

Straightline

Women's Initiative Team 10 | 2009

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The "Just One Thing" Doctrine

How Tiny Actions Can Boost Performance, Earn Promotions and Rebuild Nations

Popular culture and business are filled with stories of "big breaks"—the hit movies, giant courtroom victories or best-selling books that make actors, lawyers and authors household names.

It's tempting, then, to think that what's standing between us and success is our "big break," the bolt of lightning that puts our career on the right trajectory, the innovation that brings our business back from the doldrums or the magical dose of self-discipline that gets us more fit.

While big breaks do sometimes happen, most success—whether personal or professional—is the result of hundreds of small, often tiny, steps that ultimately result in big changes. In fact, humans are so hard-wired to resist big changes that finding small ways to make big improvements is frequently the best way to outwit evolution.

One step at a time is good walking.

Chinese Proverb

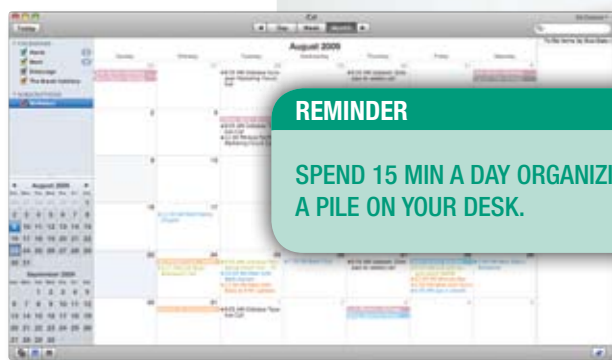
None of this means that big changes can't or won't happen. By all means, continue brainstorming for those big ideas, maybe even buy the occasional lottery ticket. But don't overlook the transformative power of small things.

This issue of *Straightline* will explore the "Just One Thing" doctrine—how Americans looking to defeat the Axis powers put it to use, how the vanquished Japanese perfected it, and how you can use it to become a better manager, improve your work performance and just generally be happier.

Why Not Make Big Changes?

As with most human nature quandaries, the reason we're usually incapable of big changes goes back several millennia. In the good old days, our ancestors who were able to react most quickly to an immediate threat (typically of the fanged variety) were able to survive and produce offspring. Those with duller reflexes typically didn't live to celebrate Mother's Day.

While the fight-or-flight response can still come in handy, our bodies typically react to fear at *any* kind of challenge, and that reaction dulls the part of our brain responsible for higher-order thinking and logic. So when we want to make a



Think back to those people you trust the most. Are they people who successfully completed a major task for you, or are they people who, year in and year out, arrived on time to meetings, met deadlines, and did the little things that earned them your trust? Chances are, it's the latter.

big change or take on a major challenge, most of us become paralyzed by the enormity of the task ahead of us and, six months later, find ourselves pretty much where we started.

Sometimes, though, inertia isn't an option.

That's where the American military manufacturers found themselves on the verge of World War II. In order to meet the military's demand for equipment, the U.S. government created management courses that, among other things, urged manufacturing supervisors to "look for hundreds of small things" they could improve in the manufacturing process and to involve every single employee through tools such as the employee suggestion box. Very quickly, writes Robert Maurer in *One Small Step Can Change Your Life*, American manufacturers were able to meet the military's needs and ultimately help defeat the Axis powers.

After the war, the same process was used to transform Japan's then-destroyed manufacturing sector. The "small steps" system became so ingrained in Japanese business culture that the Japanese gave the system a name of its own: kaizen.

Simply put, kaizen outsmarts evolution by bypassing the fear reflex. It downsizes mountains into manageable molehills and makes success more achievable. And while it may take longer to organize your office one drawer at a time, most people are unlikely to devote the 2-3 entire days it would take

Welcome to Straightline

Straightline is a publication from Andrews Kurth for women, by women. We will give you the bottom line on women's issues, be on the front line for timely substantive legal topics and serve as the hotline for firm news. We'll introduce you to fresh faces at Andrews Kurth, provide a pipeline of topical legal updates, and promise to infuse some fun features, facts and resources along the way. So join us for what promises to be Straight Talk on women's issues. No lawyer-speak. No double talk. Just the most direct line between you and our women lawyers.

to transform their workspace into the organized nirvana they envision—which is why such projects typically remain undone.

