Robert E. Kelley wrote this book that objectively discusses ways of bringing the optimal force of the third wave generation. This book offers brainpowered workers like you and your managers a source of hope. It primarily aims to help you realize the star potential that is inside you.

The star performer work skills that are detailed in this book can help you obtain a life beyond work, keep a life at work and set goals you never deemed possible.

Robert E. Kelley has been described as an "entrepreneur of the mind." His ideas and work have appeared on NBC Today Show, CBS Evening News, ABC, CNN, National Public Radio, and in major U.S. newspapers such as The New York Times, Fortune, Forbes, Business Week, and The Wall Street Journal. Dr. Kelley's has been a senior management consultant with the Stanford Research Institute, a Visiting Scholar at the Harvard Business School, worked for the consulting division of Ernst and Young, and ran his own business. Currently, he splits his time teaching, writing, and consulting.

As President of Consultants to Executives and Organizations, Dr. Kelley helps national and international clients, like AT&T, Hewlett-Packard, Merck and 3M, on how to manage brain-powered or customer-driven businesses. Internationally, he has spoken to government officials and executives in China, Japan, Singapore, Indonesia, Brazil, England, France and Italy.

For more information, visit the author's website at http://www.kelleyideas.com.
Chapter 1 - The Productivity Secrets of the Star Performers

What Leads to Star Performance?

Understanding the concept of star performance is rooted with understanding what separates a star performer from an average one.

Robert Kelley's research showed that managers and employees generally do not come up with a match when asked to name their star employees. Therefore, the author and his team grouped each characteristic that was cited by the majority to be traits of a star employee. This resulted in three categories: cognitive skills that include creativity, logic, reasoning, and higher IQ; personality that includes risk-taking, self-confidence, and ambition; and personal control over destiny.

Stars are Made, Not Born

The brainpowered workforce is the blood of every struggling economy. Utilizing this to its fullest is the primary key towards corporate success.

Stellar performance is based on how well the star performer work strategies are incorporated into the many interlocking activities done in the workplace daily. With consistent practice, certain work habits will put you above the rest.

Be the master of your own productivity by:

1) Taking initiatives
2) Establishing good and reliable networks
3) Learning how to manage yourself
4) Adopting a perspective
5) Giving followership a value
6) Valuing the concept of leadership and developing this skill
7) Putting importance on teamwork
8) Being organizationally savvy
9) Knowing how to master the art of show and tell

Improvements in Productivity Rates

This book has been proven to improve productivity rates of people who are considered as average or commonly performing employees. Since the corporate world is a jungle and nobody wants to be left behind and suffer, this book is the answer to all of your cravings for the star reward.

- **Women, Minorities and Newer Workers Improve 400 Percent**
  The mastery of the art of star performance is only a matter of learning and practice. Even women and other minorities within the society are beginning to experience the drastic boost in productivity rates by merely following the programs set in this book.

- **The Productivity Return of the Organization is 600 Percent**
  Molding employees to be star performers is one major source of competitive
advantage. This is one of the moving theses that push Kelley to intensively work on this research as well.

- **Learn what does not improve your productivity**
  Identify which work habits drag your productivity down. There is no guaranteed formula towards successfully improving productivity. There are no one-size-fits-all strategies. The important thing is that you remain true to yourself and you retain your basic nature in the workplace. Pattern your work plan from there and don’t be too dependent on self-help books or other people’s experiences.

Chapter 2 - The Nine Work Strategies of the Star Performers

1. Initiative: Blazing Trails in the Organization’s White Spaces

How do star performers define initiative? Initiatives don’t need to be brilliant to realize an impact. What matters most is they become effective and operative.

- **Seek out responsibility over and above the expected job description.**
  Taking initiative means moving out of your own protective job description to bridge spaces between job spheres called white spaces. White spaces are areas poorly covered or not covered by any job description or org chart in the organization. Found in abundance in every organization, having somebody fill in these spaces is critical to improving productivity.

