

CONTENTS

Acknowledgments *xiii*

Introduction Why Is Low-Hanging Fruit So Hard to Spot? *xvii*

**PART 1 HOW TO UNCOVER
LOW-HANGING FRUIT: SEEING
THE PROBLEM IS HARDER
THAN SOLVING THE PROBLEM** **1**

Chapter 1 Put a Price Tag on Everything to
Stop the Waste 5

Chapter 2 “Value Engineer” Your Products to
Eliminate What Your Customers
Won’t Pay For 7

Chapter 3 Ask “*Why?*” Five Times to See the
Real Problem 9

Chapter 4 Ask, “How Do We Know That Is True?” 12

Chapter 5 You Need to Tag It to Bag It: Name
a Problem to Help Everyone See It! 17

Chapter 6 Don’t Be Fooled by Misleading Metrics:
Zero in on the Ugly and Rattle the Status
Quo by Turning Metrics Upside Down 19



Chapter 7	The 80/20 Rule: Everyone Knows It, but Few Use It!	22
Chapter 8	Find Quick-and-Dirty Data to Get Refined Insights	24
Chapter 9	Benchmarking Is a Mistake	26
Chapter 10	Use Brainstorming in a New Way: To Find Problems, Not Solutions	28
PART 2	NOW THAT YOU SEE IT, SOLVE IT!	29
Chapter 11	Ask the People Closest to the Work for Their Ideas	33
Chapter 12	Get Out of Your Office and Go See for Yourself	36
Chapter 13	Stop Ignoring Your Introverts	38
Chapter 14	Turn Complaints into Collaboration: The Interdepartmental Job Swap	41
Chapter 15	Other People Have Great Ideas—Just Ask Your New Hires and Your Vendors!	43
Chapter 16	Does Your Customers' Journey Take Them on a Road Full of Potholes?	47
Chapter 17	The Unintentional Squelch	50
Chapter 18	Stop Brainstorming to Find New Ideas That Move the Profit Needle	52
Chapter 19	Making Problems Harder Can Make Finding Solutions Easier	54
Chapter 20	Use a Checklist—It Works for Fighter Pilots and Brain Surgeons, and It Will Work for You!	56





Chapter 21	Actually . . . Just <i>Don't</i> Do It!	58
Chapter 22	Give People What They Need, Not What They Want	60
Chapter 23	Simplify	62
Chapter 24	Push Work Down to the Lowest-Paid Person Capable of Doing It	64
Chapter 25	Save a Bundle: Take Simple and Low Tech over Sexy and High Tech	66
Chapter 26	Save More than a Bundle: Go No Tech over Low Tech!	68
Chapter 27	Borrow Good Ideas	70
Chapter 28	Force People to Get Help	72
PART 3	MOTIVATE YOUR TEAM TO HARVEST LOW-HANGING FRUIT	73
Chapter 29	Create an Idea-Based Budget	75
Chapter 30	The Five Surprising Words That Keep a Good Executive from Being Great: "I Want Everyone on Board"	77
Chapter 31	If You Want the <i>Money</i> , Spend the <i>Time</i>	79
Chapter 32	Executive Motivators That Demotivate Everyone Else	81
Chapter 33	The Corporate Imposter Syndrome: "The Better I Do, the Worse You'll Think of Me"	82
Chapter 34	Improving the Company Should Be Everyone's "Job One"	84
Chapter 35	Sweat the Small Stuff	86





Chapter 36	Rally the Troops	89
Chapter 37	Catch the Vision or Catch the Bus	94
Chapter 38	Eliminate Corporate Whac-A-Mole	96
Chapter 39	Beat the Competition by First Beating Your Teammates	98
Chapter 40	“Blame the Other Guy” Syndrome	100
Chapter 41	How Dimming the Lights Increases Productivity, and Why Paying Attention Pays Staggering Dividends	102
Chapter 42	Firings Can Boost Motivation	104
PART 4	ONE COMPANY—IT’S NOT AN IMPOSSIBLE DREAM	107
Chapter 43	Form a Steering Committee to Make Sure the Left Hand Knows What the Right Hand Is Doing!	109
Chapter 44	“Pocket Fisherman,” Yes; “Pocket Veto,” No!	112
Chapter 45	Hold Collaboration Workshops	114
Chapter 46	The One Monthly Meeting You Must Hold	116
Chapter 47	Celebrate Good Times, Come On	117
PART 5	DECIDE AND DELIVER	119
Chapter 48	The Three Essential Parts of a GOOD Idea	123





Chapter 49	The Miracle of Deadlines	125
Chapter 50	For Big Results, Focus on Small Ideas	127
Chapter 51	Fight the War with the Army You Have, Not the One You Want	129
Chapter 52	Add to Your Army Only When Necessary	131
Chapter 53	Create an “Idea” Flight Plan That Coordinates Implementation	132
Chapter 54	The People Who Implement the Idea Should Help to Develop the Idea: Make Sure the Buy-In Is Built In	134
PART 6	ACCOUNTABILITY: THE HOLY GRAIL!	137
Chapter 55	The Devil’s in the Details: Track Every Idea, Every Dollar, Every Month	139
Chapter 56	The Golden Rule: Withdraw and Replace	141
Chapter 57	Follow the Money All the Way to the Budget	142
Chapter 58	Don’t Let Someone Else Dictate the Value of the Ideas You Implement	144
Chapter 59	Want to Actually See the Earnings? Lock the Vault	146
Chapter 60	Track Your Position Plan	148
Chapter 61	It’s Not What You Start, It’s What You Finish	149





Chapter 62	ROI: Making the Investment Is Easy, Now Make Sure You Get the Return	151
Chapter 63	Learn from Your Mistakes: The After-Action Report	153
PART 7	NEED MORE TIME? IT'S EASIER TO FIND THAN YOU THINK!	155
Chapter 64	“Everyone Is Entitled to Their Own Opinion, but Not Their Own Facts”	159
Chapter 65	Replace Agendas with Game Plans	161
Chapter 66	Ban Meeting Tourists	163
Chapter 67	Don't Have a 60-Minute Meeting to Do 22 Minutes of Work	164
Chapter 68	Watch the Clock!	165
Chapter 69	Use Hard Starts, Not Just Hard Stops, for Your Meetings	166
Chapter 70	The Obligation to Dissent	167
Chapter 71	Talk More, E-Mail Less	170
Chapter 72	PowerPoint Kills	171
Chapter 73	Schedule a Little “Me” Time	173
Chapter 74	If You Feel Busy, Take on Even More Important Work	175
Chapter 75	Increase Your Return on Time	176
Chapter 76	In Order to Shine, Have Other People Do Your Work!	177





Chapter 77	Mom Should Have Said, “ <i>Don’t</i> Always Do Your Best!”	178
	You Can Find the Time—Now Use It Wisely!	180
PART 8	WIN OVER THE SKEPTICS, CYNICS, AND FAINT OF HEART!	189
PART 9	P.S. FOR OUR C-SUITE READERS (AND THOSE ASPIRING TO GET THERE)!	191
	And a Few More Thoughts for Everyone . . . : Fight Decision Fatigue	196
	<i>In Conclusion</i>	<i>199</i>

