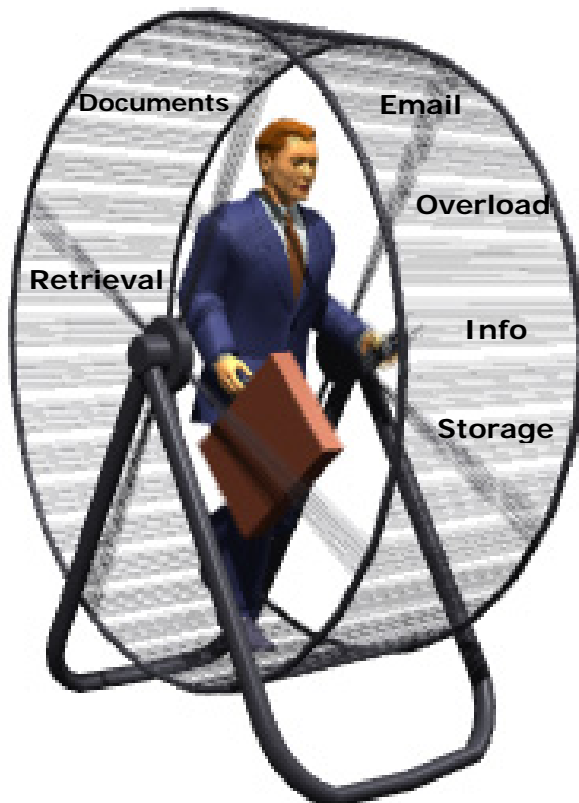


***Confidential: Do Not Forward.***

# ***The Hamster Revolution!***

Make life *easier* by discovering a powerful new way to manage email and stored information.



**Jump off the wheel  
and into your life!**

**By Mike Song, Vicki Halsey, and Tim Burress**

- Foreword by Ken Blanchard (*One Minute Manager®*)
- Back Cover by Marcus Buckingham (*First, Break All The Rules*)
- Includes a ground-breaking Capital One case study

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## I. ABOUT THE BOOK

As email volume has doubled over the past three years<sup>1</sup>, millions of professionals have begun to feel overwhelmed by the mountains of information they're expected to process and store. The time and mental energy required to manage this deluge of data has not only made work more difficult, it has disrupted work/life balance and slowed professional development. Many feel like a *hamster on a wheel*; running faster and harder, but getting nowhere.

Though several lengthy time-management books have been published, extensive research conducted by the authors indicates that busy professionals are eager to find simpler solutions. Rather than read a 250-page book containing hundreds of tips, most would prefer a concise, easy-to-follow, roadmap to success.

Enter *The Hamster Revolution*: An engaging parable about a stressed-out professional named Harold who is so over-loaded by information that he actually turns into a hamster! As he falls behind at work, Harold's family life suffers. Feeling desperate, Harold seeks advice from an information productivity expert known as the Info-Coach. The Info-Coach encourages Harold to join *The Hamster Revolution*: A movement of professionals who have decided to reclaim their lives by fighting back against info-glut.

Harold discovers how to reduce email overload while increasing email quality. He also learns how to dramatically improve the efficiency of his information storage system. The result is a balanced and efficient work environment that saves Harold 15 days a year in previously wasted time. Harold wisely uses this time to reconnect with his family and resume his professional development at work. As Harold begins to reach his fullest potential, he regains his confidence and transforms back into a human being.

The book concludes with a real world case study from Capital One demonstrating that 2,000 associates were able to regain 13 days per year as a direct result of implementing Hamster Revolution best practices.

The insights, tools, and strategies contained within *The Hamster Revolution* were developed as a result of extensive research and real world testing conducted by the authors. Mike Song and Tim Burrell are co-founders of Cohesive Knowledge Solutions (CKS); an enterprise that has developed breakthrough seminars for reducing information overload. Vicki Halsey is the Vice President of Applied Learning at The Ken Blanchard

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<sup>1</sup> EmailLabs Statistics Report on Email Growth 2006

Companies; one of the world’s foremost leadership development enterprises. Over 4,000 knowledge worker surveys were compiled in preparation for this book.

## II. NEED FOR *THE HAMSTER REVOLUTION*

There’s a palpable frustration with the quantity and quality of email gushing through our lives. Email overload, aided by wireless technology, has created a frenetic, 24-7, *hamster on a wheel* work environment. Ask any busy professional, “How’s it going with email?” and you’re likely to hear a barrage of complaints: “It’s out of control!” “Let’s blow up the reply-to-all key!” “Why can’t my co-workers get to the #\*&! point?”