- **Undertake extra efforts for the benefit of co-workers or the larger group.**
  Initiative should always be rooted upon the idea of extending an extra mile for the benefit of others. Although the action eventually ends up benefitting the star itself, it should never become a conscious effort from his end.

- **Stick tenaciously to an idea or project and follow it through to successful implementation.**
  Commitment is primarily what leads every goal to success. A good idea is only as good as it gets. What makes it better is when it is realized. Implementation is the ultimate testing ground for measuring initiative impacts. Struggles come hand in hand with goals. What builds your initiative reputation is that you followed your idea through its completion whether it ends up a success or a failure.

- **Willingly assume some personal risk in taking on new responsibilities.**
  Taking initiative bridges gaps, even in situations where anger permeates and egos are wounded. It all boils down to risk management. Stars, for instance, take the following steps when choosing their initiatives:

  1) They deliver their current assignments well.
  2) They make a “benefit check” by laying on an initiative value trail.
  3) They stay close to the critical path.
  4) They choose higher-level initiatives.
  5) They determine the probability of success and the cost of failure and know how to pull the plug gracefully when necessity calls for it.
2. Knowing Who Knows: Plugging Into the Knowledge Network

Establishing a knowledge network is essential in paving your way towards star performance.

Know What You Don't Know
With the onset of technological advancements and an unlimited availability of information, change becomes the only permanent thing in this world. What you think you are a master of today may not be the same tomorrow. Therefore, network connections matter. Determining and accepting which areas you have inadequate information and knowledge of is very important towards successfully installing some credibility upon yourself.

Networking Fundamentals
1. The knowledge itself. Know what information is essential and what is not.
2. Organizational support. Management should recognize the need for networking. Opportunities to establish and develop networks should be given to every employee.
3. Technical / physical environment. Appropriate communication systems should be made available in the workplace. Bear in mind that it is the network members who determine the channels from which information is made available. Therefore, the organization should be prepared for this.

The Eight Network Nodes
- **Node 1: Mental Models of Networking**
The network operates as an economic barter system with knowledge as the currency. Learn to choose your network trade partners. Acquire an attitude of shrewdness towards cost and benefit.

- **Node 2: Weed and Seed**
Identify qualified knowledge givers and work your way towards having them part of your network. Be in touch with other star performers as well. Chances are they have their own network base that you can eventually gain access to as well.

- **Node 3: Proactive One-Way Trading**
Make a list of experts that you might need to approach now or in the future. Build bridges towards these experts by willingly helping them when the opportunity arises.

- **Node 4: Networking Etiquette on the critical Path**
Vouching is normally the only way for you to gain access within reliable networks. Therefore, observing small courtesies and considerations within the network is critical.

- **Node 5: Do Your Homework**
Stars do a quick self-study. They summarize their attempts at finding a solution before they ask within the network. They spend some time formulating the right questions. Most importantly, they try to link their problem to the expert area of interest to intensify their attention.
• **Node 6: Credit Lavishly**
  Give your network the credit that is due them. Cite your sources when you are complimented. Recognition is elemental towards maintaining good network bases.

• **Node 7: The Benefit of Newness**
  New employees are provided with opportunities to prove their worth. They should bear in mind, however, that bad assessments travel faster than good ones. No matter how excellent they are at work, if they have anti-networking behaviors that are difficult to deal with, chances are they will not gain access within the group.

• **Node 8: Be a Good Network Citizen**
  The network maintains a symbiotic relationship within its realm. In order to avoid devaluation within the network, develop a reputation that you are someone who not only takes but gives back as well.

3. **Managing Your Whole Life at Work: Self-Management**

• **Proactively getting on the critical path**
  The first step to star quality self-management is managing to work only on those activities directly tied to the critical path. The critical path is the most direct, essential, value-added route that can be plotted from the work of a brainpowered employee to a customer.

• **Self-knowledge in self-management**
  Learn to incorporate your individual, unique traits into those self-management techniques that you have developed in yourself. This fusion could be a great factor towards putting you in star status.

