

For Immediate Release:

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Can business success really be *Awesomely Simple*?

**Business veteran John Spence says yes and has the playbook to
conquering the complexity**

Awesomely Simple:

Essential Business Strategies for Turning Ideas Into Action

By John Spence

“John Spence gets it: Simplicity is the new gold standard. Businesses that get simple, shed expenses and boost customer loyalty. The new talent to have is simplicity-skills. Spence provides simple, yet surprising recommendations on how to take the complex out of business life.

Tim Sanders

Author of *Love Is The Killer App: How To Win Business and Influence Friends*

Today's business leaders face a fast-moving and brutally competitive environment – a world where global competition and technology have ushered in a new era of complexity and speed. But one business consultant, with an enviable client list (Microsoft, IBM, and GE among them) and a reputation for cutting through complicated business processes to find simple solutions says most of the problems he sees are crucial, but not necessarily complex ones. In short, author John Spence says business does not have to be so complicated. Further, he's proven over and over

again in his own work around the globe that focusing on the 6 things that matter most yields powerful results with less angst and wasted intellectual and personal energy.

AWESOMELY SIMPLE: Essential Business Strategies for Turning Ideas Into Action

(Jossey-Bass; hardcover; September 8, 2009) examines the issues that Spence hears time and again when he is out on the road 220 days a year, working with companies worldwide to figure out how to solve their biggest problems. It offers a strategy to address six key business functions that currently eat up way too much time.

The six strategies – Vivid Vision, Best People, Robust Communication, Sense of Urgency, Disciplined Execution and Extreme Customer Focus – are what Spence says are at the core of every successful company or organization. “The book,” writes Spence, “attempts to make managing these six key functions awesomely simple – so simple, that instead of spending 80 percent of your time trying to put out completely avoidable fires, and just 20 percent of your time trying to grow, innovate and differentiate your business – you are able to do the reverse.”

AWESOMELY SIMPLE provides the clear roadmap and a robust toolkit for applying these simple strategies and building lasting business success. “Almost every business person I meet and consult with admits that they don’t focus keenly enough on the six key areas,” says Spence.. “I wrote this book to make the strategies easy to understand, but more importantly, easy to implement so that, that they can focus more time and energy on the specific actions steps that will take their business to the next level.” **AWESOMELY SIMPLE** is filled with audits, workshops, and examples so that the book can serve as a handbook and guide for any leader who aspires to build and grow his organization.

John Spence has served as Managing Partner of a highly respected business improvement consultancy that delivers guidance and executive education programs to clients worldwide. Through his work, he has presented workshops, speeches and management consulting to more than 300 organizations including: AT&T, IBM, GE Capital, NCR and The US Navy, among others. Spence has been a guest lecturer at over 90 colleges and universities across the United States and has served on the Board of Directors for the University of Florida’s Center for

Entrepreneurship & Innovation and as a senior instructor at the Cornell University Leadership Development School. He is also the author of “Excellence by Design: Leadership.”

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AWESOMELY SIMPLE: Essential Business Strategies for Turning Ideas Into Action

John Spence provides six fundamental strategies essential for success in business:

1. Vivid Vision – Creating a vivid vision is an imperative step for every company. A vivid vision is an exciting, inspiring and realistic image of what the company wants to accomplish; it gives everyone involved a clear understanding of why the company exists and what each person is working to achieve.

2. Best People – Business success depends on hiring – and keeping – talented employees. As competition continues to increase across every industry, it has become more essential than ever to build a strong foundation focused on continuous innovation and superior customer service, which can only be delivered by highly talented people.

3. Robust Communication – Communication is complex, regardless of whether you're in a company with five or 20,000 employees. However, for a business to be successful, honest, open and courageous communication is essential, both on an organizational and an interpersonal level.

4. Sense of Urgency – Success depends on speed. From your ability to deliver what your customers want the second they want it, to making sure your new product hits the market before your competitors, business survival depends on your ability to make things happen *now*.

5. Disciplined Execution – While success depends on speed, success also depends on flawless, innovative and effective execution. Your employees must understand the need to work quickly and the importance of using tools, systems and processes that allow them to do just that and still produce excellent results.

6. Extreme Customer Focus – Competitors can copy your products, imitate your offerings, gain access to your distribution channels and match or beat your prices – the only competitive differentiator left is to create a company with extreme customer focus, provided by your highly talented employees. While many companies still don't understand its importance, providing excellent customer service is the foundation of building a successful company.

