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About the Author
Also by Mike Clayton
Book Mike Clayton
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POWER HOUSE

Turbo boost your effectiveness and start making a serious impact

MIKE CLAYTON

CAPSTONE
A Wiley Brand
**Powerhouse** (noun): somebody who is full of energy, highly effective, and therefore very productive.
Powerhouse (noun): somebody who is full of energy, highly effective, and therefore very productive.

There is so much you want to get done in a day and modern life is making ever more demands. Adding to your desire for a successful career, a fulfilled private life and some form of lifetime achievement you can be proud of are all of the pressures of living and interacting socially.

Yet the one thing modern technology has not given us – and will almost certainly never provide – is more time. So the answer must be ever greater levels of productivity.

Is it any surprise therefore that many people's bookshelves are groaning with productivity and time saving manuals, and that bloggers and coaches are offering a constant stream of tips and advice? Oh no! More things to add to your reading list.

Time management and greater productivity are not the answer. The answer is not about how much you can do, but what you do and how you do it. If you choose the right things to do, and you do them in the right way, you will be productive. But not just ‘lots of stuff done-productive': you will be ‘effective-productive'.

The difference is essential: getting lots of stuff done means nothing unless the stuff you do matters. That is what effectiveness is about: about doing what matters; what will make a difference that counts.

What Does it Mean to Be a ‘Powerhouse'? 

Effective action defines Powerhouse. But one thing that you won't find in this book is a single definition of what being a Powerhouse means. It means far more than one thing and goes beyond the normal day-to-day meaning of effectiveness:

   effective (adjective): causing the desired result, successful, able to deliver what matters.

It is a mentality and approach that delivers outstanding productivity and exceptional outcomes, and makes a vivid, lasting, and positive impression on the people around you.

Becoming a Powerhouse means:

- Choosing to do the right things.
- Doing the right things for the right reasons.
- Doing the right things right.
- Working with the people around you.
- Getting the best from the people around you.
• Getting the best from yourself.
• Being prepared for the unexpected.
• Handling the unexpected.
• Knowing when and how to stop.
• Extending your Powerhouse capabilities to your whole organization.

These definitions form the agenda for this book. Over the next ten chapters, you will learn how to bring full effectiveness to everything you do. Each chapter will also show you how to turn up one of ten Power Switches, to transform yourself – and your organization – into a Powerhouse.

Chapter 1: Self-Control: Choose to Do the Right Things

The first step is to identify and evaluate all of your opportunities. Then, decide which ones to pursue. Let these become your compelling causes, and focus almost exclusively on them. This is about self-control.

Master Switch: Self-Control

Chapter 2: Judgement: Do the Right Things for the Right Reasons

You need to be clear why you are pursuing each of your compelling causes, for two reasons – personal and organizational. The organizational reason is that you will almost certainly be accountable for how you will be using your time and spending your resources, and the personal reason is that we all need to know the answer to the question ‘why?’ Without a reason, there is no motivation. We’ll cover how to justify your choices and learn about judgement.

Power Switch: Judgement

Chapter 3: Productivity: Do the Right Things Right

Now is the time to think about how you are going to accomplish what you set out to do. This is about productivity and Chapter 3 splits this into four stages: planning, preparing, performing and postparing. Don’t worry if you haven't heard the word ‘postparing’ – neither had I before I started work on this book.

Power Switch: Productivity

Chapter 4: Relationships: Work With the People Around You

You need to be able to enlist the support of the people around you: colleagues, team-members, bosses, suppliers and customers. Their active support will be a big factor in your success. And it is not just dealing with opposition that is important; it is positive support. So we will look at how you can build support for your work in Chapter 4.

This is about relationships.

Power Switch: Relationships

Chapter 5: Leadership: Get the Best From the People Around You

More than support, you may also need active help. Decide which people with what skills you will need, engage their help, and give them the leadership that will get the
best from them. This will be our agenda for Chapter 5.

Power Switch: Leadership

**Chapter 6: Conduct: Get the Best From Yourself**

The ways that you think and act will determine how effective you are in your choices, your productivity and in the way people regard you. This is all about your conduct.

Power Switch: Conduct

**Chapter 7: Perception: Be Prepared for the Unexpected**

Shift happens: are you able to anticipate it by reading people, seeing around corners and spotting risks? This is a matter of your perception.

Power Switch: Perception

**Chapter 8: Resilience: Handle the Unexpected**

Whether you spotted it or not, when shift happens, how will you respond to events? If you can keep going in the face of adversity, dealing with the challenges you encounter and keeping a feeling of calm and control, that's resilience.