It's tempting to disregard the power of small things, but think back to those people you trust the most. Are they people who successfully completed a major task for you, or are they people who, year in and year out, arrived on time to meetings, met deadlines, and did the little things that earned them your trust? Chances are, it's the latter.

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Researchers have found that smaller rewards actually encourage positive behavior more than big ones.



Sidelines

Ebon Swofford (Houston) was a CLE speaker for the University of Houston Law Foundation in Dallas, Texas, on March 26, 2009. Her presentation was “Effective Use of Demonstrative Evidence & Courtroom Technology on a Reasonable Budget.”

Cassie Stinson (Houston) delivered a presentation titled “When Worlds Collide: Appraisal, Acquisition and Condemnation of Environmentally Impaired Property” to the International Right of Way Association (IRWA) in Houston, Texas, on May 1, 2009. The IRWA is a member organization made up of 10,000 members throughout the United States and Canada in various professions engaged in right of way activities.

Donna Kim (New York) and **Kay Lynn Brumbaugh** (Dallas) presented a legal ethics program on May 2, 2009, at The Roundtable: A Networking Conference for Women in Nashville, Tennessee. The meeting was attended by in-house counsel from across the country.

Shae Wilson (Houston) presented “Demonstrated Evidence and Courtroom Technology on a Reasonable Budget” for the Advanced Evidence and Discovery CLE hosted by the University of Houston on May 7, 2009.

Muriel McFarling (Dallas) gave a presentation about mergers and acquisitions and the role of the internal auditor at the Annual “Almost Free” Seminar held by the Dallas Chapter of the Institute of Internal Auditors on June 5, 2009. The seminar was held at the Cityplace Conference Center in Dallas, Texas, and was sponsored by Solomon Edwards Group LLC.

Eden Burgess and **Tom Kline** (Washington, DC) and Andrews Kurth’s Art and Cultural Property Practice were featured in *Legal Bisnow* on June 10, 2009. The article described their art restitution practice, including examples of recent wins.

Ashley Martzen, Kasia Benson, Monica Blacker, Tamaron Houston, Jennifer Kukla (Dallas) assisted Girls, Inc. in hosting their first annual “College and Career Readiness” fair at their Dallas headquarters on Wednesday, July 8, 2009. Over twenty colleges attended, representing a local, statewide and national presence, including Southern Methodist University, The University of Texas, El Centro, Texas Women’s University, U.S. Air Force, Texas Tech, Stephen F. Austin, Wake Forest and the University of North Texas. Girls from age six to eighteen planned and executed the event, providing input at every stage of the process. Not only did the fair expose the girls to a variety of post-high school options, it also provided them the opportunity to practice project management skills.

Vera Rechsteiner (Washington, DC) moderated a panel at Platts 12th Annual Private Power in Central America Conference on June 11, 2009. Her panel was entitled “Project Funding—Availability and Access.” Andrews Kurth was a sponsor.

Kathleen Wu (Dallas) authored an article in the July 27, 2009, issue of *Texas Lawyer* titled “Dear Judge Sotomayor: We Feel Your Pain.” The article highlighted Sotomayor’s confirmation hearings and discussed the disparity in perceptions of females and males in the workplace.

In July the State Bar of Texas presented its 8th Annual Advanced In-House Counsel Course. Over 100 in-house attorneys from across the state participated in the course held at the Four Seasons in Houston.

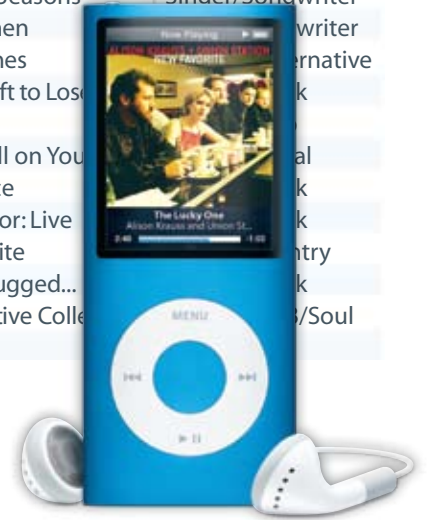
Robin Russell (Houston) was the kick-off speaker for Day 2 of the program. She spoke on “Dealing with Companies in Distress (Even Your Own) and Preparing for Bankruptcy.”

