

Transcription - Starting Or Finishing Deadlines

Welcome back I'm Kim Baillie, she's Fulyana Orsborn, this is Inside Exec. I've thrown this topic onto the table without any notification at all, she has to think on her feet so we'll see just how long that lasts. I'm sure it'll go for a half an hour, twice the normal length when she sends me the preparation notes so we know what we're at, at which point I have to start bringing the conversation back to the topic and none of you will write and say that it's always me that goes off topic because it's not true. Some of the time.

Today, I want to talk about deadlines and what I have been exposed to in the last week or so is an interesting concept in thinking about deadlines and talking about them in a different way.

So rather than as we would normally, we would think of a deadline as this is the day to have to have something finished by, often that's because something else is going to happen at that finish date. So it might be that something new starts and starts is the operative word or something gets implemented. But we think about it in terms of the deadline is I have to be finished by that point of time.

If we change the terminology around and if we say that and we just talk about the start date or this is going to happen on this date, then we have a different sense of urgency about that project or that activity.

A perfect example at the moment is when we're talking about a sale and this resonates with the other person at the table

because sales are something important, if it's not cooking it's sales. If we talk about Amazon, they don't talk about a sale ending on this day. They say the sale starts on this date, doesn't matter when it ends, it starts on this date, that's when you have to be there. If we look at Boxing Day sales or black Friday or whatever else it is that in your country that is a sale that people get drawn to, it's when it starts. So people line up beforehand, camp out overnight so they can be there when it starts.

They don't think, I know it starts on that date, but I know it'll probably go for a week. So I'll go towards the end of the time. It's the sense of urgency that a start date, a start deadline, engenders that I'm most interested in in terms of changing our thinking.

Perhaps you've got a project that is stagnating in terms of its momentum and it's a hard road, so break it up. Look at something within the project that is a milestone for example and say, okay, well we're starting this on this date and without having to say it, everyone knows that means that this lead up stuff has got to be finished before then.

But I don't think that I've got to finish that. It's that we're starting that other thing. So the urgency is we've got to be ready to start that. So let's push ourselves to get started on that at that point.

So if we're talking, for example, we're introducing a new technology system. If we then say we're going to start using the actual first aspect of this technology on Monday the X. So we all know there's a whole lot of work to be done before that. Then stage two. We'll migrate to stage two and we start paying

stage two by such and such and then we will be using it in full by X.

Instead of saying that, you believe that this will change the mindset into a sense of urgency and achievable instead of saying I have to do all of that by X. Yes you do still, but you're doing it with a different mindset. It gives you some excitement. Yes.

So I looked recently at a series on Oxford Street in London and they talked about closing one railway station and opening another one next door. So they had the soft opening. Yes, things went wrong but it didn't matter because it wasn't the official opening. The Minister for Transport was there while all these things were going wrong and he was talking to the press and they were in the background trying to fix things but it wasn't the official opening so no-one thought it had to be perfect..

It wasn't the big day. Instead it was, this is our start date for using this building because they were moving building. So this is the start date for this building. So let's make sure everything we can is focused on starting on that date, not closing the old one because that will happen of its own accord because you need to do all that before this one can start their soft opening.

And the trial run is really really powerful because you're actually testing what you plan even though you go through a testing throughout something. What it does, it's kind of like something that you go and see a dress rehearsal. It's making it real and live to me.

And I know you're going to make a funny comment about me now, it's trying a new recipe. Making it up. Not someone else who started you deciding on your recipe. Well you know what? You're going to try it and then some of it and then you taste it and you think oh no, I really don't want that ingredient. You know what, I think you could do with that, you do all of that yourself.

And then when you have that recipe ready for when Kim comes over, that's different again. Let me just tell you as an aside that it's always exciting because she doesn't tell you beforehand that it's a new recipe, just presents the adventure. How is it? How is it? I haven't actually tried to do it before. I saw it somewhere. All right, it's somewhere and I just worked it out. Yeah I'm still here. So it must be fine.

I really like people who will try again, particularly technology type of introductions. There's so many things that you can't pre-empt. Of course, you do all the things, but then the person using that aspect of it will try it and find things that none of us expected, good or bad and then we'll address them.

I just think that what resonated with me when I heard about this idea was it's the changing focus but it's the emotions that are involved in whatever you're doing. It's that you introduce some excitement and some urgency without having to browbeat people about this has to be finished by this date.

We all know things have to be finished by a certain day. What we look forward to is the new thing. The new, the starting of the new beginning. Because that's why we're doing all this work so we can start this other thing. So let's focus, refocus,

on a start deadline rather than a finish deadline for some things, not for everything. Because some things don't need it.

Okay, that's just a quick a little reflection on deadlines. For now, I'm Kim Baillie she's Fulyana Orsborn. This is Inside Exec