Professionals are also struggling to manage *stored* information. 75% of the 4,000 professionals we surveyed said they often find it time-consuming and frustrating to locate stored email and documents. Only 20% had received training on how to effectively manage stored information.<sup>2</sup>

When too much email is coming in and information is difficult to retrieve, professionals get backed-up, become frustrated, and lose productivity. This condition is often referred to as “info-glut.”

Our research indicates that a third of the nation’s 56-million knowledge workers have been deeply impacted by info-glut and are aggressively seeking solutions. For example, on a recent survey, 33% of HP colleagues indicated that email overload had become a significant challenge.<sup>3</sup>

Several time-management books have been written (xxxx – xxxxx – Microsoft and yyyy – yyyy– Penguin), but these usually consist of a long list of technology tips or a highly complex system that may be hard for most to adopt. The irony is that many readers find that these books simply contain too much information!

Overwhelmed professionals need a clear and concise game plan for battling info-glut. *The Hamster Revolution* lays out a simple three-step success plan in 100 short pages.

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<sup>2</sup> CKS Survey of 4,000 Knowledge Workers 2003-2006

<sup>3</sup> CKS HP Survey, n=120, May 2005

### III. PURPOSE OF *THE HAMSTER REVOLUTION*

*The Hamster Revolution* helps professionals manage information more efficiently so that they can restore work/life balance and reach their fullest potential. *The Hamster Revolution* helps readers to:

1. Reduce email overload
2. Improve email quality
3. Effectively manage all stored information

Readers also learn how to coach their teammates to adopt Hamster Revolution best practices. This is how the revolution gains momentum and spreads.

### IV. AUDIENCE AND USES

The primary target reader for *The Hamster Revolution* is **the overwhelmed, mid-level manager who works in an information intensive industry.** There are 56-million professionals (aka knowledge workers) in the United States. Hundreds of interviews, workshops, and focus groups conducted by the authors reveal that approximately one third of these knowledge workers are heavily impacted by info-glut. Many complain that info-glut is a daily burden that distracts them from priority assignments and professional development. Others complain that it diminishes job satisfaction. These frustrated professionals tend to work in information-driven industries such as finance, healthcare, and technology.

Within these industries, mid-level managers usually process the most information. Unlike senior executives, mid-level managers don't have administrative assistants to triage their email and organize their storage systems. Unlike field level employees, mid-level managers must communicate with subordinates, peers, and upper management. As a result, they're the most acutely affected by info-glut and are extremely interested in information management solutions.

A secondary target reader is **the C-level executive (CIO, CEO, etc.) who works in an information intensive industry.** There are many reasons for executives to pass along *The Hamster Revolution*. As a result of enterprise-wide HR surveys, executives are beginning to discover that email is creating major work/life balance issues for employees. Many IT executives are concerned about the growing cost of backing up bloated inboxes. Legal executives are concerned that employees often struggle to find critical documents required for legal proceedings. New legislation (Sarbanes Oxley) is designed to force publicly held organizations to do a better job of managing and storing their information.

## V. KNOWLEDGE BASE

### **Mike Song - CEO, Cohesive Knowledge Solutions, Inc. (CKS)**

Mike Song is the CEO of Cohesive Knowledge Solutions, Inc. (CKS). He co-founded CKS after observing that many of his co-workers were falling behind as a result of poor information management skills. Mike envisioned and developed innovative workshops that mitigate email overload. He also co-developed the COTA® system: An exciting new approach to storing email, digital documents, and hard copy information.

As CKS trained thousands of professionals, the company carefully measured attitudes and results with a series of highly targeted proprietary surveys. To date, the CKS Research Team, led by Mike Song, has collected over 300,000 individual survey responses from over 4,000 knowledge workers. This data has been extremely helpful in the development of *The Hamster Revolution*. A partial list of Mike Song's clients includes: HP, Novartis, Clear Channel, Dish Network, and Corning.

### **Victoria Halsey Ph.D. - VP of Applied Learning, Ken Blanchard Companies**

Vicki Halsey is a valued presenter, keynote speaker, consultant, and trainer for the Ken Blanchard Companies. As an expert in brain-based and accelerated learning strategies, Vicki assists organizations in understanding how to increase each individual's leadership and learning potential. Vicki's passion is helping professionals regain balance and meaning in their lives. She was one of the first to recognize the need for leadership in the information management environment. Vicki developed a series of 'conversation starters' to help professionals begin to provide information management feedback to their peers. A partial list of Vicki's clients includes: Nike, Oracle, ADP, KPMG, NBA, Merrill Lynch, GAP, Wells Fargo, Clorox and Pfizer.

### **Timothy Burress- President, CKS**

Tim Burress has a 15-year record of excellence in the field of training design and delivery. Before co-founding CKS in 2003, Tim was a Director of Learning and Development at Pfizer. Pfizer's training department has been recognized as the best in the world.<sup>4</sup> Over the past ten years, Tim has helped over 12,000 professionals manage their information more efficiently. Many of the book's insights come from Tim's hands-on, classroom experience.