Power Switch: Resilience

**Chapter 9: Growth: Know When and Where to Stop**

Of course, you need to know when to stop, but you must also know where to stop, so that your Powerhouse performance is a springboard for your next compelling cause. This demands the ability to grow with each experience.

Power Switch: Growth

In the final chapter, I will show you how to extend your Powerhouse capabilities to help the whole of your organization to become a Powerhouse Organization.

**Chapter 10: Culture: Create a Powerhouse Organization**

Can you take what you have learned and start to transform the whole organization around you? Wouldn't that be great? If you want to apply the Powerhouse principles strategically, to create a true Powerhouse culture, Chapter 10 will give you the places to start.

Organizational Power Switch: Culture

Each switch represents a capability that you can increase with learning and practice. As you turn all of the switches up to maximum, you will become a Powerhouse.
What You Need to Become a Powerhouse

Becoming a Powerhouse requires a combination of mental attitude and a practical approach that balances different perspectives, focuses ruthlessly, yet remains adaptable in the face of changing circumstances. This requires a combination of efficiency, rigour and a survival edge. This is worthwhile, but not easy. Two things will help:

1. doing the right thing for you, and
2. being fit for Powerhouse performance.

1. Doing the Right Thing for You

Being a Powerhouse will come to you far more easily when you enjoy what you are doing, and are doing something you are good at. You choose the work that brings you joy, and the key lies at the intersection of:

- The things you love to do.
- The things you are good at.
- The things you like best about work.
Ten switch console The key to the work that brings you joy

One of the main reasons we fail to achieve what we set out to do is not being clear enough about exactly what the outcome will look like if we do the right things. Always start by asking yourself: ‘what will success look like?’ So your first step is to define what you want to achieve with clarity and precision, defining success and being clear what it is for.

- What is most important about your job?
- Who does your work serve?
- What is your job really about?
- What do you want to achieve?
- What is your answer to ‘why’?

2. Get Fit for Powerhouse Performance

Fitter, healthier people perform better. Don't think that you can swallow this book whole and get instant results. You need to invest time, energy and perseverance. You also need to be fit for a Powerhouse lifestyle, investing in good rest, regular exercise and excellent nutrition.

Powerhouse performance rests on willpower. Modern research shows that this requires energy and as we go through the day willpower depletes, just as the batteries in your phone deplete. So to avoid your brain becoming mushy and your physical strength draining away, it is essential to make re-charging your energy levels a critical activity.
**Good Rest**

It is not just enough to go home at the end of the day. Make rest and relaxation a priority. Allow time for socializing, for laughing, for relaxing and, vitally, for sleep. Many people with a Powerhouse mind-set will find it hard to switch off at the end of the day. So take your sleep seriously: not by worrying about it, but by setting up the conditions for good sleep. Gradually wind down towards the end of your waking day, dim the lights, engage in more relaxing activities and refrain from stimulant drugs like caffeine (which makes sleeping more difficult) and alcohol (which may make you sleepy, but disrupts your sleep). Have your bed in a cool room with fresh air and, if necessary, write down anything that is on your mind before turning out the light.

**Regular Exercise**

A regular, moderate exercise regime will increase your resilience and give you a greater capacity for physical and mental effort. You may feel it will take up time in your day, but the amount of effective and productive time it will give you back makes short bouts of exercise an excellent investment. It is no coincidence that most of businesses’ most successful and most effective people make time for half an hour of exercise during each working day.

**Excellent Nutrition**

A rushed meal of junk food at your desk is the cliché of modern office life. On the other hand, I hope I have already made the case for fresh air, exercise and a break – possibly some socializing. If you are going to work effectively and exercise too, your body will need good fuel to power it. Choose your food wisely and have things like nuts and fruit as your regular snacks.

**Additional Resources**

*Powerhouse* is a freestanding book with everything you need to become … a Powerhouse. But if you want a few extras, like templates for some of the tools, and maybe a few videos with key ideas, then take a look at the Powerhouse website, at [www.beapowerhouse.co.uk](http://www.beapowerhouse.co.uk).
Chapter 1
Self-Control
Choose to Do the Right Things

The problem is busyness without doing the business; of getting to the end of the day having done lots and achieved nothing. It's easy to do and often happens when you become seduced by easy, absorbing, but unimportant tasks. To become a Powerhouse, you must refine your clarity of purpose to focus your energy on what matters. This means choosing the right things to do and having the self-control to set other things aside.

