allows. That is one good example of how having a common language helps organizations be more productive when it comes to the Time Matrix.

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**John - Q:** Choice 2: *Go for the Extraordinary; Don't Settle for Ordinary*. Another thing that is unique to our training is that we apply our principles to the "roles" that each of us have in our lives. Can someone elaborate on this concept a bit?

**Will - A:** Roles are how we are "self-identified". When you think of it, when you meet people the first thing you exchange are your "roles". I'm a Director, I'm a mother, etc. Understanding the power of roles and the "current state" of your "role performance" allows you to think about how to create a

better work/life balance and what it will take to be extraordinary in the roles that are most important to you.

**Kellie - A:** We make decisions about our time based on the roles we play in life. When we know our roles which is where our values are embedded they serve as the “guiding light” each week to make sure we are achieving the most important things in those roles.

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**John - Q:** Choice 3: *Schedule the Big Rocks; Don't Sort Gravel*. The “Big Rocks Video” is probably one of the most famous training videos from FranklinCovey. I have seen the new version used in The 5 Choices and love it. Please explain the principle behind this concept.

**Matt - A:** When you allow all of the urgent, but ultimately unimportant tasks to fill your days and weeks, it becomes IMPOSSIBLE to make time for truly important and ultimately more impactful activities. These urgent yet unimportant tasks tend to fill our calendar for two reasons: either we allow them to (and trust me they will!) or we CHOOSE to because it feels good on a psychological level to feel as if we've accomplished something. By making the choice to first schedule the “big rocks” and then filling in the remainder of these Q2 & Q1 tasks, we transform how we operate and ultimately achieve far greater results.

**Will - A:** This is a powerful choice of attention. Deciding what we will focus on and effectively planning is critical in developing a cadence of productive behaviors. Identifying our Big Rocks and planning for them is essential to ensure our most important action items are achieved daily, weekly, monthly, etc. Big Rocks are also repellant to the reactive gravel that we often encounter every hour of the day.

**Kellie - A:** There is always time for the things that are most important in life if we learn how to prioritize them and not get caught up in the exhausting “gravel”/things that aren't really important.

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**John - Q:** Choice 4: *Rule Your Technology; Don't Let it Rule You*. I know we spend a good portion of time on this section in the program. Participants can bring in their laptops and we will help them set up their technology right there in the class room. Would someone like to briefly explain “The 3 Master Moves”?

**Will - A:** The 3 Master Moves like Martial Arts are very strategic techniques that turn technology into powerful productivity tools. The first one is *Win Without Fighting* where participants learn to automate some of the decision making of the onslaught of the “incoming.” *Turn Things Into What They Really Are* helps filter all of the incoming into either a calendar, task, appointment or note system. So workflow becomes really powerful and systemized with this one! Last, *Link To Locate* bundles your resources so when you go to work on a task or project everything is in one place so you don't have to waste time hunting for it all!

These are very effective to harness workflow and become highly efficient in getting the “right” things done using your technology as a catalyst.

**John - Q:** Choice 5: *Fuel Your Fire; Don't Burn Out*. This is the concept of renewal. Who would like to discuss this concept and explain "The 5 Energy Drivers"?

**Will - A:** The 5Choices was developed with the partnership of 10 – 12 brain scientists and researchers. We know that the brain uses a vast amount of energy to keep us at peak performance. We have identified the 5 Energy Drives as the keys to providing the brain the right nutrients at the right time to insure us great physical and mental health. We share a little of the science around why each driver is key and the small things people can do to really have great sustainable energy to accomplish the most important things.

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**John - Q:** Now that we have a good overview to the 5 Choices, I want to discuss something I am excited about. I know that The 5 Choices offering includes a new Smart Phone app for iOS or Android. I also know that the three of you were included on the Beta release. What do you think about its functionality and do you think this will be hot with clients and why?

**Will - A:** It is going to be aligned with the 5 Choices framework and support its application once someone has attended the program. It still has work to be done but will be a powerful tool when released and used.

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**John - Q:** Lastly, if a client is interested in learning more about The 5 Choices for a team implementation, what do you suggest is a good first step to learning more?

**Matt - A:** Implementation that leads to extraordinary results begins with a thorough diagnosis of what challenges an organization is facing. I would welcome the opportunity to discuss these challenges with any of our potential Oklahoma clients. Thank you for your time and have an extraordinary week!

**Will - A:** The best way to learn more about the 5 Choices would be to contact a FranklinCovey Client Partner. Our goal is to understand the most important organizational and team goals you are seeking to achieve. We might mutually discover that the 5 Choices framework and tools can measurably be leveraged to ensure these goals are achieved.

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**John -** Well, that's all that we have time for today. Thanks for scheduling some Q2 time to elaborate and explain The 5 Choices!

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For more information about The 5 Choices or to get in touch with your Client Partner, please contact me today.

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