

## Fried and Hansson, Rework Business Decision-Making

[This is less an epitome than selections paraphrased from Fried and Hansson, *Rework*.]

1. **Ignore the “real” world.** “Be realistic” is what people stuck in their own dysfunction say.
2. **Admit that planning is guessing about the future based on the past.** Don’t cling to plans; the future is not the past. Your guesses are unreliable.
3. **Choose a size; grow to that size; stay there.** Growth without boundaries may destroy your efforts.
4. **Work sustainably.** Overwork creates burn-out, which endangers your efforts. Hire people with lives outside work. Send them home at five.
5. **Dent the universe.** We have to feel that we are improving something to remain motivated. Money will not suffice as an incentive.
6. **Sell what works for you.** Figure out what works in your own life. Sell that.
7. **Start.** Don’t procrastinate. Do what you imagine.
8. **Take a strong stand.** Do what you believe. You will put off some people, but you will also create superfans who promote you endlessly. Forget mission statements. Don’t say what you believe except to the extent required to do what you believe.
9. **No investors.** Never allow outside money into your business. Do what you can do on your own resources.
10. **Have less mass.** Avoid long-term contracts, infrastructure, immobile assets, gummy process, internal politics.
11. **Embrace constraints.** Constraints demand creativity. Shakespeare could have written novels. He chose sonnets and plays.
12. **Start building at the epicenter.** Do what is essential to your business. Build ancillary parts and structures as you go along. Ignore the details at the beginning. Do the big thing.
13. **Decide.** Never delay decisions. Perfect solutions do not exist. Choose, then adjust midcourse.
14. **Keep the menu small.** Offering everything to everyone dilutes your product. Know what you are offering; offer it.
15. **Focus on what does not change.** Avoid fads. Offer something that people always need.
16. **Avoid fancy technologies.** They distract. When Eddie Van Halen plays a crappy guitar, the guitar sounds like Eddie Van Halen.
17. **Sell your byproducts, eventually.** After you build the center of your product, offer its spinoffs.
18. **Launch today.** Do not wait for things to be done. They never are.
19. **Quit when something gets too hard.** Working harder on something that is not working is not a solution. Find an easier way to solve the problem. Spend time thinking, not exhausting yourself.
20. **Create an “alone zone.”** Eliminate interruptions. Avoid email slavery. Turn off your phone. Dedicate part of your day to focused attention. Give a limited portion to chatting, email traffic, and people who want your attention.
21. **Avoid meeting.** Meetings are a massively inefficient way to communicate or share information. When you must meet, set a timer, invite fewer people, set an agenda, solve a specific problem, assign implementation to someone. Then quit. Never more than an hour.
22. **Seek “good enough,” not perfect.** Look for judo solutions: one chop, you win.
23. **Seek quick wins.** Momentum breeds motivation. Work in two week segments, at a maximum. Do nothing that cannot be completed in two weeks. If you think something will take longer than two weeks, ask others how they would simplify the matter or break it into smaller pieces. It is okay to just quit.
24. **Sleep.** Do not forsake sleep for work. Creativity and morale fall; stubbornness and irritability rise.
25. **Estimates are wrong.** Humans estimate poorly. Break big projects into small ones, then estimate the small pieces. No twelve week plans; make twelve one-week plans.
26. **Think big, but in little chunks.** Have a big vision, but break it into tiny chunks for decision-making.
27. **Brand with yourself.** Pour yourself into your product. It cannot, then, be copied by anyone.
28. **Pick a fight.** If you have defective competitors, say so. Those who agree with you will rally to your side. You will get free advertising and notice.
29. **Do less than competitors.** Do not one-up the competition. Offer what you offer; differentiate it from your competitor. Make your product simple and aimed directly at a problem your clients have. No bells. No whistles.
30. **Say no.** When a client asks you to do something outside your scope or interest, say no. Explain to the client, but face the confrontation squarely. Decline. Your product will not be right for everyone, no matter what you do to it. You may lose your way accommodating others’ views and needs. Listen only to the criticisms that recur.
31. **Age great ideas.** Let ideas cool before acting on them. The bad ones will drop away, and you will not waste time on them. The good ones will wait.
32. **Good at home.** Make sure your product works great at home, not just looks good at point of purchase. Good-at-home generates word of mouth.
33. **Obscurity helps.** Use obscurity to practice in relative isolation. Your errors will have a small audience.
34. **Electronic audience.** Build an electronic audience by blogging, speaking, writing, tweeting, making videos. When you have something to say, they will already be listening. This is free advertising. Perhaps the best approach is teaching about what you do. Teach everything you know. It will not hurt your business. Teach even the stuff that seems boring to you. Let people come behind the scenes with you. This builds bonds between you and others. Don’t be afraid to show your flaws. Pare things down to their essence, keep the imperfections, go for character and uniqueness. Aim at niche publications and online presence. Give away a little bit of what you sell, so people will come back for more (with money in hand).
35. **Avoid press releases.** Everyone does them. Always do something different than what others are doing. Write or call a journalist personally and directly. Show your passion. Be unforgettable.
36. **Hire Sparingly.** Hire only for jobs you have done yourself and believe you need another to do now. Hire only if it harms you not to hire. Build a team where conversations are frank and people get told when they are full of crap. Hire people, when you must, not educational requirements or specific colleges or experience levels. Hire the *person* you need. Hire people who manage themselves. In choosing among people, hire the best writer. Good writing signifies clarity of thought. Test-drive a prospective employee before hiring. Give them a small one-time project.
37. **Own bad news.** When something bad happens, be the first to tell your clients. Seek coverage. Apologize directly: “I am sorry for \_\_\_\_\_. It happened because I \_\_\_\_\_. My lapse injured you.” Take responsibility personally. Be specific about injury and cause. Show your feelings.
38. **Answer people.** When someone calls, answer personally and immediately, especially if they are upset.
39. **Make needed changes.** When change is needed, make it. People will complain and explain why everything they have been doing is working just fine. Listen and wait, but persevere in the changes. They will adjust or leave. Develop the right habits; those will become a culture that supports useful behaviors.
40. **Deal with now.** Do not plan for distant futures. Optimize for now.
41. **Facilitative Environment.** Build a place that emphasizes trust, autonomy, and responsibility. People need privacy, a place to work, and the right tools. Trust them.
42. **Avoid policies.** Policies are institutional scar tissue. Deal with problems *ad hoc*. Stay small.
43. **Writing.** When you write, sound like yourself.
44. **Skip ASAP.** If you are doing it, it should be important and completed rapidly. Adding ASAP is redundant.
45. **Hose down conflict.** Avoid language that creates black and white thinking.
46. **Act on inspiration.** When you are inspired, act on it. Inspiration has an expiration date; it waits no man.