When I was a student, we would often drive into the Devon countryside, looking for a pub to spend a pleasant afternoon in. It was on one of the very last of these outings, shortly before my friends and I were due to graduate and start our working lives, that we took a turn between two high hedges and found ourselves on an un-made road – little more than a farm track. As we drove along it, the surface got worse, and then we saw a hand-painted sign, doubtless put up by a local farmer. The sign read: ‘Choose your rut carefully – you’re going to be in it for a long time.’

Focused Busyness

Focused busyness means doing stuff that really makes a difference.

What a perfect warning about adult life: forced either to carry on the way you are going or hit reverse and go backwards. No option to jump out of the rut and choose a new direction. And many of us live lives a little like that, getting to the end of each
day, having done lots … and achieved nothing.
I call this ‘busyness without doing the business’.

**Busyness Without Doing the Business**

The consequence of this constantly busy lifestyle is rarely any great sense of success or fulfilment. It often doesn't even produce much in the way of results. All it has to offer is exhaustion.

So, many of us respond by working harder, by becoming more competent and by taking on more responsibility. The ‘one more push’ approach to happiness. The problem is that the one more push is often in the wrong direction; often a push further along your existing rut. Competence, doing your job and trying harder are not enough.

The best you will do is to consolidate your existing position in your rut, moving up one small step at a time when circumstances permit. Who wants to consolidate a position where you are forever busy and never truly successful?

What is the solution? The solution is ‘focused busyness’.

**Focused busyness means doing stuff that really makes a difference.**

Becoming a Powerhouse means choosing the right things to do and having the self-control to set other things aside.

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**Powerhouse Effectiveness and Rules**

If you learn the rules and work within them, you are always going to be more effective than if you are constantly fighting against them. Changing the rules is hard and so, if you set out to do this, be sure it really matters and is the right thing to do. Wantonly fighting the rules or trying to cheat the system is not noble or wise.

Sometimes, however, it does make sense to set the rules aside: special situations demand different rules, so in highly adverse weather conditions where public transport is cancelled and roads are dangerous, it is not heroic to fight your way to work, risking your life: it is foolish.

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**The Process of Focused Busyness**

We are all influenced by something or someone and, on the matter of focused busyness, like many people, I owe a debt to the leading twentieth century management thinker, Peter Drucker, who distinguished between efficient, which is the ability to do things well, and effective, which is doing the right things well.

Focused busyness therefore starts with finding the right things to do, and then looks for ways to do them well. The first five chapters are about how to create focused busyness.
Compelling Causes

The world is full of opportunities: start by focusing on the right ones.

The world is full of opportunities and a Powerhouse will start by focusing on the right ones – a small number that will give the best results. A Powerhouse will turn them into compelling causes that spur effective action and achieve worthwhile outcomes.

The Three Laws of Opportunity

An opportunity is an uncertain future that could have a valuable, positive outcome. Opportunities are a fundamental part of life and so, like Newton’s three laws of motion and the three laws of thermodynamics, there are three laws of opportunity.

The First Law of Opportunity

‘You will get the best results when you focus on exploiting opportunities: not on solving problems.’

The Second Law of Opportunity

‘Allocate your time, your energy, and your resources to your best opportunities.’

The Third Law of Opportunity

‘Find yourself an environment that is rich in opportunities.’

Turn Your Opportunities into Compelling Causes

Frederick the Great, who faced monumental defeats before he was able to expand his kingdom of Prussia, said: ‘To defend everything is to defend nothing.’

A Powerhouse needs motivation, and nothing motivates us more powerfully than a cause to pursue. From among all your possible opportunities, find a small number of compelling causes that you can commit yourself to. These should be the opportunities with the potential to deliver the greatest satisfaction or value for the effort you put in. Let these propel you to do your best work and to exclude distractions.

Identify no more than five opportunities to seize. Make them your very best opportunities, because they must compel you to succeed. As US President Abraham Lincoln said: ‘Always bear in mind that your own resolution to succeed is more important than any one thing.’

Express Your Compelling Causes as Outcomes

Now express each of these compelling causes as an outcome:

‘My cause is to …’

You need to decide on no more than five outcomes that will be your focus over the next three months. These will dominate your agenda, keeping your attention on achieving a small number of worthwhile outcomes.

Why five; and why three months? A small number of causes to pursue will result in
greater personal effectiveness than a large number for three reasons.

First, it will produce the greater focus that you need, to produce the Powerhouse performance and the spectacular results that you want. With too many causes to pursue, you will dissipate your effort and achieve little of value towards any of the outcomes.