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<sup>4</sup> Training Magazine; Top 100 list – Pfizer #1, 2003

Tim's forte is the design and implementation of award-winning<sup>5</sup> information productivity workshops that achieve measurable and sustained behavioral change. A partial list of Tim's clients includes: Capital One, P&G, Pfizer, Progressive, and Centex.

## VI. RELATED AND COMPETING BOOKS

Two books that compete with *The Hamster Revolution* are XXXXXXXX by XXXXX (Microsoft Press) and YYYYYY – by YYYYYY (Penguin). Both books are targeted at the overwhelmed, unorganized knowledge worker. Both books provide 250+ pages of good advice on how to become more efficient at work. XXXXXXXX focuses on Microsoft Outlook® efficiency while yyyyyy provides time-management insights. One concern is that both books are long and jammed with hundreds of tips. When confronted with so much information busy readers may be inclined to ask, *What should I do first? Where do I start?*

Rather than providing a long list of tips, *The Hamster Revolution* provides a simple three step plan. It engages the reader by introducing them to Harold; a likable everyman who rises up to battle info-glut. *The Hamster Revolution* delivers its powerful information management message in 105 short pages.

Wwwwww by eeee wwwwww (Wiley Press) is a well-researched 200-page guide to working with email. Although it provides good advice on how to be more judicious with email, there is little advice relating to improving email quality or information storage. By comparison, *The Hamster Revolution* directly addresses email quality while also exploring the powerful connection between email overload and information storage challenges. After all, it's difficult to respond to an email request when the required information is hard to find. It's also difficult to store an email or attachment when you're not sure where it belongs.

Qqqq by Liz qqqqqq (Three River Press) is a 213-page *self-organization* book. This lengthy book focuses mainly on paper organization and time-management tips. Using an airport analogy, the author provides hundreds of tips on improving office efficiency. Books like qqqqqq focus exclusively on the *individual* worker.

By contrast, *The Hamster Revolution* focuses on the storage of digital information and the increasingly *collaborative*, interdependent world of the modern professional. Although email has become the most widely used enterprise communication tool, professionals rarely receive feedback on its proper use. Teammates usually choose to suffer quietly instead of providing targeted coaching to their co-workers. As a result, productivity and professional reputations are needlessly compromised.

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<sup>5</sup> Training and Development Magazine Best Award: Capital One 2004

A major advantage of *The Hamster Revolution* is that it provides practical techniques for coaching teammates. By introducing the concept of **info-coaching**, *The Hamster Revolution* empowers readers to take control of their workflow and lives.

*Surviving eeee eeeee* by Ollie eeeee (eeee Publications) is a 103-page book covering the essentials of improved information management. This is a short book that seems to be hastily written. Some portions may confuse readers:

*“If you are still not convinced that multi-tasking is not a good way to get things done, maybe some scientific proof will change your mind. Psychologists and efficiency experts have been studying multi-tasking for many years and the results cannot be argued: Multi-tasking is not effective.”*

In comparison, *The Hamster Revolution* employs clear and direct language. Our readers seek brevity and order. The three-step Hamster Revolution plan rings true because it is the product of extensive real world testing. The authors are committed to investing the time and care required to create an important and lasting work that is helpful to all readers.

**Endorsements-** Unlike *qqqqq* or *qqqqqq* the promotion of *The Hamster Revolution* will benefit from two impressive endorsements. The Hamster Revolution contains a foreword by the legendary Ken Blanchard, co-author of *The One Minute Manager* (Penguin Putnam), who has sold over 20-million books. Marcus Buckingham, best-selling author of *First, Break All the Rules* (Simon & Schuster), will provide a ringing endorsement on the back-cover. Both authors have millions of hardcore fans who respect their opinions.

**Capital One Case Study-** Unlike most books, *The Hamster Revolution* contains a ground-breaking case study from a respected Fortune 200 company. Capital One is among the top ten most recognized company brands in the world. They manage \$80-billion in assets for over 50-million clients. The Capital One case study demonstrates that Hamster Revolution insights work in the real world. Capital One was able to reduce email processing time by 21% while increasing email quality by 52%. Capital One Productivity Manager, Matt Koch, is available for media interviews.

**Similar Books-** Finally, *The Hamster Revolution* closely resembles two landmark books: *The One Minute Manager* by Ken Blanchard and *Who Moved My Cheese?* by Spencer Johnson. All three books arrived at just the right time to meet an emerging business need. Each condenses a complex set of business challenges into a simple success formula:

- In the 1980’s *The One Minute Manager* helped professionals to *manage people*.
- In the 1990’s *Who Moved My Cheese* helped professionals to *manage change*.
- Today, *The Hamster Revolution* helps professionals to *manage information*.