Diana Hudson (Houston) was recently elected to the board of trustees of the United Way of Greater Houston and to the board of directors of the Texas Law Review Association.

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iTunes: Workday Playlist

	Name	Artist	Time	Album	Genre
1	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Ain't No Mountain High Enough	Marvin Gaye	2:26	Marvin Gaye: Gold	R&B/Soul
2	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> The City	Joe Purdy	4:45	Only Four Seasons	Singer/Songwriter
3	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Blessed	Brett Dennen	3:20	Brett Dennen	Writer
4	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Brand New Day	Joshua Radin	3:31	Simple Times	Alternative
5	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Breathe In Breathe Out	Mat Kearney	3:42	Nothing Left to Lose	Rock
6	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Diamonds On the Soles of Her Shoes	Paul Simon	5:48	Graceland	World
7	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Feeling Good	Nina Simone	2:54	I Put a Spell on You	Al
8	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Moondance	Van Morrison	4:36	Moondance	Rock
9	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> How Sweet It Is	James Taylor	6:59	James Taylor: Live	Rock
10	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> The Lucky One	Alison Krauss...	3:10	New Favorite	Country
11	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> These Are Days	10,000 Maniacs	4:53	MTV Unplugged...	Rock
12	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> You Are the Sunshine of My Life	Stevie Wonder	2:50	The Definitive Colle	R&B/Soul



“Just One Thing”

continued from page 1

Putting “Just One Thing” to Work

How can you put the “Just One Thing” doctrine to work in your life? The possibilities are endless.

Ask little questions: If you’re looking to nab a new client or gain a promotion, ask yourself “What one thing could I do today (or tomorrow) to get closer to my goal?” It could be spending 15 minutes researching your potential client’s website or spending half an hour looking into continuing education options that would give you a professional leg up.

Take small actions: Arrange a single lunch with a business contact, register for a seminar, spend 10 minutes perusing a trade publication—there are any number of small actions you can take to get started on working toward your ultimate goal. Whatever your ultimate goal is, commit to doing “Just One Thing” to get you there. The smaller the better. If you come up with a step that’s too big (you’ll know you’ve done this if you procrastinate doing it), make it smaller.

Build on your small actions over time: There’s a reason many charities simply ask you to wear a pin or put on a bumper sticker. Once you’ve made a small commitment to them—declaring your support for them—it’s easier to get you to make a bigger commitment, such as writing them a check. Likewise, once you’ve committed to doing something for 10 minutes, it’s easier to keep doing it for 20 or 30 minutes until you consider it an inviolable part of your routine.

Appreciate the little good things: It’s tempting to become preoccupied with all the lousy things in our lives—looming layoffs, home repairs, debt, etc. To snap out of that mode,

once or twice a day, take time out to appreciate the nice things around you—whether it’s the way the sun hits the flowers in your office foyer or the way the security guard greets you every morning. Before long, you’ll realize that there’s more going right in your world than wrong.

Become a better manager: Executive coach Daisy Wademan Dowling advises managers to turn “dead time” into feedback time. The minutes spent walking back to your office after a meeting, driving to the airport, or heading to a client’s office are a perfect time to provide feedback and mentoring. By making a point to give just a small amount of feedback, coaching and gratitude each day, managers can help create a sharper, more motivated workforce.

Give in small ways: Want to make an employee feel appreciated? You *could* give them a big raise, or you could give them a \$10 gift card and a thank you note. Of the two, one is significantly easier on your company’s financial situation. While raises of course have their time and place, researchers have found that smaller rewards actually encourage positive behavior more than big ones.

As it turns out, the secret to success doesn’t lie in transforming ourselves or our businesses. The graveyard of “one hit wonders” is testament to the unreliability of “overnight success.” Positive change—both personal and professional—is more likely to occur when we take small, frequently unnoticeable, actions that put us on the right path—whether that path seems momentous or mundane. ■

Book Nook

Find out why little things make all the difference and how you can take steps so small that you won’t fall. Crack one of these tomes and page by page, learn to live a less stressful, more joyful life.

