

# KellerCenter Research Report



» June 2013, Volume 6, Issue 2

## Extraordinary Results Require ONE Thing

*Curtis Schroeder, MBA Candidate - Associate Editor, Keller Center Research Report*

## Do Your Customers *Really* Want a Relationship With You?

*Christopher P. Blocker, PhD, Lance A. Bettencourt, PhD, Mark B. Houston, PhD, and Daniel J. Flint, PhD*

## Intergenerational Relationship Selling for Real Estate

*Michael L. Mallin, PhD and Ellen Bolman Pullins, PhD*

## It Takes Two to Tango: How Empathy Affects Sales Encounters

*Jan Wieseke, PhD, Anja Geigenmüller, PhD, and Florian Kraus, PhD*

## Diversification and the Rise of Cultural Sales

*Xiao-Ping Chen, PhD, Dong Liu, PhD, and Rebecca Portnoy, PhD*

## INSIDER: Cracking the Sales Management Code

*Dennis Thé, MBA*

## INSIDER: LinkedIn for Business Development

*Susan Monaghan, MBA Candidate*

# Extraordinary Results Require ONE Thing

Curtis Schroeder, MBA Candidate – Associate Editor, Keller Center Research Report

Life's demands and responsibilities, both personally and professionally, increase as we get older. Our families grow, we look to advance further up the corporate ladder, and the pressure to “achieve” only intensifies. We employ countless strategies to alleviate this pressure and boost productivity: some buy self-help books or hire career coaches, and some just accept the pressure as part of the cost of doing business. We might begin to think we need to harness more self discipline, exert more willpower, lower our expectations, or abandon our dreams altogether to achieve some semblance of accomplishment in our lives.

Gary Keller, co-founder and chairman of the board of Keller Williams Realty International (KWRI), and Jay Papasan, executive editor and vice president of publishing at KWRI, contend that achieving results and happiness is much more simple. In fact, Keller and Papasan argue that each of our personal and professional ambitions should point back to ONE question:

*“What’s the ONE Thing I can do such that by doing it everything else will be easier or unnecessary?”*

This simple strategy – or the “Focusing Question,” as Keller and Papasan call it – can help real estate professionals (and any individual) live purposefully and productively. In their 2013 book, *The ONE Thing*, Keller and Papasan address the importance of identification and implementation through the Focusing Question technique to help individuals accomplish extraordinary results.



## To Conquer Mount Everest, Knock Down the Lead Domino

Achieving success is a sequential process – it is not the result of a single decision or activity. Rather, success is achieved incrementally until a specific goal or task is accomplished. To illustrate the power of sequential success, the authors cite physicist Lorne Whitehead. Professor Whitehead’s experimentation reveals that a single domino can knock down another domino that is up to 50 percent larger than itself. Using this logic and considering a sequence of dominos, each 50 percent larger than the one before, the 10<sup>th</sup> domino in the sequence would be roughly as tall as NFL quarterback Peyton Manning, and the 31<sup>st</sup> domino would be 3,000 feet taller than Mount Everest. By simply setting the first domino in motion, a domino larger than Mount Everest can eventually fall.

The point the authors make is that taking the first step (and setting subsequent steps into motion) is crucial. There is power in each decision we make and activity we engage in, so we must make each one count. Keller and Papasan believe this all points back to the ONE Thing – the lead domino – that sets extraordinary results in motion. Identifying your ONE Thing is an important part of the process, and requires significant thought and consideration.

Consider beginning your day with the Focusing Question: *What is the ONE Thing I can do today such that everything else will be easier or unnecessary?* Keller and Papasan recommend starting with the “big stuff” – spiritual life, physical health, relationships, job, business, and financial life (and in that order). By knocking-down the lead domino, you set your goals in motion and give yourself the opportunity to achieve results greater than you imagined you could achieve.

### **A Great Question and a Great Answer**

As asking Focusing Questions become more habitual, they can be reframed to address specific areas of life and business. To achieve maximum results, though, the authors contend that there are *good* questions and there are *great* questions. To help readers identify the difference and to leverage the power of a great question, they introduce a four-pronged model of question types: 1) *Small & Specific Questions* (e.g., “What can I do to increase sales by 5% this year?”), 2) *Small & Broad Questions* (e.g., “What can I do to increase sales?”), 3) *Big & Broad Questions* (e.g., “What can I do to double sales?”), and 4) *Big & Specific Questions* (e.g., “What can I do to double sales in six months?”).

Great questions are *Big & Specific* – they contain a big goal (“What can I do to double sales...”) and a specific timeframe (“...in six months”) for accomplishing it. The questioning process also requires individuals to consider a second component, though – the answer. Answers compel us to think beyond “what” and focus on “how.”

