



## Inside the Executive Suite

(Tips, Tricks, and Techniques used by the Nation's top Executives... to get things done.)

### Comp 101 Memory

I watched an executive whom I knew really well in a meeting one day and was struck by something out of the ordinary that he did. We were in a senior executive meeting, everyone was adorned in their best suits (clients were in the room) and at an opportune time, he did something that caught me by surprise. In the meeting, we were discussing next steps and he had a couple of next steps that he put back on himself. While everyone else was trying to get notes into their iPhones, he pulled from his coat pocket a small (roughly 2.5 x 5) black covered composition book and scribbled some notes in it - then returned it to his pocket.

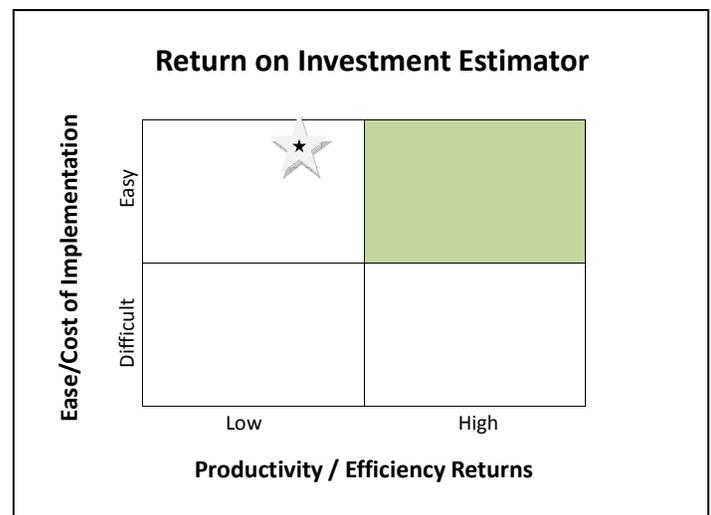
Thinking back on it, it hadn't dawned on me at that time, but he had been taking some rough notes in a very nice leather attaché case in front of him. Why the little black composition book?

Later, I had a chance to ask him about the small composition book in his pocket. He curtly said, "Memory isn't what it used to be. It's my Comp 101 memory."

O.k, this one seems a bit too simple. Notes from the meeting went into the leather binder - but, actions that he was responsible for went into the small composition book. He always was a highly organized executive and we really had no idea how he kept things strait. Now we knew.

Given another chance, I asked why he didn't use a PDA or something similar. He simply said that those were cumbersome, he owned them, but preferred the small comp book. He gave me a bunch of reasons why he preferred his Comp 101 Memory.

1. It was a permanent record.
2. He could use it on a plane at 1,000 ft. or 30,000 ft., taxiing on the runway or cruising at 500 mph.
3. It never needed charging.
4. It was admissible in court if he needed to mark the timing of an agreement on paper. That one was a stretch for me - but I confirmed it with a Justice Department attorney and I guess there are situations where it would be useful...I can also think of situations where it could get you in trouble!
5. The book only had to-dos' in it - so it was easy to organize. Meeting notes



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went into other notebooks or tablets.

As we spoke, he proceeded to give me a few more tips that I'll pass on to you.

**First, you can buy the book for about \$2 bucks at Wal-Mart.** Shrewd - and it makes a statement for sure.

**Second,** get the one that fits in a standard shirt or jacket pocket. Ladies, if you carry a purse, you have some more options - but my friend would still tell you to get something small and non-obscure that you can easily hide. That even lets you pull it out at the right time. When those of us that worked with my executive buddy got to know his mannerisms, you knew you had hit on an important point when he pulled it out of his pocket and took a note. **That was exciting because that meant stuff would get done.** It became our objective in meetings to see if we could get something to him important enough that he would jot it down.

**Third,** he used little notes with each to-do to jog his memory as to where certain supporting notes would be. For instance: **Follow-up / Jim (555) 555-1212 by 12/2; see leather binder note 11/27.** - Needs contract draft.

In this case, the reference back to his leather binder and the date was all he needed to get to an important series of support notes.

**Fourth,** the book went everywhere with him and was always at the ready. The elevator, gym, whatever. He even took down small ideas that came to him while riding in a cab, waiting on a plane, at a restaurant, etc. And, he typically shopped to find a **comp notebook with enough pages to get a year out of it.**

**Fifth,** his tip was to **start your first entry about six pages into the book.** The blank pages up front became his "key numbers" or important information (birthdays, etc.). Yeah, I know, most smart phones can now blow this out of the water. Look, just leave some blank pages, try it for a year, and I promise you that you will have filled some of the pages up front.

There is no rocket science with this tip. Franklin Covey has had binder concepts like this for decades. And, there are organizers that have special forms, etc. available of course.

But, there is something about the simplicity and **"old world" cool** that comes with the composition book.

Just to put my money where my mouth is, next time you see me, **ask me where my "comp 101 memory" is.** If I don't have it on my person, bet I can walk right to it in a briefcase or my jacket pocket.

- Keith

Questions or have other tips for us? Let us know: [exec@armadaci.com](mailto:exec@armadaci.com)