

**Hacking Work**

# Building Simpler Companies

## A STARTER KIT

Companion piece to our book,  
HACKING WORK, By Bill Jensen and Josh Klein,  
from ongoing SEARCH FOR A SIMPLER WAY research by The Jensen Group

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**Bill Jensen** • [Bill@HackingWork.com](mailto:Bill@HackingWork.com)

**Josh Klein** • [Josh@HackingWork.com](mailto:Josh@HackingWork.com)

**[www.HackingWork.com](http://www.HackingWork.com)**

Also see our other sites:

[www.simplerwork.com](http://www.simplerwork.com)

[www.josh.is](http://www.josh.is)

THE NEW COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE

# Simplicity is all about **power**

The power to do **less** of what doesn't matter and **more** of what does



**SIMPLER FOR WHOM?**

**COMPANY**

(Organizational Strategies,  
Processes, Culture, etc.)

**EXECUTIVES**

**WORKFORCE**

(All individuals in Company)

**CUSTOMERS**

(Products, Services, Processes  
at Individual-Level, Not Market-Level)

## POP QUIZ

# Since **simplicity** is

the power to do **less** of what doesn't matter and **more** of what does...

Which group **consistently** gets the **most attention** paid to simplifying things for them?\*

Consistently giving them the **most power to do less** of what doesn't really matter

- COMPANY**
- EXECUTIVES**
- WORKFORCE**
- CUSTOMERS**



Which group **consistently** gets the **least attention** paid to simplifying things for them?\*

Consistently giving them the **least power to do less** of what doesn't really matter

- COMPANY**
- EXECUTIVES**
- WORKFORCE**
- CUSTOMERS**

# THE POWER TO **DO LESS** OF WHAT **DOESN'T MATTER**

Which group  
**consistently**  
gets the  
**most attention**  
paid to  
simplifying things  
for them?



Which group  
**consistently**  
gets the  
**least attention**  
paid to  
simplifying things  
for them?

## **X** EXECUTIVES

Consistently highest response in all different types of companies:

**Between 50% to 97% stating “most attention”.**

Depending on the degree of customer focus within each company, either Customers or the Company came up as next highest

## **X** WORKFORCE

Consistently highest response in all different types of companies:

**Between 77% to 100% stating “least attention”.**

Even if one wishes to debate the “most attention” finding, one finding is undeniable:

Of the four main stakeholder groups, **our workforce believes they have the least power to do less of what doesn't matter...**

That simplifying their workload, their to-do's gets the least attention

## WHAT THIS MEANS TO YOU

# Up to 70% Gain or Loss

Except in the **rarest** of customer-, entrepreneurial- or innovation-focused companies...

Most everything that is designed to get work done  
is **corporate-centered**



Designed to make it easier for the company and its leaders to consistently, predictably meet complex marketplace, customer and shareholder demands

Of course, corporate-centered design will not go away. If it did, companies couldn't compete or produce effectively

## IF YOUR GOAL IS TO TRULY CREATE A SIMPLER COMPANY

A lot more of what you build, measure and use  
to get work done will have to be **user-centered**



Designed to make it easier for each individual to meet the complex, ever-changing and conflicting demands of their jobs

## CURRENT COST DUE TO THIS LACK OF SIMPLICITY

**Drain** on productivity and effectiveness: from **10% to 70%\***

# The New Compass

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**Ease-of-use**



and **reduced-use-of-time**



are equal to

—and sometimes more important than —

recognition, compassion, inclusion, rewards, process,

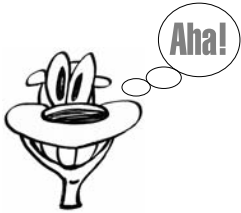
strategy, structure, penalties, loyalty and hierarchy

in their **ability to drive human behavior.**<sup>1</sup>

1. Jensen Group, *Search for a Simpler Way*, ongoing study, begun 1992: By 1994, ease-of-use and time sensitivity appeared as critical trends within communication.

As we expanded our study into all areas of organizational effectiveness, with more than 500,000 people in over 25 countries, these trends have only grown stronger.

