

# MEGAN KERR

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## *Business book: editing & layout*

*Original*

### **How to Gain Control and Prevent Chaos**

Many busy **business owners complain they do not have time** to expand or improve their businesses. They don't even have time for themselves.

Their families think of them as visiting distant relatives. They're too busy doing the job. They have become expert **fire fighters**--correcting errors and lapses.

Their lives have become chaotic and unstable. Remember, 70% of businesses fail because of inadequate management control.

**Control reduces the risk of things going wrong.**

**Control leads to quality -- highly satisfied customers**

So what can we learn from nature about stability and error freedom?

**Nature's stability or control comes from the stable hereditary building blocks** - genes. Genes reproduce with **stunning fidelity** – making only one error in 1,000,000,000 (billion), and have brilliant repair mechanisms to keep your genes working perfectly. So how can we emulate this process or system in business?

**A gene is a length of DNA** (deoxyribonucleic acid), **a long list of instructions on how to put the organism together, and make it work.** Genes determine the features, characteristics, capability or functions of an organism. This long list or sequence of instructions defines the genetic code.

### **Why Genes are Like a Recipe**

**Compare Genes to a recipe, a set of instructions - an operating manual**, which detail the shape and form of the organism -- **its genome.**

Some type of gene act as **sensor genes**, switching on and off other genes (control genes) that produce required proteins, to maintain equilibrium or control within the living organism when problems occur.

Genes inherently provide control systems for the organisms **using feedback control loops.**

**You need to build sensors into your recipes.**

## **Is Someone Always Letting You Down?**

**In business, your employee needs to know how to do the job and to know when they have done it right.** You need to define in your recipe sensor genes to indicate when the job is not being done correctly.

**Without this recipe someone will always be letting you and your business down.**

They have forgotten to check that a key item is ready. They have made a mistake, even when they are experienced.

**Humans fail about 1 in 10 to 1 in a 100 times at simple tasks**

**This human error rate increases by 10 or so when the person is under time pressure or is not sure of what exactly to do.**

**That's why you should automate the routine aspects of your business as much as possible.**

**Without a recipe or system, it is really unfair to your staff.**

## **What's your First Crucial Step**

So what's the answer? The "Devil is in the Detail." Create a recipe with in built checks or feedback. **Write down your ways of working--create a detailed system--written specifications, rules, plans, procedures, templates and checklists** to guide your staff so that they reproduce work without lapses.

**Create an operating manual...** a recipe book...for your system. It defines your "**how you do business**"--that what really makes you distinctive and different. Note competitors can't readily copy your "how".

**Writing it down is critical.** It gives everyone clear direction and it is so easy to change and add to.

**If you can't define it you can't control it**

Consider using an international standard quality management system such as ISO 9000 to help you create a comprehensive and thorough operating manual.

ISO 9000 standards would give a great system for your business and you would be internationally recognised for the quality of work. Get help from an ISO 9000 expert in your field.

**Standardise your ways of working first  
using your procedures manual.**

**Improvements will fail until you have reproducibility  
in your ways of working.**

**Don't change the slightest detail  
without first proving that the change  
works reliably and with precision.  
Don't leave anything to chance.**

## **What were Churchill's Two Leadership Secrets**

**Churchill became Prime Minister of the UK** in 1940 and for five years directed the UK war effort with **great perseverance and courage**. He was deemed an **outstanding and great leader**.

So what were his leadership secrets? Here they are:

**1) Churchill gave extremely clear written detailed instructions on what he wanted to happen. He left no room for his expectations not to be met.**

**2) Churchill kept himself well informed with first hand information. He visited the troops near the front line. He watched the air-raids to witness the terrible damage on London.**

## **Is someone always letting you or your business down?**

When your business staff let you down, have you given them exact clear instructions of who, what, where and when especially when you are attempting to do new things where there is no agreed or previously defined way of doing the job i.e. no procedures manual in place?

## **So how does Nature relate to Churchill's leadership?**

Nature controls gene reproduction with extremely few faults – one fault or mutation in a billion reproductions. The controlling DNA instruction or code, a sequence or permutation of only four building block chemicals, is clear, simple, and unambiguous.

**In leadership, you need a way of controlling or preventing faults or omissions. You need to give clear instructions or commands or prepare clear procedures for your staff to follow**

Also, in Nature you need to be sensitive to the environment and be able to adapt to remain the fittest. Remember, Darwin's survival of the fittest.