Second, it is unlikely that all of your opportunities will be of the same scale. It is the way of things that a small number of them will, together, deliver the vast majority of the benefit. This is sometimes known as ‘The Pareto Principle’ after Italian economist, Vilfredo Pareto, who found in early twentieth century Italy that most of the wealth was in the pockets of a small number of people. This is still true today, in all countries and globally. Indeed, the statistic that is best associated with Pareto – that 20 per cent of the population owned 80 per cent of the wealth – is still true, to within a few per cent, of the world today. In a world of near infinite opportunities, you must choose something or risk achieving nothing.

The third reason to pursue a small number of causes is because it is risky. When you decide which causes are truly compelling to you, you are making the choice to abandon a host of other, lesser opportunities. This is risky: what if you choose wrong? But deciding is cutting yourself off from the alternatives and that level of risk should really sharpen your senses, stiffen your sinews and summon up all of your energy: you are committed now.

This leads us to the reason why it is best to determine your compelling causes for the next three months – not for the next year. If you choose wrongly, then shorter-term causes mean you can abandon a poor choice more quickly and refocus your efforts. If it is still looking like the right choice after three months of effort and learning, then decide what the next outcome is towards winning this cause.
Express Your Outcomes with Precision

Many writers have written many words about goal setting and most of them focus on the idea of SMART goals. Some have even developed the idea of SMARTER goals – cute! I developed the concept of SMARTEST goals for an earlier book, where SMARTEST stands for:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Specific</th>
<th>Be absolutely precise in stating your intention.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Meaningful</td>
<td>Be clear why you want this outcome.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Action-oriented</td>
<td>Make sure the goal is something you can achieve through your own effort.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Responsible</td>
<td>Check that your intention does not conflict with something else that really matters to you.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Towards</td>
<td>Word your goal so it takes you towards what you want: rather than away from what you don't.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exciting</td>
<td>Choose goals that will excite you – you may as well.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supported</td>
<td>Identify the people and resources that can help.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time-bound</td>
<td>Set a deadline: deadlines are highly motivating both consciously and unconsciously.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

But this is not enough for a Powerhouse performer. We need to look at the latest research, and there are three pieces that should transform the way you determine your outcomes.

Experts Do it Differently

In studies of high school basketball players at three levels (expert, non-expert and novice), Timothy Cleary and Barry Zimmerman of the City University of New York found that experts set goals differently from non-experts. Experts set specific goals, like to hit ten out of ten shots, to bend their knees when they throw, or to keep their eye on the rim of the basket.

Non-experts and novices also set goals based on the outcome, their technique and their focus, but the goals they set were far more general, like to make their shots, to try harder and to concentrate more.

Lesson 1: Set very specific goals that you can monitor every step of the way, with real precision.

Short-Term and Long-Term Goals

It's official – there is no answer yet to the simple question of whether short or long-term goals work better. The evidence shows that the answer depends on the circumstances. If you have a lot of work to do or a big project, research by Albert Bandura and Dale Schunk suggests that setting yourself intermediate goals will produce better performance. But work by Dutch researchers Maurice de Volder and Willy Lens showed that a focus on the long-term future helped high school students
achieve more by seeing the link between day-to-day work and what they wanted from life.

**Lesson 2: Set yourself motivating long-term goals and then create simple short-term goals so you can track your progress.**

*Change ‘I Will’ to ‘Will I?’*

We all hold a steady flow of conversation with ourselves, in our heads, but how does the way we talk to ourselves affect how well we achieve our goals? Ibrahim Senay, Dolores Albarracin and Kenji Noguchi looked at the impact of different ways we use our self-talk. They set students challenging puzzles, and compared the impact on solving them of either thinking ‘I will solve this’, or thinking ‘Will I solve this?’

In a series of experiments, their results were as conclusive as they were surprising …

We have got used to the idea of ‘the power of positive thinking’ and so you might expect the students who thought positive ‘I will …’ thoughts to do better. They did not. Students who thought ‘Will I …?’ consistently out-performed those who thought ‘I will …’. This seems to be an example of a wider phenomenon in the psychology of influence; that questions induce thoughts about the answers to them, and hence triggers intrinsic, self-generated motivation. The authors of the study speculate that the ‘I will …’ form takes away some of our sense of control over events, thus reducing our sense of personal responsibility.

**Lesson 3: When thinking about your goals, ask yourself ‘Will I …?’**

![Powerhouse outcomes template](image)

**Powerhouse Outcomes**

To help you to deliver on your compelling causes, you need to be able to develop your five Powerhouse outcomes, and a simple quarterly outcomes sheet will help you keep them at the front of your mind. You can download a copy of this template at [www.beapowerhouse.co.uk](http://www.beapowerhouse.co.uk). On the five Powerhouse outcomes sheet; make a note of the three-month period that these outcomes cover.
Step 1: A Clear Outcome

For each of your outcomes, give it a motivating title and a short description of what you want to achieve over the three months. This may be a whole outcome, or a step on the way to a larger outcome, so note that down too.