**Living the Simple Life:
A Guide to Scaling Down and Enjoying More**
by Elaine St. James

The Power of Small
by Linda Kaplan Thaler and Robin Koval

The Simple Living Guide
by Janet Luhrs

**One Small Step Can Change Your Life:
The Kaizen Way**
by Robert Maurer

The ability to simplify means to eliminate the unnecessary so that the necessary may speak.

Hans Hofmann, painter



Top of the Line

Live and Entertain with Unboring Basics



Living

1. LIVING COMFORTABLY

Resort Robe. \$115

You don't have to check into the Ritz-Carlton to slip into a luxe robe. Make it a daily necessity. The soft, creamy texture of this robe improves with laundering and wear. Use promo code **FALL09** to receive a 30% discount on all orders placed on peacockalley.com through 12/31/09.

2. LIVING WITH (MULTI-) PURPOSE

Rosebud Salve. \$6

Since 1892, the Rosebud Perfume Company has provided simple, multi-use products that are affordable and effective. Their Rosebud Salve can be used on everything from chapped lips to dry elbows. sephora.com

3. LIVING CONVENIENCE

Alice.com

Purchase your household essentials using Alice. The new website tracks when it's time to restock, provides electronic coupons and delivers the goods for free. Plus, prices are lower than other retailers. Meet Alice and skip the last minute trips to the drugstore.

4. LIVING LUXURY

Solid Cashmere Throw. \$298

If you are going to work on living life's little pleasures—curling up with a book, a catnap on the sofa—you must be properly equipped. A cashmere throw, while a luxury, is certainly a basic that you will enjoy for years to come. wshome.com

5. LIVING WITH LISTS

Moleskine. \$18

For two centuries now, Moleskine journals have been the legendary notebook of artists, intellectuals and travelers. Think stylish minimalism coupled with unmatched quality. Simplify daily lists. thedailyplanner.com

Entertaining

6. ENTERTAINING PRESENTATION

Square Lucite Tray. \$120

Serve cocktails and nibbles in style with one of Dabney Lee's fabulous square lucite trays. Choose your own style swatch and monogram for a personal touch. dabneyleethome.com

7. ENTERTAINING DRINKS

Bar Tool Set. \$50

Outfit your home with bar tool basics. Handcrafted in polished stainless, this classic set includes all the essential tools in a matching ice bucket. crateandbarrel.com

8. ENTERTAINING INVITES

Pingg.com

It's the online invitation of choice for design conscious hosts. Create stylish invitations, choose how to send them—online (via email, social network or mobile text) or print (Pingg will print, stamp and mail invitations). Customize an event web page and manage all of your guest communications. Now that's well sent.

*Have nothing in your houses
that you do not know to be useful
or believe to be beautiful.*

William Morris, artist

9. ENTERTAINING EATS

Barefoot Contessa Back to Basics: How to Get Great Flavors from Simple Ingredients. \$35

Ina Garten's latest cookbook, featuring almost 100 new recipes, focuses on the techniques behind her elegant food and her easy entertaining style. Recipes are short and simple and will make entertaining at home easier and more enjoyable. amazon.com

Sidelines continued from page 2

Kay Lynn Brumbaugh (Dallas) was recognized as one of Dallas' most formidable and accomplished business defense lawyers in "The Defenders," a special publication of the *Dallas Business Journal* highlighting 15 local attorneys whom companies turn to in high-stakes litigation.

Julia Gorodetsky (New York) authored an article in the upcoming issue of the *Tulane Environmental Law Journal* titled "Analogy By Necessity: The Filed Rate Doctrine and the Judicial Review of the Agency Inaction." This paper takes an interdisciplinary approach to the analysis of private party antitrust claims filed in the unique context of the electricity market.

Tamaron Houston (Dallas) has been selected as a member of the 2009 leadership class of the Dallas Association of Young Lawyers (DAYL). The DAYL Leadership Program has become a model for bar associations across the state, and many lawyers in leadership positions in both the State and Dallas Bar Associations have participated.

Tammy Brenning (Houston), **Michele Schwartz** (Dallas) and **Donna Kim** (New York) were recently elected to the WIT Committee. In addition, WIT welcomes two men to the committee, **Peter McKee** (Dallas) and **Tom Perich** (Houston).

Tammy Brenning (Houston) has been appointed to Co-Chair of the Recruiting Committee for 2009-2010.