Keller and Papasan also note that there are *good* answers and *great* answers, and that answers fall into three categories: 1) *Doable* (easiest to seek, within scope of skills and experience), 2) *Stretch* (within reach, but at the farthest end of skills and experience), and 3) *Possibility* (exists beyond what is already known and being done).

Great answers are *Possibility* answers – rather than checking-off a task from the list, possibility answers require individuals to engage in a transformative process. Through benchmarking (i.e., leveraging the research and experience of other individuals or companies) and trending (i.e., anticipating tomorrow’s outcomes), possibility answers are achievable. Although this may be the more challenging and time-intensive approach, the potential outcomes are much greater.

## **Live With Purpose, By Priority, and For Productivity**

*Identifying and implementing* the ONE Thing are two separate tasks. Keller and Papasan understand that without implementation, the ONE Thing strategy is rendered ineffective. The implementation formula the authors suggest is framed by three tenets: to *Live With Purpose*, *Live By Priority*, and *Live for Productivity*.

### *Live With Purpose*

Living with purpose means living for something “bigger” than yourself. Having a purpose driving all you do can ultimately bring you meaning and joy. You can find your purpose by first seeking to understand what drives you: *What keeps you going in the face of adversity? What gets you excited?* Pick a direction and identify a purpose – your purpose can change, but you should begin seeking it now.

### *Live By Priority*

In business or personal life, the priority you should focus on is the one that most effectively helps you achieve your purpose. There may be many priorities across the different areas of your life, but when you seek to prioritize you will discover there is one priority that is the most important. To begin the prioritization process, first set a future goal. Write the goal down on paper, and then write down the necessary steps to achieve it. Visualizing the steps will help you identify top priorities and put together a plan of action for implementation.

### *Live For Productivity*

Productivity begins by taking the first step. Leverage the work you accomplished in identifying your purpose and priorities and then get to work. Keller and Papasan argue that the best way to make your ONE Thing happen is to “time block” – that is, setting time aside time each day to focus on accomplishing your ONE Thing. Do not let yourself get distracted during this block (put away your phone, email) and do whatever you can to spend the full amount of time you allot. The authors believe your time block is the most important meeting of the day, so you need to protect it.

Purpose is the guiding force that drives prioritization. Prioritization promotes productivity. And productive activities yield results. While most individuals look first to be productive, they often fail to realize the process that makes productivity possible – and that productivity is best achieved through purpose-driven prioritization.

## **What This Means for Real Estate Professionals**

Application of these concepts across all facets of life is important for holistic development and achievement. Real estate professionals can use this framework in daily business activities, as

well, to drive revenue, improve customer satisfaction, and to achieve a more meaningful work life, among others.

Consider how you might identify and implement the ONE Thing to impact your business:

*As A Real Estate Professional...*

- What is the ONE Thing I can do to improve *(big goal)* by *(specific timeframe)*?
- What is the ONE Thing I can do to ensure I *(big goal)* by *(specific timeframe)*?
- What is the ONE Thing I can do to make my company more *(big goal)* by *(specific timeframe)*?

*As A Real Estate Professional...*

- My *purpose* is to \_\_\_\_\_.
- My *priority* is to \_\_\_\_\_.
- I will achieve *productivity* by blocking time and focusing on my ONE Thing *(days)* from *(time)* to *(time)*.

## References

Keller, Gary and Jay Papasan (2013), *The One Thing: The Surprisingly Simple Truth Behind Extraordinary Results*, Austin, TX: Bard Press.

## About the Author

**Curtis Schroeder, MBA Candidate, May 2014, Baylor University**

**Assistant Director, Keller Center for Research**

**Associate Editor, *Keller Center Research Report***

Curtis Schroeder graduated from Baylor University with a Bachelor of Business Administration in Marketing in 2009. Curtis currently serves as the Assistant Director of the Keller Center for Research and the Center for Professional Selling at Baylor University, and as the Associate Editor of the Keller Center Research Report. Curtis is pursuing a Masters of Business Administration from Baylor University with a focus in marketing.

---

## **Keller Center Research Report**

Baylor University » Keller Center for Research » Hankamer School of Business  
One Bear Place #98007 » Waco, TX 76798  
[www.baylor.edu/kellercenter](http://www.baylor.edu/kellercenter) » [Keller\\_Center@baylor.edu](mailto:Keller_Center@baylor.edu)

*Keller Center Research Report is a trademark owned by Baylor University.  
© Baylor University. All rights reserved.*