



Review

Making Ideas Happen: Overcoming Obstacles Between Vision & Reality

Scott Belsky. New York: Portfolio, 2010. 256pp. ISBN: 978-1-5918-4312-2. \$25.95

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Making Ideas Happen: Overcoming Obstacles Between Vision & Reality is a book for everyone who has ever been frustrated by watching good ideas die for lack of proper leadership or follow-through. Scott Belsky, founder and CEO of Behance, offers practical steps for project management and inspiring examples of creative people who fostered their dreams into reality. Although it is an engaging and easy read, this book should be studied like a textbook until the concepts become second nature.

Belsky recommends three major components of managing projects that, when combined, will lead to successful completion: organization and execution, forces of community, and leadership capability. The section on organization and execution is divided into "Action Steps," "Backburner Items," and "References"—all practical ways for overcoming the reactionary way we deal with the influx of information facing us each day. Belsky then covers the multitude of reasons why great ideas are rarely executed in isolation. Involving people, even naysayers and competitors, helps us to kill bad ideas, sharpen the focus of a project, and be accountable for staying on track. Consensus-driven teams, he warns, "run the risk of settling on what offends no one and satisfies no one" (p. 188). Great ideas can become mediocre when sacrificed to the idea of making everyone agree. Belsky addresses the challenges of leadership. He stresses the impor-

tance of teams that have good chemistry, the ability to motivate others, and the need to evaluate yourself as a leader for any barriers to teamwork you may harbor. The most difficult part of good leadership is being willing to evaluate your natural tendency to own projects.

Several startling, counterintuitive ideas emerge from the book. In the brainstorming process, it is necessary to liberally kill ideas in order to stay focused on the project at hand. Creative people function well when given freedom to move outside the office. Flex time is important as long as the productivity level remains high. Having fun is often critical to seeing a project through to completion. Nothing kills creativity like being paid for it. In the current economic downturn, where libraries are fighting for survival, economic incentives are not on the horizon. Intrinsic reward systems are much more viable.

The examples in Belsky's book are generally from the corporate world, but the concepts he presents translate well to libraries of all kinds. Everyone should read this book and perhaps own it so they can refer to it. The book is particularly recommended for those in leadership roles. Libraries have been locked within bureaucratic systems that have led to stagnancy that is being challenged by competition from the Internet. We have often been slow to adapt to what the users expect. It is time for some creative thinking, flexibility, and adaptability. Belsky's examples show that bold moves can work if planned and organized well, involve the feedback of many types of people, and are led by those who are sometimes willing to step out of the way to let projects flourish.

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