Yes, you could say **Churchill was constantly sensing the environment first-hand and adapting his actions.**

Have any problems developed because you really did not know what was going on in your business and it's environment? If so, follow Churchill's lead and get out there and find out first hand what is going on.

## **How to Turn Your Employees into Stars**

**Well-trained staff operating your recipe or system will produce outstanding results.**

Train your staff in the use of the system. This not only builds your capability but also allows you to pass your way of working across generations of staff. **Start here in small steps to gain time.**

**Gain control and you'll win time to maximise outside influence, find new opportunities for new business and to enhance your capabilities.**

**If you do not do this you'll be fire-fighting all the time! It's your first crucial step to enjoyment and outstanding profits.**

**Your recipe or operating manual will help gain control and manage risk. It's all to do with managing risk.**

**For areas not yet clearly specified you must learn to give clear and specific instructions.**

**Don't be vague and leave it to chance what your staff should do.**

If you are not completely sure what they should do, break the task down into steps. Only tell them about the steps you are sure, tell them what you are unsure about, and ask them to come back for more directions when they have completed the sure steps.

It is the only way they will meet your expectations and become stars.

## **How to Create Your Operating Manual to Gain Control**

Here's a number of steps you can take that will help you get started and gain control

1. **Select a single task or process** that has recently given you problems.
2. **Involve your staff; this is vital; hold a meeting of those concerned.** Tell them that you are concerned because of the problems, and things can't continue as before. Don't accuse them of any wrongdoing.

You want to improve things by creating an accepted way of doing the task concerned, so that it can be done correctly each time saving embarrassment to all.

You need their help. Ask questions; get your staff to provide the answers.

3. **Write down a simple list of the sequential steps** needed to do the task with the help of your staff. Tell them you want a simple clear written procedure that will make it easier for them to get it right each time.

Just write down what you actually do now. This provides a first draft of a procedure.

4. **Keep it simple**, if it's getting to involved with many steps – keep asking why? It's got to be easy. Challenge your own rules and constraints placed on the task.

**Keep thinking of what the customer really needs.** Consider breaking down into a number of smaller steps or removing the complicating rules.

5. **Examine the steps taken, add or modify existing steps to help prevent the lapses occurring. Build in checks and balances to tell your staff there and then that the job is being done correctly.** i.e.

- Create Checklists.
- Create Template Letters and Forms.
- **Use Reviews by more senior staff** at key points in the task or process to **gain the benefit of their experience and corporate memory.**

Remember to record the review has been completed. Allow the staff to fix any snag found by the reviewer in the task if it's straightforward, so not needing a further review.

- **Build in Tests and Checks into the process. Don't leave anything to chance.**
- **Automate your processes for speed and to help remove human error.**

6. **State clearly in the procedure who or which job role is responsible** for each part of the task.
7. **Ensure all the appropriate information needed to complete the task correctly is gathered at the start of the process.**
8. Ensure that information needed for the next task or process is passed on to the next-step of the whole process. Write it down on a document.

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9. **Use diagrams.** A picture is worth a 1000 words. Use a flowchart with boxes for each step and arrows for the information flow or an indication of what the next step is. See the example above.

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*Business book layout: final*

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## 13. Principle 7: Gain Control and Prevent Chaos

### In brief

Nature's stability or control comes from the stable hereditary building blocks – genes. Genes reproduce with stunning fidelity and have brilliant repair mechanisms to keep them working perfectly. We can emulate this process or system in business.

Generations of individual species carry forward good survival genes over millions of years. In business, you need your genes to do the same over generations of employees. To do this you need a memory bank for your company to retain your good capabilities and to manage the risk of things going wrong. Some types of genes act as control genes to maintain equilibrium when problems occur.

Remember: 80% of businesses that fail, fail from the lack of control. If things are constantly going wrong for you – customer complaints, product returns, high wastage – gaining control is your first priority.

Decide what's really important to your customers – integrity, compassion, good clear communication, and products and services that really work. Use that as a yardstick for the level of control or risk management you need in your procedures and checklists. Manage the risk.

**Benefits:** Stop fire-fighting and make real progress. Put a constant smile on your face. Employees smile every day. Customers rave about your products and services. Your profits zoom year after year. Your business is a delight to you and a challenge – not a millstone round your neck.

**Related *great* business traits:** Customers – delivering product and service that work. Employees – challenge and variety, doing something worthwhile, gaining skills and experience. Owners – enjoyment, survival, profits (a better than average return for the business type on investment year after year).