Elizabeth Campbell (Houston) presented "Successful Leadership Strategies Grounded in Diversity and Inclusion" at the 2009 Texas Leadership, Education and Diversity event hosted by the Austin chapters of the National Society of Hispanic MBAs and the National Black MBA Association. Andrews Kurth was a Silver sponsor of this event.

Kathleen Wu (Dallas) has been selected to the 2009 DirectWomen Board Institute, a program designed to identify and promote qualified women lawyers to serve on corporate boards of public companies. **Diana Hudson** (Houston) was selected to give the opening remarks at this year's DirectWomen Alumnae program, which is a central focus of the DirectWomen project. **Gail Merel** (Houston) has been involved with the organization since its inception, serving on the Steering Committee and as Co-Chair of the Development Committee among other leadership positions.

Andrews Kurth hosted its annual Entrepreneur of the Year After Party in Austin on May 28, 2009. The Entrepreneur of the Year program, the world's most prestigious business award for entrepreneurs, is hosted by Ernst & Young.

For straight talk about economic recovery, real estate finance and the capital markets, visit our new blog **The Line** at www.aktheline.com.

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The Fair Labor Standards Act: Changes to Your Workforce in These Difficult Economic Times

by Bennee Jones and Marc Katz



Most employers have a basic understanding of their obligations under the Fair Labor Standards Act or its state equivalent to pay both minimum wage and overtime pay. They also generally understand that certain positions may be exempt from minimum wage and overtime pay obligations, and that the most common exemptions apply to employees whose duties are those of a bona fide executive or of an administrative, professional, computer, or outside sales nature. However, many employers are unaware of the complexities of the various exemptions and the serious liability that can result from misapplication of the exemptions.

Specifically, a finding that an employer has misclassified an employee's status may subject the employer to substantial wage repayment and penalties. In the past year or so, courts have seen an explosion in FLSA class action ("collective action") cases brought by employees classified as exempt who allege they are non-exempt or by non-exempt employees who claim they have not been compensated for all hours worked. These lawsuits allow attorneys suing on behalf of the employees to go back as far as three years to examine the duties, work hours and pay of every employee who worked for the employer during that time. An employer's failure to properly document duties, work hours and pay may also result in liability. These cases may be brought either on behalf of an individual or as a collective action on behalf of numerous individuals. Collective actions frequently result in judgments or settlements in the tens of millions of dollars.

Although employers often rely on a job description, an offer letter, and/or an employment agreement to establish the employee's classification, none of these documents are dispositive. Instead of relying on a job description, which may not accurately reflect the employee's actual job duties, or on an offer letter or employment agreement, which typically recite only that the employee's position is "exempt," the employer should identify in writing the employee's actual job duties and periodically confirm that the employee continues to perform these duties. It is critical that employers continue to ensure their designations are accurate and documented.

Moreover, in these difficult economic times during which it may become necessary to reduce the company's workforce and restructure existing job duties to allow for a smaller workforce, employers must be mindful that any change in duties may cause an "exempt" employee's classification to become "non-exempt."

Example A: In the case of a layoff, an employee who is classified as "exempt" under the Executive exemption (which requires, among other things, that the executive direct the work of at least two or more full-time employees or their equivalent in hours worked) and who has directed the work of two full-time employees, may lose exempt status if, after a reduction-in-force, the executive now directs the work of only one full-time employee and one part-time employee. In short, employers must review any revised job duties against the applicable FLSA exemption to confirm whether or not the exemption will continue to apply.

Example B: In the case where the employer seeks to avoid a layoff, the employer may decide to reduce the employee's salary and/or work hours. A reduction in salary and/or work hours may change the employee's job classification to be "non-exempt."

In the past year or so, courts have seen an explosion in FLSA class action ("collective action") cases brought by employees classified as exempt who allege they are non-exempt or by non-exempt employees who claim they have not been compensated for all hours worked.

Except for the outside sales and the computer professional exemption, all of the exemptions discussed above require pay to be on a salary basis and require a weekly salary minimum. At this time, the weekly salary minimum requirement is not less than \$455 per week, or in the case of the computer employee exemption, either not less than \$455 per week or not less than \$27.63 an hour. Employers should review any employee's revised salary to ensure that the salary reduction is not done on an hourly basis and does not drop the employee below the salary minimum threshold, either of which could destroy the employee's "exempt" status.

