How to Manage Your Tasks and Get Results

1 The Zen of Results

J.D. Meier

Blog: http://SourcesOfInsight.com/jmeier

"Absorb what is useful, reject what is

useless, add what is specifically your own.“

– Bruce Lee

2 A Short Story – “Deliver Incremental Value”

 It was a warm, sunny day. I was driving a teammate to our lunch destination – our favorite pizza

spot, where great thoughts happen.

 When I glanced into my rear-view mirror, I thought about our enormous backlog. It felt like a great

weight. I just wanted a fresh start, with the wisdom of our backlog, but without the weight.

 It was at that moment that I realized what bothered me most about our backlog. It wasn’t the backlog

itself. It was the mindset. I turned to my colleague and said, we need to think in terms of value

delivered. We need to get out of the backlog burn-down mindset.

 My colleague pondered. I continued. If we think in terms of value delivered, we leverage timing and

opportunity. The problem with a backlog is rot. What if, instead, we viewed it as an input stream, but

we actively triage delivering value each day? My colleague’s eyes lit up. The light-bulbs went off.

 This mind-set puts the key question front and center – “what’s the next best thing we can do, right

now?”. The next best thing may happen to be the next item in the backlog. Or it may be responding

to an emerging customer need. Or it may be nailing a fleeting window of opportunity. Asking the

question helps reveal the answer.

 Either way, the mind-set renewed us. The mindset was the key. We were once again in control of

our results. We were deliberately carving out value and that felt good. The lesson I learned was …

… Think in value delivered over backlog burn-down!

- J.D. Meier