## VII. OUTLINE

### CHAPTER 1: CONFESSIONS OF AN INFO-HAMSTER

Harold awakens to find that his dream job, HR Director at Foster and Schrubbs, has become a nightmare. Overwhelmed by an avalanche of information, he is falling behind at work and neglecting his family. After years of struggling to keep up, he has begun to feel like a hamster on a wheel: working faster and harder but getting nowhere. In fact, Harold feels so much like a hamster, he actually changes into one, but is too distracted to notice his strange transformation. Worried about his slipping job performance and declining work/life balance, Harold seeks help from a productivity expert known as the Info-Coach.

### CHAPTER 2: THE HAMSTER PLAN

After overcoming his initial shock at having a hamster for a client, the Info-Coach helps Harold understand that his real enemy is info-glut. Indeed, Harold's effectiveness has diminished as the amount of information he manages has grown.

The Info-Coach encourages Harold to join a new movement called *The Hamster Revolution* in order to learn how to fight back against info-glut. The Info-Coach introduces a simple, three-step plan designed to restore order, balance, and productivity to Harold's life. Steps one and two are covered in the first meeting: reduce email volume and improve email quality. The third step, which will be covered later in the week, focuses on dramatically improving Harold's information storage system. A final wrap-up meeting will be held in two weeks to gain feedback and fine-tune Harold's new found Hamster Revolution skills.

### CHAPTER 3: STRATEGY 1 – REDUCE EMAIL OVERLOAD

Not unlike the Karate Kid, Harold is shocked by the simplicity of his first lesson. With the help of the Info-Coach, he realizes that *he* is his own worst enemy in the battle against info-glut. The Info-Coach helps Harold understand that the 10,000 emails he sends each year are like boomerangs: For every ten that he sends, he'll get back six responses.<sup>6</sup> Harold begins to see that by becoming more judicious, he can exert control over the volume of email he receives.

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<sup>6</sup> Managing Your Email, Cavanaugh (Wiley) 2003.

But Harold isn't sure that he actually sends unnecessary emails. After all, he's never gotten feedback from any of his recipients. *How would he know?* The Info-Coach and Harold open Harold's laptop and review his recent outgoing email. Sure enough, they discover a number of unnecessary emails. They also find emails that were sent to too many people via the dreaded reply-to-all key.

The Info-Coach provides Harold with three simple questions he can ask *before* he sends an email:

1. Is this email truly *needed* by my recipient to perform their job?
2. Is this email *appropriate*?
3. Is this email *targeted* to the correct number of people?

Each question is accompanied by a powerful explanation that helps Harold eliminate a large number of unnecessary messages. The Info-Coach provides a helpful job aid called the *1-2-3 Email Quantity Tool* that neatly summarizes all three questions. He encourages Harold to use the tool to eliminate one out of every five emails that he is planning to send.

Recalling how emails are like boomerangs, Harold realizes that by sending 20% fewer emails he will reduce incoming email by over 10%. He also discovers that he can use the *1-2-3 Email Quantity Tool* to coach his co-workers to be more judicious which further lightens his email load. The Info-Coach helps Harold to understand that he can save 15 days a year by proactively managing his email volume. Harold eagerly commits to hitting his goal of reducing outgoing email by 20%.

#### CHAPTER 4: A TALE OF TWO EMAILS

The discussion turns to email quality. The Info-Coach uses a simple exercise to illustrate how much time is wasted on low-quality email. He gives Harold two contrasting emails: The first one long and meandering - the second concise and clear. Using a stopwatch, he measures the time it takes for Harold to read each email. The difference is 1.5 minutes. Harold realizes that he is wasting a tremendous amount of time creating and reading lengthy, wall-of-words emails. After venting his frustration at the verbose author, Harold is embarrassed to learn that the Info-Coach actually wrote the meandering message long before he joined *The Hamster Revolution*. Harold realizes the importance of creating clear, concise, and actionable email. He also understands that his professional image is closely tied to the clarity of his outgoing messages.

#### CHAPTER 5: STRATEGY 2 – IMPROVE EMAIL QUALITY

The Info-Coach announces a Hamster Revolution initiation ceremony. He asks Harold to stand on his chair and strike a classic body-builder bicep pose while shouting 'Strengthen

the subject!’ Next, he asks Harold to strike another pose known as the crab while saying, ‘Sculpt the body!’ After forcing Harold to perform this ridiculous ritual two more times, the Info-Coach explains his purpose: Harold must make sure that every email he sends has a strong subject and well-structured body. These two insights are now forever drilled into Harold’s brain.