Finally, keep in mind that an employee may be "exempt" under one or more exemptions. Therefore, if an employer determines that an employee is no longer "exempt" under one exemption, the employer should review the employee's duties and assess whether or not he is "exempt" under another exemption. ■

One of the 50 Best Law Firms for Women Two Years in a Row

For the second year in a row, Andrews Kurth was named one of the 50 "Best Law Firms For Women" by *Working Mother* magazine and Flex-Time Lawyers LLC®. The honor recognizes and celebrates the top 50 U.S. law firms who are committed to supporting the advancement and development of women in the legal profession. Andrews Kurth is one of only two Texas-based law firms to receive this recognition.



"Being named one of the top 50 firms for women reflects the value we place on helping our lawyers find professional satisfaction and success at Andrews Kurth."
— Meredith Mouer, Partner and WIT Co-Chair

Spotlight: Kiva When Small Loans Make a Big Difference

Thanks to the power of social networking, small businesses worldwide are receiving funding through the first person-to-person micro-lending website.

During a trip to East Africa five years ago, Matt Flannery and Jessica Jackley realized how much a small financial loan or grant could impact the creation of a small business, which in turn could support a family. They met successful entrepreneurs who were able to generate enough profits from their small businesses to make a substantial impact on their standard of living and the community in which they lived. And so Kiva was conceived.

The most important thing you will ever be asked to do is to give or to raise money. If we who are so fortunate don't do it, who will? Ruth Altschuler, philanthropist

Fresh Faces

With much excitement, we welcome these new lawyers to the Andrews Kurth team.



Cristina Torres (Dallas)

Cristina joined the Firm's Labor and Employment section of the Dallas office as an Associate on July 20, 2009. She has experience advising and representing clients in matters involving affirmative action compliance, Title

VII of the Civil Rights Act, the Age Discrimination in Employment Act, the Americans with Disabilities Act and the Fair Labor Standards Act, as well as workers' compensation retaliation under Section 451 of the Texas Labor Code. Cristina received her B.A., *cum laude*, from The University of Texas at El Paso in 2002. She earned her J.D. from the University of California at Berkeley, Boalt Hall School of Law in 2005.



Prisca LeCroy (Dallas)

Prisca LeCroy has joined our Litigation section as an Associate. Prior to joining Andrews Kurth, Prisca served as a judicial clerk for the Honorable John M. Roberts. She received her J.D. from the University of Virginia School of Law in 2008 and her A.B., *magna cum laude*, from Harvard College in 2003.

Team WIT

Co-Chairs:

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Elizabeth Campbell
Deborah Grabein
Amy Hancock
Donna Kim
Peter McKee, Jr.
Thomas Perich
Shemin Proctor
Robin Russell

Michele Schwartz
Marty Smith DeBusk
Laura Trenaman
Kendall Wade
Kathleen Wu

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Courtney Culver
Brittany Thompson

Kiva (www.kiva.org) was established in 2005 as a U.S. 501(c)(3) non-profit organization to empower individuals to lend money interest-free directly to unique entrepreneurs around the globe.

The individuals featured on Kiva's website are real people. They need a loan from socially-conscious donors willing to make a small financial commitment to help them achieve greater economic independence for themselves, their family and their community. The loans may be used to buy land, animals, supplies, fabric—anything needed to start the business.



Visit www.kiva.org.

Here's how the web of giving works.

1. Browse profiles of entrepreneurs in need and choose a person or group to lend to using PayPal or a credit card. Loans can start as low as \$5. Kiva collects and distributes the funds through their microfinance partners around the world.
2. Kiva's microfinance partners distribute the loan funds to the selected entrepreneur and often provide assistance to maximize the entrepreneur's chance to succeed.
3. The entrepreneur repays the loan, usually after six to 12 months. Loan repayments and other updates are posted to www.kiva.org and emailed to the donor, if requested.
4. Once lenders receive their money back, they can either loan it to another entrepreneur, donate to Kiva to cover their expenses, or withdraw their funds.

Check out this social site with a cause and help change the world one click at a time. ■

Living Your Bare Essentials



*Among work, family, travel and volunteer activities, most of us feel so overwhelmed by our obligations that we've forgotten one of life's simple truths: **we're** in the driver's seat.*

Yes, it's true. Each of us controls what we take on and what we don't. We need to pay the bills and keep the cat fed, but how we choose to fulfill those obligations, and how many others we choose to take on, will determine how stressed or satisfied we are with our lives.

