

**Openings:** Author E.B. White captures the dilemma of life with beauty and humour.

*"If the world were merely seductive, that would be easy. If it were merely challenging, that would be no problem. But I arise in the morning torn between a desire to improve the world, and a desire to enjoy the world. This makes it hard to plan the day."*

**Spotlight:** Let us be clear about two points. First, efficiency and effectiveness are not synonymous. Efficiency speaks to achieving a high ratio of output to input while effectiveness speaks to achieving the intended or expected result. Second, efficiency is not a word that applies to human endeavours. With the exception of biological processes in the context of physical activities such as sports, attempting to measure how efficiently a person performs a task does not provide any relevant information.

The appeal of efficiency is understandable. Since the dawn of the industrial revolution, ever more efficient machines have transformed societies and created great financial wealth. Conceptualising people as biological machines, through motion and time study, has for over one hundred years promised to bring the same benefits to the tasks that people perform. Given that early adopters of these management theories, such as Henry Ford's production lines, have abandoned most if not all of these theories, should make us question why these theories are still being implemented.

What is of interest from this social experimentation is how people, in spite of the bizarre management theory imposed on them, tend to get the job done. This is because human beings are incredibly effective. Once placed at the starting line and pointed towards the finish line, people skilfully navigate the maze between them and the required result. Unfortunately, because these mazes are very torturous, the cost to the enterprise is very high. Even though the highest cost for almost every business is labour, it is still a challenge for enterprises to abandon practises that are efficient yet ineffective.

A major difference between efficiency and effectiveness is that while efficiency can be achieved in only one manner—manipulating the variables in the equation—effectiveness can be achieved in as many ways as there are individuals tasked with the objective. As well, unlike efficiency, effectiveness has no point of diminishing returns. Its pursuit is a learning process and as long as an individual is open to learning, tomorrow the task is performed more effectively than today. This is good news that comes with a challenge; effectiveness is very difficult to measure and it is non-linear. How do you write your weekly status report when there is nothing firm to measure and what can be measured only shows up in the last week of the project? The management structure of most enterprises is built around efficiency so before effectiveness can take hold, the culture must be realigned.

This does not mean that we spurn being efficient. Watch any top athlete and what you see is the model of efficiency. The difference is that this efficiency is a result of focusing on being effective. In no sport is there a prize for being efficient; the prize goes to the winner and that is the person who is most effective, the one who scores the most goals.

**Links:** To get your fix of efficiency fanaticism, check out [www.insightman.com](http://www.insightman.com), an ode to the high efficiency Honda Insight automobile. Read some of the logs and it is difficult not to smile when you learn how an attention to the efficiency of a machine can unexpectedly affect your life.

**Musings:** With only a few cold, hot, or rainy days each year, Victoria is a cyclist's haven. About the only impediment to bicycling around the city is a shortage of daylight in the dead of winter. A good lighting system resolves this potential sticking point leaving any passionate cyclist no valid excuse for not cycling at least 300 days each year.

Being a passion—the object of love or desire—it would seem obvious that every opportunity to put that bicycle in motion is seized upon and guarded jealously. Still, there are days when we allow other aspects of life to take precedence over our passions. We rationalise such behaviour as the need to attend to the practicalities of daily existence. Not indulging our passions diminishes our lives because our passions are what re-create us providing the energy to address the daily tasks.

Next time that you feel an excuse building to not do what you love doing, let go of that excuse. Remind yourself that planned or unplanned, pursuing your passion is your unique way to improve the world while enjoying it.

**Facts & Figures:** So how has your net worth fared over the past two decades? The annual Forbes 400 list of personal wealth shows an interesting glimpse at how some people are doing. In 1982, you required \$91 million to make the list and by 2000, that amount had risen to \$725 million. Occupying the top spot on the list is Bill Gates whose wealth, by 2005, is projected to be \$1 trillion.

**Quote:** D.H. Lawrence gives us the final word against the imposition of efficiency on human beings.

*"I am not a mechanism, an assembly of various sections. And it is not because the mechanism is working wrongly, that I am ill."*