Praise for AWESOMELY SIMPLE

“John Spence's message in *Awesomely Simple* is like a bucket of cold water in the face of any business leader trying to figure out the complexities of success. The message is that it's not complex at all. Business success is simple. Not easy. But simple. Whatever your business, read this book. John cuts through the clutter and gives you six core strategies to follow. Simple.”

-Joe Calloway

Author of *Becoming A Category Of One*

“Reducing hundreds of management books into a clear and concise road map for success, John Spence delivers six core strategies that will energize and invigorate any leader. *Awesomely Simple* captures the lessons learned from years of consulting many of America's greatest companies making this a handbook for those passionate about excellence and competitive advantage.

-Bill Yancey

President/CEO, Penson Financial Services, Inc.

“What we love about John is his ability to take the complex business and financial services world we live in, and make it EASY for all of us to understand. John has developed a great relationship with our Agents and Leadership teams. *Awesomely Simple* will help everyone make goal setting, strategy, and vision more focused on Relationships and People, and that is our core.”

-Randy Schleeter

Agency Field Executive, State Farm Insurance and Financial Services

“John Spence knows how to make the complex simple. Read this book.”

-Rick Barrera

CEO, Overpromise, Inc.

“Can business success really be *Awesomely Simple*? The answer is an enthusiastic YES! if you apply John Spence's lessons. Read this book. Have everyone in your organization read this book. Most important, apply its lessons, and you, too, can deliver amazing results.”

-Randy G. Pennington

Author, *Results Rule! Build a Culture that Blows the Competition Away*

John Spence Speaks Out on:

Why talent matters more now than ever:

Let's just face up to reality. Products across the globe—even those that traditionally would have been considered unique and valuable—are becoming commoditized. Every company, in every industry, is feeling the squeeze of increased competition and extremely well informed consumers who have unprecedented access to the information needed to make a buying decision. The old bastions of competitive advantage—location, access to capital, proprietary technology, distribution channels, etc.—are in most cases no longer relevant. To my mind, the only truly sustainable competitive advantage left is the creation of a corporate culture that is solidly built on a foundation of **continuous innovation** and **extreme customer focus** - both of which can only be delivered by highly talented people.

The importance of interpersonal communication skills:

The number one factor that drives superior *organizational communications* is superior *interpersonal communication skills*. If the people inside of the organization do not have the skills, tools and motivation to strive for superb interpersonal communications, there is no way to achieve effective organizational communications. The first is a function of the second.

The danger of not being agile in today's business culture:

If speed = success, then bureaucracy = failure.

To create a culture that allows your top talent to deliver outstanding work with a high sense of urgency, it is essential that you eliminate every possible impediment to fast action and the free flow of information across every level of the organization. Successful leaders give their people all of the tools, information and resources they need to excel at their jobs, then get out of their way. To quote my friends at Microsoft: "Stop the insanity." Stop any meeting, discontinue any report, eliminate any procedure, kill any rule, revamp any process that does not add **real** value to the organization and allow people to do their jobs more efficiently, effectively and quickly. Read that last sentence again, it is awesomely simple... and true.

Why execution is vital:

It is one thing to understand intellectually what you need to do to make your organization successful, but it is a completely different thing to be able to create a culture of disciplined execution that takes your great ideas and plans and turns them into consistently well executed actions. Peter Drucker, the most famous management thinker of our time, identified "the ability to deliver results" as the primary skill of a leader and the only true measure of organizational effectiveness. Businesses that create sustained success are sharply focused on a set of core competencies and then relentlessly execute on those competencies better than the competition to create strategic advantage. Businesses that fail might have the best of intentions, good people,

great products and a solid plan for success, but cannot deliver results because they are not disciplined in executing on their most important goals day in and day out.

Being a Customer-Focused Company:

If I had a soapbox close by, I'd be up on top of it. I believe so strongly that if you take everything else you have learned so far in this book: well communicated vision for the future, best people, courageous communication + transparency, a culture of urgency, and disciplined execution... and focus all of it *intensely* on listening to your customers, delivering superior customer service, and building strong relationships with your customers -- *you will dominate your market*. I said it earlier in the book, but it bears repeating: the only sustainable competitive differentiator left to most businesses today is creating a **culture** of *continuous innovation* and *extreme customer focus* (which are both driven by *highly talented people*). Competitors can copy your products, they can copy your processes and systems, they can buy or reverse engineer your technology, they can gain access to the same or similar distribution channels, they can meet or beat you on just about every front except for building a team of talented people that strive every single day for continuous incremental improvements across the organization and who deliver consistently superior customer service (as defined by the customer).