For many people, the upside of our economy's recent troubles is that the problems have forced them to live a simpler life. That's brought some fringe benefits, such as a clarified vision of what's important in their lives, reduced stress and a more environmentally friendly existence.

Even if your financial situation hasn't changed recently—it may have even improved—it's still possible to reap the benefits of living simply.

Living simply means taking control of your money (ideally socking ample sums away for retirement, emergencies, etc.) and your time, by not taking on more personal and professional commitments than you should. By paring your life down to its bare essentials, you open yourself up to more joy and less stress.

Some tips from *The Simple Living Guide* and *Living the Simple Life*:

- **Socialize simply.** Just because you're cutting back doesn't mean you can't enjoy the company of your friends and family. When you think back to your most enjoyable times, what you remember probably isn't the expensive meal or the luxurious surroundings. It's the camaraderie and the conversations. Human connections are what bring us joy, and those can be made anytime, anywhere. Go on family hikes, take a bike ride with a friend, have a neighborhood potluck or go on a date to a book store. The options are endless.

- **Structure around what is important in your life.** Whether it's family, gardening, volunteer work or your job, make sure that your time reflects what is important to *you*.

Simplicity is the ultimate sophistication.

Leonardo da Vinci, artist/inventor

- **Get rid of clutter.** Make a habit of culling those clothes, books, knick-knacks and other tchotchkes that clutter your home. It's much easier to get organized when you have fewer things to organize.

- **Enjoy the moment you're in.** There's always something else you can be doing. Don't assume that those people who are enjoying their meal or their conversation or taking a walk in the woods simply have no obligations. They do. But they *choose* to enjoy the same moment in which you're distracted and stressed.

- **Don't take on more work than you know you can do well.** When you take on assignments you aren't able to complete well, you risk doing a bad job on that *and* your pre-existing work. Granted, some assignments aren't negotiable, but some are. Know your limits. Those who would be counting on you to do a good job will probably appreciate your candor. This doesn't mean you would never agree to work overtime. It does mean that if you do agree to work overtime, you know your capabilities and are fully aware that this is a special occasion and will require extra hours.

- **When you can spend time with your parents or grandparents, savor them. You'll be glad you did.**

- **Don't postpone entertaining until your home is perfect.** Erma Bombeck, in a column titled "If I Had My Life to Live Over," said she "would have invited friends over to dinner even if the carpet was stained and the sofa faded." Too often, we're so embarrassed by our (and our home's) imperfections that we miss out on moments we would cherish. If all you have time to prepare is frozen pizza, entertain anyway.

- **Embrace down time.** You don't have to be in a peaceful meadow or yoga studio to Zen out. When you're stuck in line or in a waiting room, don't check your e-mail or fill your time with busy work—at least not right away. For a few moments, just enjoy the solitude and breathe deeply. This is a great time to work in that meditation you say you don't have time for.

- **Religious or not, rest one day a week.**

- **Learn to say "no."** According to playwright Jules Renard, "The truly free person is the one who knows how to decline a dinner invitation without giving an excuse." While you may never reach a Renardian level of freedom, it can't hurt to say "no" once in a while—to volunteer requests, social invitations or anything that feels like more of an obligation than a treat. Limit saying "yes" to only those requests and invites that get you excited.

In addition to being less stressful and less expensive, living simply is also greener. If you're buying fewer things, you're making less trash that will end up in a landfill. You're also reducing demand for those things, which has a ripple effect.

As the holidays approach, now is an ideal time to reflect on how to make your year-end celebrations simpler and more meaningful to you and your family. The key is saying "yes" to those things that bring you joy and "no" to everything else. ■

Brand Yourself:

Build a Personal Brand Through Social Networking

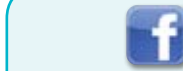
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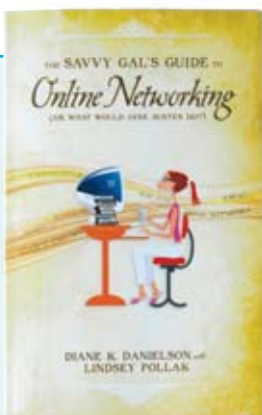
We need to differentiate ourselves more than ever in this tough market. Today's consumers are skeptical; they are seeking a trusted brand. And now, with the rise in social networking, you can build that brand online.