# Why Simple Matters



## **It's about work:** How it really gets done

Think about it this way: If your favorite airline truly pampered you, gave you lots of rewards, perks, privileges and status, and flew to all your favorite destinations — but made it difficult to get where you were going — would you keep flying them? (That's what we thought!) Well, the same applies to our work, and the companies that employ us.

The design of work has not kept up with the needs of work. In most companies, doing great work is not as easy as it should be. That's because most everything companies design to get work done is still *corporate-centered*. In shifting to knowledge and service work — where every teammate's understanding, clarity, interactions and choices could be the difference between success and failure, or between MoreBetterFaster and not good enough, not fast enough — the tools, support, processes and information flow need to be a lot more *user-centered*.

The Jensen Group has been studying the space where **user-centered design also yields better results for the company and their customers.** The **SimplerWork Index™** builds simpler companies by understanding the six disciplines that make it a lot easier to get stuff done *and* deliver business results.

# SimplerWork Index™ Survey

STRONGLY  
AGREE

AGREE

NEITHER  
AGREE/  
DISAGREE

DISAGREE

STRONGLY  
DISAGREE

## 1. Competing on Clarity

My manager organizes and shares information in ways that help me work smarter and faster

## 2. Navigation

In my workplace, it is easy for me to find whomever or whatever I need to work smart enough, fast enough

## 3. Fulfillment of Basics

In my workplace, it is easy to get what I need to get my work done—right information, right way, in the right amount

## 4. Usability

In my workplace, corporate-built stuff\* is easy to use

\*Tools, training, instructions, information technology, etc.; all that is designed to help you do your work

## 5. Speed

In my workplace, that same corporate-built stuff gets me what I need, as fast as I need it

## 6. Time

My company is respectful of my time and attention, and is focused on using it wisely and effectively

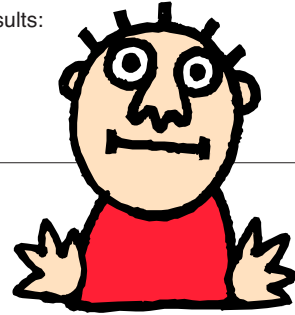
# New View of Work Design

**1992 to 1999:** Developed Index; Borrowed from the world of consumerism where respect's impact on the bottom-line had already been proven. Because all consumer research shows that perfecting how they treat you in areas of Clarity/Navigation/Fulfillment/Usability/Speed/and Time means you will buy more, and stay as a loyal customer!

**TO DATE, 2009:** Surveyed over 220,000 individuals in more than 2,500 companies. Results:

**Four or more Unfavorable: 67%**

**Four or more Favorable: 19%**



## Competing on Clarity

Evaluates manager's effectiveness in helping individual work smarter and faster

**49% favorable**

## Navigation

Evaluates company's effectiveness in helping individual find who or what s/he needs

**31% favorable**

## Fulfillment of Basics

Evaluates company's effectiveness in work-oriented communication and knowledge management

**27% favorable**

## Usability

Evaluates company's effectiveness in all that it designs to help people get tasks done

**20% favorable**

## Speed

Evaluates company's effectiveness in enabling employees to work in a 24/7, ever-faster world

**19% favorable**

## Time

Evaluates company's respect for employees' time as an asset to be invested

**11% favorable**

# So What?

If you are an executive in a large company (entrepreneurial environments fare much better) with 100 employees...

**51** have to go back to their manager again and again to figure out what they're supposed to do

**69** can't find what they need to do their best

**73** are filling in the blanks for themselves on task/goal-communication

**80** think their son's X-Box works better than the tools you supply

**81** think you are email when it comes pushing speed down the chain of command, and snailmail when it comes to acting on employee feedback

**89** have been trained by the company to guard their time, or at least to be dubious and have second thoughts or hang back, when asked to give more of it

The Index completely changes how you look at **productivity, efficiency,** and **effectiveness**

# Sweet Spots<sup>1</sup>

Go too far in user-centered design and you lose corporate controls, don't go far enough and you lose efficiencies, speed, innovation and your best talent



THE **BIGGEST REASON** BUILDING A SIMPLER COMPANY WILL BE SUPER IMPORTANT

# GenY

is the first generation in human history (...no, we're not exaggerating!...)  
to be raised on the

## **total democratization of information.**


(Google-like access to whatever they need, how they need it, when they need it...Growing more user-centered every day.)

