



FEAL Review

Michael Hewitt-Gleeson is an internationally renowned thought leader. He is the first person to design the universal brain software known as x10 thinking. Used by governments, corporations and schools in over 48 countries to teach thinking skills Hewitt-Gleeson's most famous advocate was Jack Welch who used x10 thinking to help him transform the culture of General Electric.

Michael presented the opening address at the FEAL National Conference, 27 August 2008. Following is an article which builds on some of the key elements provided in his session.

When I'm consulting to business leaders this is the first question I ask my clients 'Why did you lose sleep last night?'

In the last 12 months, business leaders have told me that they've lost sleep over ...

- the constant pressure to meet and beat my quarterly targets.
- how to balance my work pressures with the needs of my family and my health?
- how can I recruit smarter, more productive people?
- I'm losing good people. How can I keep them from leaving?
- I need to develop a lot more leaders in our enterprise.
- to better manage a much more competitive culture.
- we need to find a more effective communications strategy.
- our metrics are not up to scratch. How to better analyse sales and KPIs.
- I worry about whether our security is OK.
- how to ensure the survival and succession of my business

What is interesting about all of these problems is that they are not new. There are already solutions readily available.



Every one of these sleep-losers has already been solved many times by many managers all around the world. But most people are stuck in their current brain patterns and their thinking goes round and round and round.

This is where the need for thinking skills comes in. So let me ask a question: "what is the number 1 productive thing that any manager in any enterprise can do?"

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The most productive thing that any manager in any enterprise can do is to ensure that all their employees, all their knowledge-workers, are skilled thinkers about better ways to do their job.

Those managers and staff that are not skilled thinkers are just like automatons marking time, missing opportunities for growth and maybe even losing sleep.



There are many ways to develop thinking skills. One very useful thinking skill I have devised is called 'X10 thinking'. For more than 25 years I have been advising business leaders and their employees on how to use X10 thinking. I have assisted a wide range of enterprises from 70,000 New York City hospital employees to US corporations like GE.

What is X10 Thinking?

X10 thinking is the habit of multiplying things by 10! X10 thinking is new brain software that goes for adding value to business decisions. It can be used by anyone, anywhere and at anytime in science, in business and in life. X10 thinking allows you to escape entrenched thinking patterns.

X10 thinking can be used to accelerate the rate of growth of the business and can be used by thought-leaders and innovators in any industry. X10 thinking can be used to get a lead and advantage over competitors and to get a much better return on investment.

X10 thinking becomes part of the corporate culture so everyone, every day looks for ways to use the number 10 and to find things that they can X10 in their own job and their own workspace. The important thing is that X10 thinking becomes a habit from the leadership of the enterprise down through the managers, supervisors and staff.

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For example, here are typical ways I can use the number 10:

1. Give ten times more gifts to clients this week than last week.
2. Send ten times more postcards to new clients this month than I did last month.
3. Call someone who would like to hear from me in ten minutes time.
4. Consult ten colleagues for their opinion on a matter of importance to me.
5. Search for ten Web sites that I have never visited.
6. Invite ten people over for a discussion on a matter of importance to all concerned.

7. Practice a new skill 10 times a day for the next ten days.
8. Go for a brisk walk at 10am.
9. Cut costs by 10%.
10. Spend ten minutes learning a new interview technique.

General Electric X10

In business, Jack Welch of General Electric was the most famous advocate of X10 thinking in the US. He used X10 thinking at GE to help him change the culture of a 100-year-old manufacturer to the most valuable company (at the time he left it) in the history of the world!

I was invited to GE soon after he became chairman and CEO. In the 1980s I spent several years, at his request, installing the X10 thinking brain software at GE. He wrote to me saying, 'I would love to have a management team that really understood the X10 equation. It's the *value-added* role in the management processes.

In his book about his time at GE called, Jack (Warner Books 2001), he wrote "X10 thinking would make each of us wake up with the goal of 'finding a better way everyday'. It was a phrase that became a slogan, put up on the walls of GE factories and offices around the world".

He also told me that X10 thinking helped him design new concepts like 'boundarylessness' and 'work-out'. He believed that '*finding a better way everyday*' wasn't just a slogan. It was the essence of boundaryless behaviour, and it defined company and corporate expectations.

The Power of X10 Thinking

GE employees used X10 thinking to solve all the sleep-loser problems that worry business people every day:

- reduce costs of materials
- reduce downtime
- reduce labour costs
- reduce regulatory penalties
- reduce product liability costs
- eliminate manufacturing waste.

Other clients have used X10 thinking to:

- increase sales
- increase prices
- expand market share



- grow wallet share
- enter new markets
- enter new market segments
- enter new geographies
- earn new customers
- contain controllable customer attrition
- enable new products.

Using X10 Thinking for Fund Executives

As fund executives are well aware that to survive in an intensely complex and competitive business environment you must continuously innovate and challenge the norms. Staying ahead of the game requires not only good products, member service and clever marketing. Staying ahead of the game means fund executives must also think differently, think strategically and think creatively.

As I mentioned above, most people are stuck in their current brain patterns and their thinking just goes round and round and round. Worrying about a problem is not the same thing as looking for a much better solution. Using X10 Thinking will help you create innovative ways to help you escape from your current thinking patterns and to search for fresh approaches.

There are many ways to use X10 thinking but the one of the simplest techniques is to...

ESCAPE

'Help! I'm trapped. How can I escape?' This is the cry of the X10 thinker. Why? Because THE most difficult feat of thinking is to escape from your point-of-view. All of us are trapped in the special world we create for ourselves in our brain, our own unique viewpoint. Your world and my world are different. You are trapped in your brain pattern as surely as I am trapped in mine.

OPPORTUNITY

Escaping from a current viewpoint involves risk and uncertainty. So there must be a positive gain or an upside to make the switch worthwhile.

To help define the benefits of changing we need to focus on the main opportunity for doing so. There may be an opportunity to save money, time or prevent a future problem. The exercise is to try to see the main opportunity in the proposed X10 leap.

WHO?

One of the quickest ways to escape from your current viewpoint is to ask another thinker for their point-of-view.

Since no two human brains are exactly alike each person has a valid, but different, view. Their current view might be your better view. Ask your partner, children, customers, enemies or someone considered to be an expert in the field.

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STAIRWAY

Suppose you are stuck on the ground floor trying to watch a parade go by and your view is limited. If only you had a better view. You look around and find a step-ladder with ten steps. As you climb each step your view of the parade gets better. Ten steps later you have a better view. X10 thinking is how we use the number 10 to escape from our current view up the ladder to a better view.

JUST SUPPOSE

What would I see? This is the question Albert Einstein asked himself at 16. By the time he had answered it five years later he had made the greatest single discovery ever made by a human brain. Asking 'just suppose' is a great way to surprise yourself and to get outside your own head. Use random connections and take quantum leaps.

NOTICE

The basis of all science is observation and measurement - noticing things. A clever thinker is a clever noticer and the skill of noticing is looking for feedback.

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