One of the most well-known articles about personal branding harkens back to 1997, when Tom Peters penned an article for *Fast Company* magazine titled "The Brand Called You." In the article, he declared a "new brand world." He said, "Regardless of age, regardless of position, regardless of the business we happen to be in all of us need to understand the importance of branding. We are CEOs of our own companies: Me Inc. To be in business today, our most important job is to be head marketer for the brand called You."

Social networking is changing the brand world again.

Historically professionals tended to market themselves through their resume and depended heavily on the reputation of the employers they have worked for—something that makes less sense in this economy. While not dismissing the value of more traditional networking, many self-marketing experts agree that the increased usage of online social networking sites is a game-changer.

The number of social networking users has doubled over the past two years due to the growth of LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter and other social networking sites. More than 55 million adults (about 1/3 of the population) in the United States visit social networking sites at least once a month. This number has seen a steady increase each year, from 15 percent in 2007 to 18 percent last year.



The Savvy Gal's Guide to Online Networking (Or What Would Jane Austen Do?)
by Diane K. Danielson and Lindsey Pollak

Millions of business professionals and companies have joined the ranks of Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter. These three—the most popular of the social networking sites—can be an effective, inexpensive way to broadcast who you are to a targeted market. Additionally, such sites allow people to forge connections, not just face to face, but across the country and abroad, leading to opportunities to expand their contact lists and generate business.

LinkedIn is the most popular business-oriented social network—with more than 47 million registered users representing 170 industries in over 200 countries and territories around the world. Facebook has an even larger online community with more than 300,000,000 active users. Then there is Twitter, which is essentially a shorter and more viral form of blogging. Update your status by answering the question "what are you doing?" in no more than 140 characters.

Be aware of the potential pitfalls of online networking sites, though. In particular, some experts voice concern over business networking on Facebook, because it allows contacts to freely

post material that will also appear on a person's profile page; the risk is that someone else might post an inappropriate comment or photo. Despite the risks, experts are advising individuals to use the web and other tools to brand themselves.

Building an online brand isn't for the faint of heart. It takes patience. It demands commitment. It's a long-term investment. But with a little strategy and a lot of status updates you can rise in the search engine rankings and increase the visibility and value of your personal brand.

Tips to follow when using the social networking sites to build your personal brand:

1. Know your audience for each social network.
2. Create a branding strategy; determine how you want others to view you.
3. Set your privacy settings to ensure control of any information that you share with others.
4. Complete a profile with your current and previous professional experience, education and interests.
5. Import contacts and grow your network by finding friends, colleagues and other business professionals.
6. Update your status with relevant content that your readers will find of interest.
7. Start a group or a page with others from your workplace, university, or any other group to which you belong.
8. Support a non-profit by becoming a fan and send invitations to others to join and support.
9. Join or start an event in your area to meet new people who share similar interests.
10. Cross promote your social networking site profiles.
11. Constantly feed your social networks with information to rank higher in search engines. ■

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LinkedIn.com



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If you enjoy the discovery of new music but you don't have the time to vet the latest downloads on iTunes, then Pandora's online streaming radio is for you.

Based on the Music Genome Project, Pandora is a powerful resource for music discovery. It analyzes the essence of each song and captures the more than 400 attributes that give each recording its magical sound—melody, harmony, instrumentation, rhythm, vocals, lyrics, etc. Explore almost a century of popular recordings—new and old, well-known and completely obscure—to identify songs with musical similarities to your choice.

Pick any song (or artist or album) you like and Pandora will study its tempo and tonality to create a customized online "radio station" to listen to via computer or mobile phone.

Create up to 100 of these unique "stations."

It's free (up to 40 hours per month) and easy. Plus, it's adaptive: give a track the thumbs-up or -down and it will adjust the playlist accordingly. As you listen, Pandora logs your preferences, as well as bookmarked artists and songs, in your profile.

Download your "stations" to your mobile phone and listen on the go. Share your stations with other Pandora listeners. You can even gift a custom Pandora station to a friend.

But don't let us sing its virtues; listen for yourself. ■

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