

Short Attention Span Syndrome

Fight this contagious disease.



by Dave Crenshaw

WE MAY HAVE AN EPIDEMIC among us. At the next networking meeting you attend, wash your hands immediately afterward—maybe five times for good measure. Despite medical evidence to the contrary, a previously thought incommunicable disease is spreading faster than copies of *Who Moved My Cheese?* The disease is Short Attention Span Syndrome, or SASS.

Symptoms of SASS

Perhaps you have noticed some of the following symptoms:

- Shifting in your seat and coughing just a little too loudly during a boring meeting
- Saying to your significant other, “I’m sorry, honey, could you repeat that? I wasn’t paying attention.”
- Going to sleep while mentally rifling through a mile-long to-do list.

Many with these symptoms joke, “I must have ADHD!” However, ADHD is present from birth and, while treatable, is permanent. SASS, on the other hand, develops over time.

Symptoms begin to appear around the teenage years and slowly accelerate until they become a frenzy of activity and mental noise. SASS is viral. It passes from manager to employee, from spouse to spouse, from parents to children, and from children to parents.

Spreading SASS

SASS is most commonly passed by entrepreneurial types—business owners, risktasking executives, sales professionals, visionaries. Entrepreneurs develop SASS themselves, typically in the incubator of their own ever-changing minds. While everyone has a lot to do, entrepreneurs have the tendency to pick up a lot more “to-do’s” than the average person.

Entrepreneurs pass SASS to their employees in the form of altered objectives, multi-tasking, bold initiative, training meetings, revised agendas, organizational restructuring, innovation after innovation, and—of course—more meetings. They pass it

on, unable to listen to the comments of others as they continue to create more to-do’s in their mind.

Then they return to the quiet of their own homes and continue to think about more changes and more to-do’s deep into the night. They are often oblivious to the peas and carrots on their plate and the 8-year-old wanting to play Bob the Builder.

3-Step Cure

While those afflicted by SASS usually have developed an altered sense of reality, there is a cure.:

1. Look in a mirror. Ask yourself, “How many of me are there?” Sometimes, the SASSy individual “thinks outside the box” to the point that they insist there are two of them. In this case, repeat 50 times the phrase, “There is only one of me. There is only one of me....”

2. Look at a clock. At the beginning of a minute, count each second as it

passes. At the end of the minute, ask yourself how many seconds there were. If the number is anything other than 60, repeat this exercise 59 times. At the end of the hour, ask yourself how many minutes there were. If necessary, repeat this exercise another 23 times and ask yourself about hours in the day.

3. Look at your calendar. If you have double-bookings or travel time is not properly scheduled, you need to remind yourself that there is only one of you and you cannot magically teleport from location to location.

As therapy continues, SASSy entrepreneurs will gradually overcome their delusion that their disease makes them more productive. They will come to learn the truth of the proverb, “Man who chases two chickens catches none.” **SSE**

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ACTION: Don't let to-do lists rule your life.

SALES/CUSTOMERS

Consumer Awareness

Learn the four styles of behavior.



by Nido Qubein

Good sales professionals learn the behavior styles of the people they approach and adjust accordingly. People generally fall into one of these broad categories:

1. Dominators. These are your fierce competitors. They are pragmatic, decisive, and intent on winning. When you approach them, forget the small talk. They want you to get to the point. They’re likely to challenge you, and if you yield they’ll exploit the advantage. Dominators don’t like to be manipulated, so always be straightforward with them. When you discuss problems with them, let them be part of the solution.

2. Interactors. Interactors are the most sociable of the behavior types. They like to interact with people, and bask in the admiration of others. While they prefer the big picture to minute details, small talk is fine with them.

Approach them in a friendly manner, and be aware of your body lan-

guage. Interactors are very sensitive to non-verbal clues. They’d rather communicate by conversation than by memo, but they have short memories for detail. When you reach an agreement with them, nail it down in writing.

3. Relaters. Relaters work well with others, are less aggressive and less decisive and prefer to make decisions by group consensus. Relaters dislike conflict and will go to great lengths to get along with others. In the process, they may suppress their own feelings.

Relaters like comfortable, casual, low-key environments. Relaters want to be liked and appreciated. When dealing with Relaters, assure them that

they’re highly valued.

When changes are necessary, prepare them well in advance, and stress the factors that will remain unchanged.

4. Evaluators. Evaluators are drawn more to logic than to feelings. They are guided by inner standards, which they strive to meet, regardless of whether their efforts are applauded. Evaluators revel in details, and are interested in how things work. They prefer quality over quantity and are drawn more to reasoning than to imagination. Evaluators are methodical perfectionists who won’t commit to action until they’re certain every detail has been nailed down. **SSE**

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ACTION: Evaluate your customers appropriately.

