



BUSINESSWISE

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THE WISE® PODCAST CHANNEL

WORKABLE SOLUTIONS TO
A PROSPEROUS BUSINESS

Episode 1-Volume 2

Outflow

Welcome to BusinessWISE. This is a series of articles created for entrepreneurs who are interested in expanding their companies by learning and applying the management system discovered and developed by humanitarian, philosopher, and administrative genius, Mr. L. Ron Hubbard.

The subject of today's article is *outflow*. Let's jump right in with a quote from Mr. Hubbard:

"Outflow is holier, more moral, more remunerative and more effective than inflow."

From the article OUTFLOW, dated 6 July 1959.

We're using "flow" here to mean a directed motion which has two basic characteristics: either it's going away from you, or it's coming closer. These are two of the basic flows in the physical universe. Things are either emanating from you, or they're coming toward you, or some combination thereof.

For example, this is easy to see in a conversation. When you are speaking to someone, you are outflowing to that person. When you are receiving a communication from them, you are inflowing.

If a business owner or an entrepreneur – not necessarily you, but somebody – starts running into trouble with their company, which flow rivets their attention? Which flow do they consider to be their priority? Well, let's face it, it's the *inflow*. They look at the mailbox to see what's come in the mail. Or they look at the appointment book, to see who's coming in to see them. It's all about what's coming in.

And yet, Hubbard says: **"Outflow is holier, more moral, more remunerative and more effective than inflow."** So which flow *should* be grabbing the attention of that business owner or entrepreneur? Which one *should* he or she be focused on? Well, clearly, per this reference from Mr. Hubbard, it should be the *outflow*.

Let's do a little exercise, here. Take a piece of paper and write a list of the numbers that you monitor most closely in your business: your figures or statistics. Write them down in a column. Maybe you keep track of your income, or the number of new customers, etc. Maybe you graph them, maybe you don't; either way, write down that list of numbers or statistics or figures that you use to gauge the health of your business.

Once you've done that, go back over that list and write down the word "in" if that number measures an inflow, or "out" if that number measures an outflow. Income, obviously, measures an inflow. Maybe you keep a statistic of the value of services you deliver to your customers: that's an outflow. Maybe you keep a statistic of the number of new customers every week or every month; that would be an inflow. So, go over your list and mark, one by one, whether the number measures in or out.

Have you done that? Good. Now, look that list over, and figure out your ratio of inflow statistics to outflow statistics. Chances are, you're looking at a disproportionately higher number of inflow statistics than outflow statistics. And whichever you're monitoring most closely will tell you which flow you have your attention on.

Is "inflow" the right flow to have your attention on? Evidently not, per this reference. Again, he says: **"Outflow is holier, more moral, more remunerative and more effective than inflow."**

Now why would that be? Because inflow is a proportional response to outflow. He who would inflow, must outflow.

How do you take charge of an inflow statistic? What do you do when the phone's not ringing? Do you stare at it, say some kind of mantra over it? When customers aren't coming in, do you go look out the window and "will" them inside? Do you pray for them to come in?

How do you become Cause over inflow?

You become Cause over inflow by becoming Cause over *outflow*. You can always grab the phone and make phone calls. You can always write a letter. You can go out in the street and say, "Hi!" That's an outflow.

Let's take a dramatic example. Say you started a store, or a shop. The shop is on a good street, in a good location. You fill the shop with all kinds of interesting things for people to buy: widgets, or sandwiches, or what have you. And then you paint all the windows black and remove all your signage. There's no promotion going out, no advertising at all. In other words, no outflow. How much inflow are you going to get?

I'll give you an answer: it's zero. You're not going to get any inflow, at all.

Now, if you opened your front door, looked out into the street, and started yelling, "Hey! Sandwiches for sale! Widgets for sale! Come on in!" This isn't exactly an artful or skillful marketing approach. But if

you did that long enough, wouldn't somebody eventually walk into that place, even if it's just to tell you to shut up?

In other words, any inflow your business receives is going to be in response to some sort of outflow. The proportion of inflow to outflow is relative to the skill and quality of that outflow. But don't go after quality without acknowledging this fact: It's quantity first. Remember: **"Outflow is holier, more moral, more remunerative and more effective than inflow."**

I think a lot of people have kind of understood this over the centuries. It's an agreeable concept. People have said for the longest time that "To give is better than to receive." Yep, outflow is better. And now you know why. Because he who would inflow, must outflow.