• **Self-managing and job satisfaction**
  Know your wants, desires and needs. Be more acquainted with yourself. Work towards establishing a career path that makes you enjoy, appreciate and value your job and your company goals.

• **Managing flow: the productive state of mind**
  Avoid situations that could disrupt your productivity concentration. Again, there are no formulas on how to do this but you can always formulate unique techniques to help you deal with unexpected and inevitable distractions.

• **Organized self-management: getting the job done**
  Star quality work does not only require that you deliver a job on time: you must also work hard to maintain internal (colleagues, management) and external (clients) respect. All these basically depend on how you efficiently manage yourself. Adapt a self-management system that will help you do the following: plan a whole project, organize your time, track your progress, be able to store and retrieve information, anticipate and hurdle possible crises, set up a back-up plan if all else fails, and relay results and developments to the appropriate information users.
• **Organized self-management: company and career**
  Star employees always keep in mind that every action taken within the organization should be aligned with the critical path. It is imperative then that upper management and the ranks-in-file are open to discussions, especially those involving company goals.

  Star employees take a wider perspective when it comes to approaching work on hand and work that would yet come into their hands. They are forward-moving but cautious thinkers. They earnestly take on risk - but only calculated risk.

4. Getting the Big Picture: Learning How to Build Perspective

• **Colleague Perspective**
  The exclusivity of cultures from different workplaces is one fundamental reason why many brain-powered workers in various disciplines are not very open to practices like institutional peer review and the like. Walling off employees by putting them through years of training for narrowly defined specialties makes them adopt a myopic view of the world outside of the workplace. They fail to recognize the diversity and breadth of experiences to be learned from considering perspectives that can be offered by people from other disciplines.

  Star performers, on the other hand, see the process of soliciting critical perspective as an important way to improve their work. It is also an effective way to enhance professional standing. It helps build others’ commitment to success because it brings about some sense of partnership.

  Few people are really able to keep an open mind when their hard efforts are criticized. Others compensate such difficulty by finding a "critique" buddy. These buddies are usually experts whom you highly respect, share compatible personalities with and whose motives you trust. These buddies are the ones who can offer you constructive criticism.

• **Customer Perspective**
  This is one valuable perspective to consider in every business. Knowing customer needs and motivations is essential towards achieving success.

• **Competitor Perspective**
  Your competitors are your primary success hurdles. Therefore, it is important that you learn about their products. Make a point-by-point comparison of their product to yours. Touch on their possible developments as well. Know how they think. This is the only way you can gain an edge over them.

• **Company-Management Perspective**
  Company and management goals should be aligned with that of the employees' working goals in order to realize achievement. Kelley's research shows that many companies fall short on this. It is important that
management keep communication lines open for employees. By presenting employees with a clearer vision of the company's goals, a more active participation can be expected from them.

- **Creative Dissonance Perspective**
  Get out of your workbox. Try to mingle with the outside world. The world has something to offer towards the improvement of your goal achievement procedures.

5. **Followership: Checking Your Ego at the Door to Lead in Assists**

Followership is the work strategy that guides your interactions with leaders. It focuses on all the relationships you have with people who have organizational power and authority over you. Followership is also different from teamwork, which is most often about brainpowered-worker-to-brainpowered-worker relationships.

A star follower should be always considering the following factors: independent critical thinking and active participation in the destiny of the enterprise.

**Work Strategies of a Star Follower**

Star employees commonly possess the following behaviors and attitudes. This is how they are distinguished from the whole flock.