The Info-Coach demonstrates simple ways that Harold can *strengthen the subject* of each email by using consistent categories and descriptive titles. He also provides a useful way to sculpt the body of emails so that the key point is always the first thing the reader sees. Harold learns how to chunk the body of each message into clearly identified sections. This structure is called A-B-C: A is for Action Summary, B is for Background, and C is for Closing.

The Info-Coach neatly summarizes everything he has just taught Harold into one simple job aid called the 1-2-3/A-B-C Email Productivity Tool. At last Harold has a simple game plan for email: Reduce quantity and improve quality in order to save time, reduce stress, and accomplish more.

## CHAPTER 6: EMAIL INFO-COACHING

The Info-Coach urges Harold to magnify his email results by sharing what he has learned with co-workers. Further exploration of Harold’s computer reveals that 50% of the email he receives comes from his teammates. If Harold provides feedback to them on other things - why not also provide feedback on email too?

At first Harold is reluctant. He isn’t sure how people will respond. The Info-Coach shares techniques that make spreading *The Hamster Revolution* easy, fun, and effective. He shows Harold how he can provide constructive feedback that doesn’t offend. He outlines different strategies for subordinates, peers, and bosses. Harold begins to get excited over how much time he’ll save when his teammates send more actionable email to him. *Everybody will accomplish more in less time*, he thinks. He leaves the Info-Coach’s office eager to implement everything he has learned about email and info-coaching.

Despite his growing enthusiasm, Harold is still a little nervous about coaching some of his peers. In a panic, he contacts the Info-Coach via IM moments before a meeting with a particularly resistant group of co-workers. The Info-Coach calms Harold down and provides a strategy that helps gain commitment from the resistant group. Harold is now a hamster on a mission. He is excited to take the lead and spread the word about *The Hamster Revolution*.

## CHAPTER 7: HAROLD TURNS THE TIDE

The next session with the Info-Coach takes place at Harold’s office. Before covering information storage, the Info-Coach learns that Harold’s co-workers are very excited about his new email skill set. Harold proudly reports that he has used the 1-2-3/A-B-C tool every day. Some of his teammates have already commented that his messages are clearer and more concise.

Harold has also continued to coach his colleagues. For the last few days he has concluded each email to his team with a Hamster Revolution conversation starter: *Sick of email overload? Join the Revolution!! Ask me how.* Harold’s co-workers can’t resist asking, “What in the world are you talking about?” After explaining his efforts to improve his own email skill set, Harold successfully uses the 1-2-3/A-B-C tool, to supply targeted coaching.

Now that he sends and receives fewer emails, Harold is saving 30 minutes a day which equates to 15 days a year. Pleased with his progress, the Info-Coach addresses the final Hamster Revolution strategy: Improving Harold’s information storage system.

## CHAPTER 8: STRATEGY 3 - IMPROVE INFORMATION STORAGE AND RETRIEVAL EFFICIENCY BY 100%

Like many professionals, Harold has developed his organizational system on the fly, without much strategy. He admits that he struggles to rapidly locate email and documents. After examining Harold’s email and My Documents folders, the Info-Coach points out several major flaws in Harold’s system. Harold’s biggest problem is that he has too many overlapping categories.

An urgent PowerPoint® training presentation that is sent by Harold’s boss could reside within an urgent folder, a training folder, a PowerPoint® folder, or a boss-sent folder. (As a reminder, Harold is an HR director at Foster and Schrub.) It could also be stored under email folders or in My Documents as an attachment. Slowly, Harold begins to see that much of his stress and confusion is tied to the fact that there is way too much *variation* in his poorly designed storage system. A single document could be stored in ten different places!

The Info-Coach introduces Harold to COTA. COTA is a simple and intuitive way to store business information. COTA consists of four distinct and universal business categories. Because of its universal nature, COTA remains constant no matter how much Harold’s job may change. The COTA framework helps Harold sort business information into four logical content-based buckets:

1. Clients (Since Harold works in HR, these are internal clients like R&D)

2. **O**utput (These are products and services provided by Harold's team)
3. **T**eams (The main teams that Harold is on)
4. **A**ministrative (Expense reports, company car, etc.)

A fifth folder is set up for Harold's personal information. The Info-Coach also introduces a few simple rules to help break ties for documents that could be placed into more than one COTA category. He also shows Harold how to prioritize folders for rapid navigation.

Harold is beginning to see the logic of the COTA system but he is worried about set-up time. He is surprised to learn that COTA can be set up in less than an hour. The Info-Coach helps Harold to create the COTA folders under My Documents. Harold is stunned to see that 80% of his existing folders can easily be dragged and dropped into one of his four primary COTA master folders. With help from the Info-Coach, Harold quickly sorts the rest of his information into the COTA framework.