In the same article that I mentioned above, Hubbard goes on to say:

"The order of priority of staff action follows for any department or staff member:

"1. Outflow to general public using any comm [communication] particle or body,"¹

That's your number one priority.

Do a little inspection. Walk into your business as though you are a stranger, a prospective new customer. Walk right up to the front door and walk in there. See what you see. What is greeting you? That's outflow.

How does the place look? Is it neat? Is it clean? Is it attractive?

How about the staff? How are they dressed? How do they greet you? How are their manners?

That's all outflow. And that is extremely important. It is the number one "outflow to general public using any communication, particle or body."

How do the staff answer the phone? How do they greet new customers? How do they handle customer requests? How does the place look? How efficient is it? How much waiting time is there?

This is all outflow. Not to mention, of course, your marketing, your promotion, your letters – outflow. Number one priority: **"Outflow to general public using any comm particle or body."**

And here is the second most important flow:

"2. Inflow of income-producing comm particles,"¹

Notice, Hubbard's not saying here that inflow is not important. He's just saying it's number two.

All too often you'll see desks with piles of unopened letters. When working with businesses, I've found credit card numbers in the trashcan that have never been processed. I've seen checks show

up in piles of mail that no one's ever looked at. Make it easy to receive inflow of income-producing communication particles.

I've heard people tell customers, "Come back next week, we're too busy." I even had someone turn off their phone because they were too busy. They just put on the answering machine. "We're too busy, we can't take any more business."

Of course, in a few weeks they'll wonder why they have to scramble around, looking for business. Inflow of income-producing comm particles is important. It's just junior to number one, which is the **"Outflow to general public using any comm particle or body."** Set up your lines so that income-producing particles can come in easily. And they will come in, as long as you have your outflow in place.

Okay, number three in priority:

"3. Outflow of finished work or reports to other org [organization] members,"

Of course, you need to communicate with your teammates. Bosses need to communicate to their juniors, juniors need to communicate to their bosses. If you ask for something, the speed with which it's returned is important; it does measure the efficiency and the quality of that organization. But priority-wise, it's number three, and you put that aside if you're handling outflow to the general public, or inflow of income-producing communication particles. Outflow of the finished work or reports to other organization members is junior to those things.

So, if it becomes a choice of one or the other, which one are you going to put your attention on?

Just this morning, I was in a coffee shop. There I was, standing in line, and there were two employees, talking to each other, going over something that was obviously more important than the customers waiting for service. And after a few minutes, I just walked out and went to a different place. In the second shop, they had their heads on straight as far as handling the inflow of income-producing communication particles. Their "Outflow of finished work or reports to other org members" was junior in importance to: *There's a customer who wants to be serviced.* We've all had this experience. It's important, but it's number three.

Number four:

"4. Inflow of orders, requests, information from other org members." ¹

You need to be able to receive communication. Have a basket system, have some place which makes it easy for communications to be received, and then swiftly delivered. Have a system for that. Inter-organizational communication is important and will measure your success to a large extent; it's just junior in importance to the earlier three. But have your communication system set up so that it's easy to receive a communication. Then, when you are able to get to it, you can handle it properly.

Verbal communication is often not the best way to go. If you're busy with something, you're handling an income-producing communication particle and somebody wants to talk about office business and they're yapping in your ear when you're trying to handle something, you might say, "Yeah, yeah, yeah, I'll get to it." But of course, you never do. Because it's not important right then, and if it was never written down, never put in any kind of basket, it gets disregarded and the organization becomes much less efficient because of it.

Hubbard's final sentence in that article is:

"Give priority in terms of time as above and increase your unit." ¹

In this case, "unit" means a unit of income. In other words, give priority in terms of time as above and increase your income.

And if you do, then you will.

Well, there you go. I hope this has been of value to you. Thank you for reading.



¹ All of these quotes are from Mr. Hubbard's article entitled *OUTFLOW*, dated 6 July 1959.

*The Hubbard College Reference Set can be purchased from the Hubbard College International at www.hubbardcollegepress.org.

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