Many busy business owners complain they don't have time to expand or improve their businesses. They don't even have time for themselves. Their families think of them as visiting distant relatives. They're too busy doing the job. They have become expert fire fighters, correcting errors and lapses. Their lives have become chaotic and unstable. Remember, 80% of businesses fail because of inadequate management control.

Control reduces the risk of things going wrong.  
Control leads to quality: highly satisfied customers

What can we learn from nature about stability and error freedom? Nature's stability or control comes from the stable hereditary building blocks – genes. Genes reproduce with stunning fidelity – making only one error in 1 billion – and have brilliant repair mechanisms to keep them working perfectly. How can we emulate this process or system in business?

## 1. Everyone Needs a Recipe

### *Genes are like a recipe*

A gene is a length of DNA (deoxyribonucleic acid), a long list of instructions on how to put the organism together and make it work. Genes determine the features, characteristics, capability, or functions of an organism. This long list or sequence of instructions defines the genetic code. Imagine genes as a recipe or an operating manual which details the shape and form of the organism – its genome.

Genes inherently provide control systems for the organisms using feedback control loops. Some types of gene act as sensors, switching on and off other genes (control genes). These control genes, in turn, produce proteins that control the living organism and deal with problems. Similarly, you need to build sensors into your recipes.

### *Who is letting who down?*

In your business, your employees need to know how to do the job and to know when they have done it right. In your recipe, you need to define sensor genes to indicate when the job is not being done correctly.

Without a recipe, someone will always be letting you and your business down.

People may forget to check that a key item is ready. They may have made a mistake, even if they are experienced. Humans have error rates.

Humans fail about 1/10 to 1/100 times at simple tasks.

This human error rate increases by about 10 when the person is under time pressure or is not sure of what exactly to do. This is why you should automate the routine aspects of your business as much as possible. Working without a recipe or system is really unfair to your staff.

### ***Turn your employees into stars***

Well-trained staff using your recipe will produce outstanding results. Train your staff in the use of the system. This not only builds your capability but also allows you to pass your way of working across generations of staff. Start here in small steps to gain time.

Gain control and you'll win time to maximise outside influence, to find new opportunities for new business, and to enhance your capabilities.

If you do not do this, you'll be fire-fighting all the time! It's your first crucial step to enjoyment and outstanding profits. Your recipe or operating manual will help gain control and manage risk: everything is to do with managing risk.

For areas not yet clearly specified, you must learn to give clear and specific instructions.  
Don't be vague and leave to chance what your staff should do.

If you are not completely sure what staff should do in a situation, break the task down into steps. Only give instructions for the steps you are sure of, tell them what you are unsure of, and ask them to come back for more directions when they have completed the sure steps. This is the only way your employees will meet your expectations and become stars.

### ***What were Churchill's two leadership secrets?***

Churchill became Prime Minister of the UK in 1940 and for five years directed the UK war effort with great perseverance and courage. He was deemed an outstanding and great leader. So what were his leadership secrets?

Churchill gave extremely clear, written, detailed instructions on what he wanted to happen. He left no room for his expectations not to be met.

Churchill kept himself well-informed with first-hand information: he visited the troops near the front line and he watched the air-raids to witness the terrible damage to London.

Is someone always letting you or your business down? Who is letting who down? When your business staff let you down, have you given them exact clear instructions of who, what, where and when? Most importantly, have you done this when you are attempting to do new things where there is no agreed or previously defined way of doing the job? Do you have procedure manuals in place? If not, it's you letting your business and your staff down.

### *Churchill's leadership echoes nature*

Nature controls gene reproduction with extremely few faults: one fault or mutation in a billion reproductions. The controlling DNA code, a sequence of only four building block chemicals, is clear, simple, and unambiguous.

In leadership, you need a way of controlling faults and omissions. You need to give clear instructions and prepare clear procedures for your staff to follow.

Furthermore, in nature, you need to be sensitive to the environment and able to adapt to remain the fittest. Remember, Darwin's survival of the fittest. As a leader, Churchill was constantly sensing the environment first-hand and adapting his actions.

Have problems developed because you did not really know what was going on in your business and its environment? If so, follow Churchill's lead: get out there and find out first-hand what is going on.

## 2. Create an Operating Manual

### *Write it down*

So what's the answer? 'God is in the detail.' Create a recipe with built-in checks or feedback. Write down your ways of working to create a detailed system: written specifications, rules, plans, procedures, templates, and checklists to guide your staff so that they reproduce work without lapses. Create an operating manual – a 'recipe book' – for your system. It defines how you do business: that which really makes you distinctive and different. Note: competitors can't readily copy your 'how'. Writing it down is critical. It gives everyone clear direction, and it is easy to change and add to.