Harold registers a common complaint. It's time-consuming to store half of his information in Outlook email folders and the other a half under My Documents. A single repository would make more sense. Harold is shocked when the Info-Coach demonstrates that email can be saved in My Documents by simply hitting the f12 key. Harold now has one convenient, well-organized COTA structure for all his long-term computer information.

Finally, The Info-Coach shows Harold how easy it is to create COTA shortcuts on his lower horizontal Quicklaunch® toolbar and in his My Favorites menu. This provides Harold with extremely rapid access to his information. In less than an hour, the Info-Coach has helped Harold implement a simple, yet highly efficient information management system that Harold can use for the rest of his life.

Back at work, Harold begins to see the real power of COTA. Suddenly, it's easier for Harold to plan, respond, innovate, decide, and execute (PRIDE). All of these activities are easier when source information can be rapidly accessed. Now Harold can zoom in and grab email and documents in a flash. Suddenly, it's easy to have the right information at the right time. Harold has eliminated overlapping categories and simplified his life. Victory over info-glut has been achieved!

## CHAPTER 9: WHY DOES COTA WORK SO WELL?

Harold calls the Info-Coach with a few questions. He wants to know how he can apply the methodology to other information repositories such as his hard-copy filing cabinet and internet links. He's also interested in understanding why COTA works so well. The Info-Coach helps Harold to harmonize his other storage repositories and then launches into a deeper explanation of COTA.

COTA, he explains, is intuitive because it's a simple metaphor for work: We all work on **T**teams and deliver **O**utput to **C**lients. Everyone must process **A**ddministrative information as well. Since virtually all jobs contain Client, Output, Team, and Administrative information, COTA is universal and comprehensive. This turns out to be an incredibly important feature because Harold's job is constantly changing. COTA is flexible and universal so no matter how much Harold's job changes, the COTA framework remains consistent.

COTA also decreases the mental energy required to access information. Harold only has to think about the information he needs in order to find it. As he shows the system to his teammates, many eagerly convert to COTA.

Over the next two weeks, Harold continues to implement the three simple Hamster Revolution strategies. He is truly amazed at how *The Hamster Revolution* has streamlined his workflow and made his life easier. *It really is all about how you manage your information...* he thinks.

## CHAPTER 10: WRAP UP IT UP...I'LL TAKE IT!

At the final wrap-up session, Harold thanks the Info-Coach and promises to keep spreading the word about *The Hamster Revolution*. Together, they review his tremendous progress. The Info-Coach encourages Harold to continue coaching his teammates. Harold thanks the Info-Coach and says goodbye.

## EPILOUGE: IT'S ME...HAROLD!

Six months later, a tall, energetic stranger walks into the Info-Coach's office. The Info-Coach is shocked to learn that it's Harold. He has transformed back into a human being...a very productive and fulfilled human being. They discuss how Harold has been spreading the word about *The Hamster Revolution*. The Info-Coach is impressed.

Harold reveals that he is spending more quality time with his family and that he's never been more satisfied with his life. At work, Harold is taking on new and exciting assignments and moving ahead with his career. The Info-Coach shares a few final insights and then its time for Harold to go.

"Glad to see that you're managing your information before it manages you!" smiles the Info-Coach as he walks Harold to the elevator. They shake hands and say good-bye. As the elevator opens, out pops a nervous-looking grey hamster with white spots. He is wearing a tan business suit and carrying a tiny brown briefcase.

"You must be Bernard," says the Info-Coach shaking his new client's paw, "Welcome."

"You gotta help me," squeaks Bernard, "I'm getting buried alive at work..."

## ADDENDUM CASE STUDY: CAPITAL ONE'S EMAIL PRODUCTIVITY SOLUTION

Over 2,000 Capital One associates attended a CKS workshop providing insights identical to those found in *The Hamster Revolution*. A 60-Day Post-Training survey revealed that email volume decreased by 21% while email quality improved by 52%. Capital One estimated that participants saved an astounding 13 days per year.

- **Reference:** Matt Koch: Productivity Manager Capital One: (804) 363-7437
- **Read the Case Study On-Line:** <http://www.cohesiveknowledge.com/Casestudies.htm>
- **Media Coverage:** NPR ran a full length feature story on the Capital One/CKS Collaboration: <http://www.cohesiveknowledge.com/News.htm>

## VIII. SAMPLE CHAPTERS

### CHAPTER 1: CONFESSIONS OF AN INFO-HAMSTER

I was working peacefully in my office when the door slowly opened and shut with a click. I looked up - puzzled to see no one there. "You'd better be able to help me!" said a small voice. *Was this a joke?*

Perplexed, I stood up and that's when I saw him. Trudging across the floor, tugging at his tie, was a small, nervous-looking white hamster with brown spots. He was wearing a dark blue business suit and carrying a small black briefcase. He looked tired and defeated.

