

**Openings:** We have reached the midpoint of summer where we have relaxed into the slower pace required to sustain us through the long daylight hours. In about one week, the first back-to-school flyers will appear and the realisation that September is only a few short weeks away will set in. Be certain to get out and revel in your favourite warm weather activities before the autumn winds put a chill in the air.

**Spotlight:** The basic business equation is very simple: Revenue – Cost > 0. When a business is trending towards a situation where costs exceed revenues, the options are to either increase revenues or decrease costs. Ideas for increasing revenues can be quite creative yet when looking for cost saving measures, the same creativity is often missing. This is not hard to understand because cost control is usually something that is forced upon an enterprise. Rather than having to periodically implement cost saving measures, adopting a culture of simplicity is an alternative method for keeping costs down.

Simplicity is finding the balance point between what is essential and what is available. Simplicity is not associated with lack as it can just as easily encompass more as it can encompass less. Between the extremes of the bare necessities and excess, a middle ground exists that, for each enterprise, represents the most effective employment of people, tools, and resources. Occupying this territory allows an enterprise to operate at peak profitability. All stakeholders receive a fair return and an equitable balance exists between the stakeholders and all aspects of the enterprise.

A simplicity culture is based on the believe that there is a correct quantity of quality people, tools, and resources and only that quantity—no more or no less—will get the job done. This is not a static value and rather one that varies proportionally with the workload and the investment in appropriate technology. There are no efforts to “squeeze” more out of people when the economy slows and there are no efforts to “swell” departments when the economy is booming. Individuals take responsibility for their actions and make decisions without committee approval. There is true choice between alternatives without mandated outcomes. The driving force is to increase the enterprises wealth through means aligned with its values.

Just as the physical world tends towards entropy, enterprises tend towards simplicity. That which is not important or does not have value falls away when an enterprise functions unhindered. Prestige and status are qualities opposed to simplicity not because they are wrong, but because they redirect the energies of the enterprise. Wealth is a quality aligned with simplicity because simplicity emphasises the effective use of the enterprises energy. In a culture of simplicity, no matter what the economic climate, the greatest good is always returned from what is available within the enterprise. Excess, in any form, is not considered because it is counter to the culture. Establish a simplicity culture and then let loose your creativity on how to invest the profits.

**Just For Fun:** Besides being very humorous, this is an exercise in following instructions.

1. Go to [www.google.com](http://www.google.com)
2. Type “weapons of mass destruction”
3. Rather than selecting *Google Search*, select *I’m Feeling Lucky*
4. Do not make any assumptions about what you see, read the page carefully

This is definitely something that is great fun to share.

**Musings:** With clear blue skies, a cooling ocean breeze, and the most strenuous activity being keeping deer away from the flowers, it is difficult to get too excited about anything. Still, those deer do present an interesting dilemma.

The sight of a doe with a dappled fawn in tow elicits a heart-felt smile and appreciation for the beauty of nature. Coupled with the myth of *Bambi*, it is easy to look kindly upon these gentle creatures.

The fact that these are herbivores consuming several kilograms of leafy greens (i.e., flowers and shrubs) daily sheds a different light on their presence. In addition, finding the end product of their digestive process deposited in randomly positioned piles across the lawn can sway one to thoughts of venison roasts.

So, is the approach to these visitors “*c’est la vie*” or “*not in my backyard*”? Even on a gorgeous summer day, no matter how much we might like it to be, life refuses to be neat and tidy.

**Facts & Figures:** Don’t dispose, decompose! EarthShell Corporation is making plates, bowls, and hinged-lid sandwich and salad containers from a “batter” of vegetable starch, fibre, air, and water. While the items look and feel very much like standard fast-food containers, they decompose in 60 to 90 days leaving no toxic residues.

**Quote:** Designer Paul Jacques Grillo cuts to the heart of what simplicity is all about.

*“Simplicity does not mean want or poverty. It does not mean ... absence.... It only means that ... anything foreign ... should be taken away.”*