An Open Letter to CEOs

Dear CEO:

Here are a couple of "Big Wins" for your consideration. Both came about as a result of engineering a solution to a big problem facing the company in question. Chances are, I can engineer a "big win" for you, too. Let's talk.

Lightning-Fast and Dirt-Cheap Systems Development.

The CEO of a variable life insurance company offering investment-based products had promised a new product and supporting system to the CEO one of the country's best-known financial firms. The CEO of the insurance company had a problem. It was November and he had promised the CEO of the financial firm that the new product and supporting system would be available in January. The IT department said it would take 18 months and cost $2 million to develop the system needed to support the new product. Instead, the insurance company's Chief of Staff, a former client, brought me in to lead an effort to develop the new support system on networked PCs. The new system was rolled out two months later at a total cost of less than $400K. The Chief of Staff was happy and so were both CEOs.

Saving Millions of Dollars by Capturing Clerical Work in Algorithmic Form.

The CEO of a large, well-known testing company was plagued by an annually recurring problem. In the spring of each year, his company had to hire and train a large, temporary workforce to manually resolve errors on millions of seasonally submitted forms that had been suspended from computer processing. The training of the temps lasted for three weeks, the dropout rate was high, and close supervision was required once the temps were on the job owing to the high-error rate in their work. The CEO had been told by a strategy consulting firm that I had a reputation for "improving productivity through training." Accordingly, I was brought in and, working with staff, I led an effort to develop algorithmic job aids for each of the more than 100 reasons for suspension from computer processing. The training was refocused on having the trainees learn how to use the algorithmic job aids. The training was shortened to one week, and the dropout rate dropped to almost nothing as did the error rate the temps made once they were on the job. The dollar savings were well into six figures. Subsequently, the algorithms were used to modify the computer edit routines to eliminate the suspensions altogether. Consequently, the need for and costs of the temporary workforce disappeared entirely, saving millions of dollars each year.

Sincerely,

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