"I hear you're the so-called productivity expert," he said with a hint of sarcasm. He heaved a sigh and extended a paw. "I'm Harold."

I leaned down to shake, "Pleased to meet you Harold and yes, my job is to help professionals lead more productive and fulfilling lives."

Harold raised his eyes hopefully when I mentioned fulfillment. "Maybe I'm in the right place after all," he muttered.

Once I'd gotten over my initial shock that Harold was a hamster, I realized that he was my 1:30 PM appointment.

"Welcome Harold! Please sit down and tell me what brings you here."

Harold scrambled into the visitor's chair across from my desk. As he leaned back, his PDA buzzed loudly. Harold looked down, lost his footing and almost fell through the gap in the back of the chair. He scrambled frantically to regain his balance and composure. "OK, OK, here's my story," he said.

"Five years ago I landed my dream job; Human Resources Director at Foster and Schrubb Financial. At first, the position was perfect. I was incredibly productive and my team launched several big initiatives." Harold frowned and shifted in his seat, "But a couple years ago, I noticed that I was getting less and less done."

"And how'd that feel?"

"Am I in analysis?" quipped Harold rolling his eyes. "Well, Dr. Freud, I felt stressed. I was getting buried alive by email, voice-mail, meeting notes...I had information coming out of my ears."

Harold pointed at his PDA. "Then I got this thing. At first I liked being connected 24-7, but somehow, I fell even further behind."

"Not used to bringing up the rear are you?"

"No...I like to lead," replied Harold softly as he picked at some loose fur on his wrist.

"To make matters worse, and this is embarrassing to admit," he leaned forward and whispered, "I've been having trouble finding stuff."

I leaned forward and whispered, "What kind of 'stuff' Harold?"

"Well, I'll store an attachment or email and when I really, really need it...I can't find it! I store so much stuff...things just seem to vaporize! Other times I'm working on my team's shared drive and everyone is storing things differently. What a mess! When I can't find what I'm looking for, I



spend a lot of time requesting re-sends or re-creating things. I'm staying late just to keep up."

"So work is spilling over into your personal life?"

Harold raised his furry eyebrows thoughtfully. He reached into his pocket and produced an impossibly small picture. I squinted and saw that it was Harold's family; a lovely wife and two beautiful children. "Nice family," I offered.

"Upset family," corrected Harold wearily, "Thanks to wireless technology I'm always on-line. Carol's really frustrated with the time I spend working after hours."

He held up his paws with an exasperated look, "My kids hate it when I work on weekends. I miss soccer games and dance recitals...but if I don't keep up..." Harold shrugged his little hamster shoulders with an expression that seemed to say, *If I don't check email every five seconds, I'll surely die.*

"So your dream job has become a nightmare?"

Harold nodded. "I feel like I'm losing...me."

He continued softly, "I used to love learning new things. I was thrilled to get to the office each morning. Now I dread it. I feel like...like..." Harold struggled for the right words.

"Like a hamster on a wheel?" I offered.

"Yes!" shouted Harold bolting upright in his chair, "I've become a *hamster on a wheel!*" Running faster and harder but getting nowhere."

I suddenly realized that Harold was unaware that he'd actually turned into a hamster. Although I'd helped countless professionals who *felt* and *acted* like hamsters, Harold was the first that had actually changed into one! Apparently, his metamorphosis had been gradual and therefore hard to detect.

## CHAPTER 2: A NEW WAY TO WORK

Harold raised his paws in frustration, "So you're the expert. How do I get off the hamster wheel?"

"You fight back, Harold. There's a better way to work."

"Yeah, yeah, yeah," he said looking tense, "I've taken a couple time-management classes but they didn't help."

"Harold, this isn't a *time* management problem...it's an *information* management problem: Too much low-value information is flooding into your life."

"So what do I do?" asked Harold.

"Join *The Hamster Revolution*."

"Huh?" asked Harold looking surprised. "Revolution against what?"

"Info-glut!" I said, "That's your enemy; way too much, low-value information mucking up your world. You can't reach your fullest potential when you're drowning in information! *The Hamster Revolution* is a strategic plan that helps you conquer info-glut once and for all."

"How does it work?" asked Harold incredulously.

"First, I'll show you how to reduce email volume and improve email quality. Then I'll teach you how to coach your co-workers to do the same. The result will be a 20% drop in the total time you spend processing email.

Next, I'll provide you with a powerful system for organizing all of your information. This system, called COTA, will help you store and retrieve all of your email, documents, and links in a flash."

Harold was interested now, "So it's kind of like a one-two punch. First we get email under control and then we use this COTA thing to organize my information?"