If you can't define it, you can't control it

Consider using an international standard quality management system, such as ISO 9000, to help you create a comprehensive and thorough operating manual. ISO 9000 standards gives a great system for your business and you would be internationally recognised for the quality of work. Get help from an ISO 9000 expert in your field.

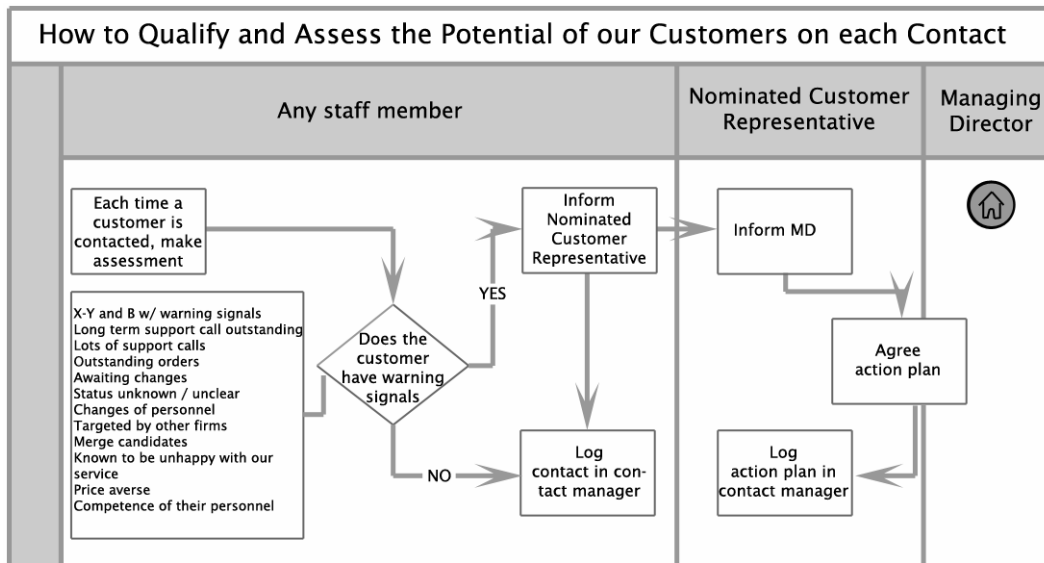
Standardise your ways of working first, using your procedures manual. Improvements will fail until your ways of working are reproducible. Don't change the slightest detail without first proving that the change works reliably and with precision. Leave nothing to chance.

### *Regain control*

Creating an operating manual is essential to regaining control. Here's a number of steps you can take that will help you get started.

1. **Select a single task or process** that has recently given you problems.
2. **Hold a meeting of those concerned.** It is vital to involve your staff. Tell them that you are concerned because of the problems and that things can't continue as before. Don't accuse them of any wrongdoing. You want to improve things by creating an accepted way of doing the task concerned so that it can be done correctly each time, saving embarrassment to all. You need their help: ask questions; get your staff to provide the answers.
3. **Write down a simple list of the sequential steps** needed to do the task, with the help of your staff. Tell them you want a simple clear written procedure that will make it easier for them to get it right each time. Just write down what you actually do now. This provides a first draft of a procedure.
4. **Keep it simple.** If it's getting too involved with too many steps, keep asking 'Why?' It's got to be easy: challenge your own rules and constraints placed on the task.
5. **Keep thinking of what the customer really needs.** Consider breaking it down into a number of smaller steps or removing the complicating rules.
6. **Examine** the steps taken, then add or modify existing steps to help prevent the lapses occurring.
7. **Build in checks and balances** to let your staff know instantly that the job is being done correctly. For example...
  - create checklists
  - create template letters and forms
  - set up reviews by more senior staff at key points in the task or process, to gain the benefit of their experience and corporate memory: remember to record the review has been completed; allow the staff to fix any snag found by the reviewer in the task if it's straightforward, so not needing a further review
  - build tests and checks into the process: leave nothing to chance
  - automate your processes for speed and to help remove human error
8. **Assign responsibility.** State clearly in the procedure who or which job role is responsible for each part of the task.
9. **Check the information flow.** Ensure all the appropriate information needed to complete the task correctly is gathered at the start of the process. Ensure that information needed for the

next task or process is passed on to the next step of the whole process. Write it down on a document.



10. **Use diagrams.** A picture is worth a 1000 words. Use a flowchart with boxes for each step and arrows for the information flow or an indication of what the next step is. Look at the example above.