To deliver what all GenYers are seeking —

## **Personal Productivity:**

- Know me
  - Know my work
  - Know what I need
  - Know how to help me
  - Know how to tailor it all for me so I can be my best
- employers will have to build simpler,  
more user-centered companies



“It’s all about  
making it **easier**  
for me  to do  
**great work.**”



# Getting Started

**Changing the conversation** among your senior execs,  
and within your organization,  
is the most important first step

(Self-awareness, evaluation, understanding and discussion what needs to change is where every big change begins)

**1 Survey:** Use the SimplerWork Index Survey

Sample a representative cross-section of your workforce. Just to begin the conversation, can be as little as 100 people

**2 Use the New Lens:** What are your biggest Aha's?

Truly detailed data-crunching can come later. Right now, just consider: How different is the workforce's view from the senior team's?

**3 Change the Conversation**

How could building a simpler company — being far more user-centered in key areas — be a new competitive advantage in the marketplace and in the war for talent?

## THE CV OF

# A Simpleton



### ABOUT THE FOOL BEHIND THE TOOLS

*Harvard Business Review*, CNBC and *Fast Company* have called **Bill Jensen**

today's foremost expert on work complexity and cutting through clutter to what really matters.

He has spent the past two decades studying how work gets done. (Much of what he's found horrifies him.)

He is an internationally-acclaimed author and speaker who is known for provocative ideas, extremely useful content, and his passion for making it easier for everyone to work smarter.

- His first book, *Simplicity*, was the Number 5 Leadership/Management book on Amazon in 2000.
- His latest best-seller is *Simplicity Survival Handbook: 32 Ways to Do Less and Accomplish More*.
- His upcoming book, *Hacking Work: Breaking Stupid Rules for Smart Results* reveals an underground army of benevolent hackers — breaking all sorts of rules so everyone can do great work.

Bill holds degrees in Communication Design and Organizational Development.

He's CEO of The Jensen Group, whose mission is: To make it easier to get stuff done.

Among the Jensen Group's clients are GE, Bank of America, Genentech, Pfizer, Johnson&Johnson, NASA, Walt Disney World, American Express, the US Navy SEALs, the government of Ontario, Singapore Institute of Mgmt, Guangzhou China Development District, and the Swedish Post Office.



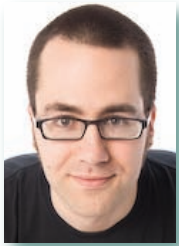
Some people see things that are and ask, Why?

Some people dream of things that never were and ask, Why not?

Some people have to go to work and don't have time for all that...

**George Carlin**

bill@hackingwork.com  
bill@simplerwork.com



THE CV OF

# A Hacker

“Josh Klein is the quintessential hacker — someone who takes his greatest joy from combining the unexpected and seeing the result work in new and better ways.”

Josh has practiced and was trained, both formally and informally, in hacking — social systems, computer networks, institutions, consumer hardware, animal behavior, and, most recently, the publishing industry. When he’s not taking things apart or putting them back together again he speaks, writes, and consults on new and emerging technologies that improve people’s lives — and has tremendous fun doing it.

Most of Josh’s time is spent speaking to companies and at conferences such as Gadgetoff, TED, SICS, LA-IP, BIF, and Serious Play, and he has appeared on the Sundance Channel, Nova, and other programs. He also spends a significant amount of time consulting to companies large and small, such as Microsoft, Oracle, Frog Design, Nokia, Johns Hopkins, Bankinter, The United States Office of the Director of National Intelligence, and others.

But really what Josh does is this: he examines systems, he takes them apart, and he puts different pieces together to produce something new and more effective.

He hacks. Everything.

[josh@hackingwork.com](mailto:josh@hackingwork.com)  
[www.hackingwork.com](http://www.hackingwork.com)

[josh@josh.is](mailto:josh@josh.is)  
[www.josh.is](http://www.josh.is)