I nodded, "It's the right place to focus because email and tasks related to information storage consume 30-40% of a typical professional's day.<sup>78</sup> More importantly, there's a powerful connection between email and information storage:

- If you reduce email overload you'll have less email to save and fewer interruptions.
- If you dramatically improve your information storage system it'll be easier to move messages out of your inbox and into storage.
- If you can retrieve stored information rapidly, you can effortlessly respond to email requests.

*The Hamster Revolution* strategies work in concert to create an easily navigated, highly efficient information environment."

"I'll believe it when I see it," said Harold cautiously. "But I like your approach. You're looking at the whole process of managing information, not just email in a vacuum. I've never thought of it that way before."

"You're not alone. Most professionals lack a cohesive information management system. To make matters worse, over the past five years the volume of information we process has skyrocketed. As inboxes and storage systems have become bloated, millions of professionals have begun to feel like hamsters! *Well, it's time for the hamsters to fight back.* *The Hamster Revolution* delivers the tools and strategies you need to restore balance and order to your life. Best of all, it will save you 15 days a year."

Harold raised his eyebrows at this, "15 days?"

"Absolutely," I said, "You can save a lot of time by mastering the flow of information through your world. We're going to get your life back, Harold."

"How long will *Operation Recover Harold's Life* take?"

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<sup>7</sup> CKS Surveys of 4,000 Knowledge Workers - 2006

<sup>8</sup> IDC-The High Cost of Lost Information, Susan Feldman 2005

“Three meetings,” I replied, “We’ll cover email today and we’ll meet later this week to cover information storage. Then you’ll take a week to implement what you’ve learned. You can call or IM me during that time for information management coaching or *info-coaching* for short. We’ll hold a final wrap-up meeting to see how you did and map out a long-term plan.”

I paused to let Harold think it over. He reflected on his predicament for a moment and then blurted, “OK, I’ll join your Hamster Revolution!”

“Our revolution,” I smiled, “Ready to reclaim your life?”

Harold stood up on his chair and gave a mock salute, “Let the revolting begin!”

## IX. MANUSCRIPT LENGTH AND LAYOUT

- *The Hamster Revolution* will be formatted in a style similar to the *One Minute Manager* and *Who Moved My Cheese?*. It will contain roughly 100-105 pages with approximately 180 words per page.
- The book will also include several charts and three illustrations of Harold.

## X. TIMETABLE

We plan to complete the book by April 1st, 2006.

## XI. MARKETING SUPPORT

*The Hamster Revolution* will enjoy excellent marketing support from CKS and The Ken Blanchard Companies.

- **Ken Blanchard Promotion:** The Ken Blanchard Companies, one of the most successful leadership development enterprises in the world, will promote *The Hamster Revolution* via their website, newsletter, press releases, keynote addresses, and client presentations. They will also provide marketing and public relations outreach to major media channels.
- **CKS Promotion:** CKS will promote *The Hamster Revolution* via the Cohesiveknowledge.com website, e-newsletters, press releases, conventions, direct mail marketing campaigns, telephonic marketing campaigns, training sessions, keynote addresses, and client presentations. Executives at Capital One, Pfizer, Merrill

Lynch, and Novartis have already inquired about purchasing copies of *The Hamster Revolution*.

- **Dedicated PR Expert Hired:** CKS has hired Megan Kahn, a former Sr. VP of Marketing at Ketchum, to aggressively promote *The Hamster Revolution* through all major media channels including TV, Internet, Radio, Print, etc. Kahn will also seek high-level endorsements from industry analysts such as Gartner and Basex.
- **Authors Committed to Aggressive Promotion:** Michael Song, Vicki Halsey, and Tim Burrell are personally committed to *relentlessly* promoting *The Hamster Revolution* at all public and private events they attend. All three authors are excellent speakers who can provide engaging and informative live interviews that will stimulate sales.
- **Branding the Hamster:** *The Hamster Revolution* will stand out from all other books in its category because its protagonist, Harold, is a likable yet troubled hamster. Test marketing for the hamster concept has been extremely well received. Professionals can relate to the feeling of being on a hamster wheel. We have envisioned a powerful marketing campaign leveraging the humor and symbolism of Harold leaping from the wheel into his new life.

## XII. CONCLUSION

The authors passionately believe that *The Hamster Revolution* can make the world a better place. We have witnessed the impact of *The Hamster Revolution* on thousands of real world professionals who experienced improved business agility, productivity, and quality of life. We believe that millions more will benefit from joining this dynamic, fun, and timely grassroots movement.

***Please join us in the publication and promotion of *The Hamster Revolution*.***

***Contact the authors at 203-457-0444 or [contact@cohesiveknowledge.com](mailto:contact@cohesiveknowledge.com).***