



Use bias towards action to get more done and work less.

Practical Strategy



Problem

Early stage startups are notorious for lots of overtime, competing priorities, crazy deadlines, endless pivots, and effectively no work life balance.

Elon has an awesome work ethic and loves the “work grind”, many people use him as an example to justify the crazy hours they work and expect of others.

Do you dare to ask if crazy work hours are really necessary?

Working overtime all the time can be considered a “brute force” approach, I would like to think we can be smarter than that. There are simple tactics you can adopt to get things done without having to sacrifice your personal time.



Solution

Let me share with you some useful tactics that will :

- put in place a system to get things done fast
- turn you into a superstar in the eyes of your team and leadership
- help you achieve work life balance

The key to success is to :

- adopt bias towards action, avoid analysis paralysis, own it and go, just get started
- identify achievable weekly to dos for everyone on the team
- focus on opportunities to enable your team
- apply Pareto principle, focus early on the 20% of the work that delivers 80% of the value



Outcomes

Your tactics will provide transparency around all the tasks identified and energize the team as work gets done every week. The bias towards action will create momentum to unblock the team and avoid analysis paralysis, this in turn enables the team to make a larger impact.

As the entire team learns to move forward, the pace of work should accelerate. The most observable outcome each week will be ever increasing amount of work output, this accomplishment will enable the team to recognize their efforts.

But the most important outcome is that you and your team may be able to **to avoid overtime, lower stress levels** and begin the journey towards **work life balance**.

This technique works equally well for leaders at all levels and individual contributors.



Bias towards action

Naval Ravikant says "All of the really successful people I know have a really strong action bias. They just do things."

Jeff Bezos has one of the principal leadership values defined as bias for action and it reads as follows "Speed matters in business. Many decisions and actions are reversible and do not need extensive study. We value calculated risk taking."

You can't possibly predict the future, and all of its outcomes. You can only approximate and estimate based on new input and past experience in order to calculate the risk. The bias towards action is the catalyst needed to move you forward, with every completed task you reduce the risk as you move towards a working solution.

The key is to minimize the risks and focus on taking baby steps to move forward, then just go. Apply Pareto principle (80/20 rule) to identify the activities that deliver the most value so that they can be tackled first. Don't overthink everything, you must avoid analysis paralysis at all costs.



Enable your team

Teams effectiveness often defaults to the lowest common denominator, entropy creeps in and work slows down gradually over time. You can combat this by providing transparency around all the tasks that need to get done. Structure the work so that next set of tasks is identified the week prior, set expectations that they must be done each week, towards the end of the week conduct weekly task status review with all team members participating.

Such work cadence combined with everyone's bias towards action will soon lead to an increased team momentum.

Find ways to enable the team to move faster, it could be as simple as some white board sessions to share knowledge. Look for bottlenecks that slow everything down, ask which activities could be avoided, automated or outsourced and understand root cause of overtime work, pain points and gripes. Apply Pareto principle (80/20 rule) to identify the activities that deliver the most value to the team so that they can be tackled first.

These tactics do not conflict with agile or scrum, but they tend to become the go to methodology in fast paced and highly productive engineering teams.

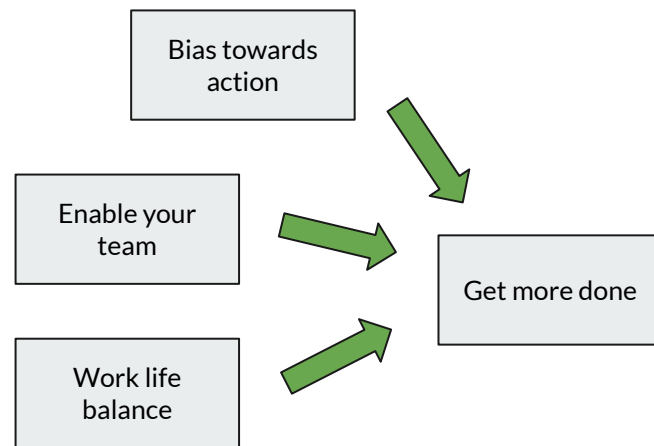


Now we celebrate!

How does this help me?

This approach brings about a WIN-WIN-WIN situation for you, your team and the management.

- Your enabled team makes an impact with better outcomes and gains reduced stress levels and personal time.
- Management can observe beneficial impact of your work across the team, and will reduce pressure on the team accordingly leading to reduced stress and improved work life balance.
- Your bias towards action approach positively impacts the team leading to an increased productivity and better work life balance as everyone gets more done.



Questions?

Filip Szalewicz
fszale@gmail.com