Step 2: Allocate Time to Your Outcomes

Make an estimate of the amount of time each of your outcomes will need. Each quarter will have 65 working days, but you will need three of them to attend to mundane administrative work, which we will cover soon, in the section titled The 5 Per Cent Solution. So allocate between 50 and 60 days across your five Powerhouse outcomes, to allow for some contingency.

People often find that being able to allocate, say, 12 whole days to an initiative feels like a lot – ‘but what about the other stuff I have to do? That will get in the way – I won't be able to spend all of the 12 days on it.’ Well, that's the secret to Powerhouse time planning: actually spending large chunks of unbroken time on single compelling causes. To achieve Powerhouse outcomes, you need to drive down mundane, administrative and time-wasting tasks to an absolute minimum … and focus.

If you think you need more than 60 days for your five causes, then you have too many outcomes. It is better to do fewer things and do them well, so decide which to drop now, rather than find yourself not achieving what you want or, worse still, delivering poor quality results. An alternative to dropping an outcome is to split it into two stages and set this quarter's outcome as completing Stage 1.

Note that if you have a significant number of days of fixed commitment coming up, like training courses or annual leave, reduce the 50 to 60 days accordingly.

Step 3: Plan Each Outcome in Detail

Now you need to take each of your five Powerhouse outcomes and put some detailed planning in, to create the short-term goals that will allow you to track your progress and celebrate your successes. We often call these ‘milestones’. A good way to do this is as a single page in your notebook, or on an outcome specification sheet like the one illustrated below. You can download a copy of this template at www.beapowerhouse.co.uk.

Use your outcome specification sheet to think through the detail of what you are going to be doing, and why. Powerhouse outcomes are worthwhile work, so you will spend a large part of your time on one of three types of activity:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcome Specification</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Will I...?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Detail</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Why does it matter?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Who does it matter to?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When is it needed?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key steps</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Outcome specification sheet**

1. Creative: thinking, imagining and developing new ideas.
3. Relationship-building: talking, listening and helping people.
Use the ‘Detail' section of your outcome specification sheet to write a very specific description of your outcome, the work you will be doing, and where you need to apply most attention if you want to succeed. One of the most valuable Powerhouse habits you can get into is to always ask one simple question of anything worthwhile that you plan to do:

‘What do I need to pay most attention to, if I want to succeed at this?’

These are your critical success factors.

In the ‘When is it needed?’ box, record the final deadline for this Powerhouse outcome. This can stretch well beyond a single quarter and, indeed, some projects can take many years. The outcome you will record on your five outcomes sheet will be a single stage or set of milestones, which you can complete within the quarter.

For most of us, we need to break a big outcome into small steps, just to feel in control and to help us get started. Even if you don't need this motivational push, it still pays to plan (as we'll see in Chapter 3). Think through the key steps, actions or accomplishments along the way, and include as much detail as you like. The most important step is always the first. If you are prone to putting things off, because they seem too complicated or daunting, then make step one (and the next few steps) small and simple.

Saying N.O.

If you are going to apply Powerhouse focus in pursuing a small number of compelling causes, then you will, from time-to-time, need to deal with distractions. In organizations, these usually come from colleagues, asking you to get involved in other, less important pieces of work, or help them with their compelling causes. Some give and take is vital for the smooth running of any organization – and also for the health of your working relationships. Some people's requests will also contribute to your own compelling causes. Others will not.

Evaluate the request carefully and, if you choose to, decline it. For many of us, this is hard. We don't like saying no: it makes us sound grumpy, churlish, uncooperative and negative. We worry how we will be seen, and whether it will destroy our reputation and damage our relationships. Don't. Done properly, a no can be a positive thing.

To make no positive, transform it into a N.O. – a Noble Objection.

A no becomes a Noble Objection when you do it for the right reasons and you say it in a respectful, courteous way. The right reasons are important – this is not an excuse to decline to do valuable work on behalf of your organization. Instead, it must be a considered choice as to which work is the most valuable. When you get this right, you earn more respect; not less. After all, if you just said yes to everything, you'd soon be perceived as an easy touch. And say N.O. with good grace and courtesy. Let them know that, whilst you have to say no, you don't take any pleasure in it. There is a lot more on when to say no and how to say no, in The YES/NO Book.