- **Self-leadership** - The stars know how to lead themselves well.
- **Focus / commitment / incentive** - They have focus, commitment, and incentives beyond personal gain.
- **Competence that leads to credibility** - They build competence and credibility in order to have maximum influence in the workplace.
- **The courageous conscience** - They exercise an honest, courageous conscience when carrying out assignments and implementing policies.
- **They control their own egos to work cooperatively with leaders. Here are seven ways to control your ego:**
  1) Be pro-active
  2) Be a fact finder
  3) Be an advice seeker
  4) Be a system player
  5) Be persuasive - speak in the language of the organization
  6) Be courageous - go over heads when absolutely necessary
  7) Be a collective follower or plan well to stand alone

6. **Small-L Leadership in a Big-L World**

Small-L leadership is practiced among peers, most often in teams. The degree of success usually has nothing to do with the power of a job title. Rather, it has a great deal to do with expertise, a credible reputation, influence and persuasion. The role is temporary and the transition could range from an hour to 6 months. A team leader
must possess any one of the following:

- **Knowledge quotient** - This plays a central role in small-L leadership. It can provide the initial credibility that opens up other brainpowered peers to listen to you in the first place. It also provides the “content” that separates success from failure. This is shared throughout the group, preferably rotating with each person's expertise, depending on the needs of the work at hand.

- **People-Skills Quotient** - This is where out-of-self focus comes in. Since big-L leaders usually focus on their individual goals, small-L leaders come in to bridge critical gaps. These gaps may be filled by understanding how significant human relationships contribute to the success of a project. By earning a co-worker's trust and sympathy, you can easily tap into his skill and expertise pool.

- **Momentum Quotient** - This refers to coming up with that whole collection of activities required to move a project from beginning to completion. It includes constantly grabbing those moments when your team's morale is up and finding ways to keep that morale level high until the whole project is complete.

Small L-leaderships enable the shifting of the entire burden of the whole project from one person to the whole team itself. Responsibilities are distributed. Each member of the team is encouraged to immerse themselves deeply with the goal of getting the project done and getting it done well.

In the end, however, it still boils down to preferences and suitability to circumstances. As an individual receiving the impact of these leadership styles, ask yourself which ones really work for you: the Big-L leadership, which is more individualistic and egoistic in nature or the small-L leadership, which is based on track records and oriented towards building the whole team itself.

7. **Teamwork: Getting Real About Teams**

The corporate world has definitely evolved significantly over the past decade. In this “we” decade, corporate leaders are now starting to show greater respect for team achievements. Therefore, in your quest for star recognition, it is important that you learn enough about how teamwork really operates.

Teamwork is a complex series of skills that involve taking joint ownership of goal settings, group commitments, work activities, schedules, and group accomplishments. It is especially necessary for complex brainpowered work. It shifts responsibilities, burdens, and accountabilities from individuals to groups. Everybody is expected to exert as much effort as possible.

**Getting in touch with the culture**

Know what your bosses think about team-playing and teamwork, know how your colleagues embrace the idea of sharing tasks and information, and determine the level of teamwork skills in your company/department. By knowing the culture that
exists in your workplace, choosing a team that can put great value on teamwork becomes less tedious.

8. Organizational Savvy: Street Smarts in the Corporate Power Zone

Companies from different sectors tell us that there are thousands of brainpowered workers who do not become star performers because of a bias against workers who are seen to be too locked to their technical specialization and do not operate well in the larger organizational context. These workers are passed over because they lack the ability to be organizationally savvy. This is the essential ability to manage competing workplace interests to promote ideas, resolve conflicts and achieve goals.

Star producers, who bring strong interpersonal skills to the workplace and forge good relationships with co-workers, managers and clients, create a niche that distinguishes them from the rest. They are able to market that niche successfully within the organization.

9. Show-and-Tell: Persuading the Right Audience with the Right Message

The basic skill needed to persuade the right audience with the right message is: KNOW YOUR AUDIENCE:

In many cases, understanding the audience framework can bring major benefits in terms of moving an audience, not just to accept your point of view but also to take concrete action as a result of it. In addition, those who are adept at this skill get noticed more quickly - their star performer status is publicly affirmed.

By knowing your audience, you are able to tailor fit how to present your message in the way that is most interesting, relevant and understandable to that audience. You may use human terms, or terms that touch the emotions, so that the audience can relate personally to the message. You may use props during a talk to enhance the story because you provide a visual factor that helps the audience understand you better. It is important, though, that the use of these props be kept to a limit. Props should not steal the attention of the audience. They are just aids in conveying the message, not the message itself.

Become a Star Performer: Making the Program for You

Star productivity requires work. Do not lose sight that the goal is higher productivity.

Star performance is not a cure-all for a miserable work situation. Even star performers end up with the wrong job, get the wrong boss for them, or are in the wrong company. This makes for a difficult situation because even though you are producing at a high level, your work goes unrecognized or unrewarded. Obstacles are put in your way, making high productivity almost unsustainable. Star performers may try to change jobs or bosses within the company, attempt to change the dysfunctional organizational culture for the better or go to work for a different
company that better recognizes their mastery of productivity skills. The important lesson is not to stay in a bad situation where your star cannot shine. Even if you blame your lower productivity on others, your reputation suffers more in the long run. It is never too late to improve your productivity. If you have been an average performer for more years than you can remember, you can still be a star. You can make it happen at any time in your career.

Chapter 3 - Some Productive Last Words
A Conversation with Women and Minority Employees: Useful Tips on Becoming Stars

Women and minorities struggle most with three star work strategies that are relevant to long-term success and are particular hazards for them.

1. Understanding Initiative
   Star initiatives are different from job completion behaviors. Women, consequently spin their wheels in workplace behaviors, mistakenly believing they are showing great initiative when others perceive them as merely doing their jobs. Their extra efforts go unrewarded. Unfocused hard work and more hours do not bring star performance.

   Women and minorities need to fully understand how co-workers, managers and the larger organization define initiative.
   - What is seen as “doing your job” versus “going above and beyond your job?”
   - What is the “critical path” for your company and how do you make sure you are on it?
   - Which “white space” is it important to step into to help out your colleagues and the company?

   Once a woman or a minority employee learns the expanded definition of initiative, they make it happen quickly.

2. Customized Networking
   Women and minorities face special challenges in networking. At the top of the list is the need to overcome prejudices and be viewed as a trading partner who brings value to the network. With this in mind, findings show that there are many ways to achieve a successful networking strategy.

   No single way works for everyone, nor is any one way essential. There is value in exposing people to a wide range of alternatives rather than limiting them to one. The point is to broaden learning opportunities for everyone, not limit them.

3. Reality Check on Teams
   No one keeps track of your team commitments but you. The number of
teams you’re on counts for little; only your contributions that give value to the critical path matter. Since women and minorities are often asked to be on more teams, they can soon be swamped with work that doesn't matter.

Choosing the teams you join allows you to manage your time better, staying free of the clutter that takes you off critical path work, and aids you in contributing better input to the teams you find valuable.

**A Message for Managers: Productivity in the Brainpowered Economy**

Managers of intellectual capital find themselves in an uncomfortable position because they are increasingly dependent on brainpowered employees whose work process they do not understand and whose productivity they cannot control. In most traditional businesses, the manager knows how to do the subordinate’s job but this is not the scenario in most brainpowered jobs.

Executives have to think far enough ahead to grab the available workers who have the skills to work with the emerging technology. If they don't, they risk their companies being left behind during the next technological revolution.

Workers these days are aware of their value in the job marketplace and will probably change companies several times during their careers. Managers can contain the transfer problem by keeping brainpowered employees happy where they are. This can be done by providing generous salaries and benefits and flexible working conditions.

The more star workers turn their ideas into sought-after products and services, the more cushion managers have in determining new directions for the business.

**Star Performance Is Your Key to a Better Work Life**

Workers who go through the program are now more highly valued by their colleagues and other managers in the company than they were before. It showed workers that being smart, assertive and analytical aren't enough. They have to be able to lead the team through difficult times and personal challenges.

**Star Performance Allows You to Get a Life**

Although star performers primarily perform for the satisfaction that comes from doing a great job and for the respect of their peers, it is comforting to know that one will now get the economic rewards that one deserves.

Being a star performer is not just about avoiding downsizing or adding value to the critical path. It is not just about working smarter instead of longer. It is about you -- the kind of person you want to be and the kind of life you want to lead.