

Reviews...

"You taught me a lot when you were here... Nice Book! I'm thinking that I should have been working for you!"

Dr. Mark Prouty PhD, President of Geometrics Inc, San Jose, CA

"This is a real hands-on approach from a 'real' people person. Steve Rosen masterfully built a team where each member was made to feel like an 'all-star' contributor" ...

Barry Lee, Mid Atlantic Network, Winchester, VA

"Great read regardless of your occupation...Steve's insights made me realize that successful engineers have to play dominos, too."

Dan Moser, Senior Embedded Software Engineer, Erie, PA

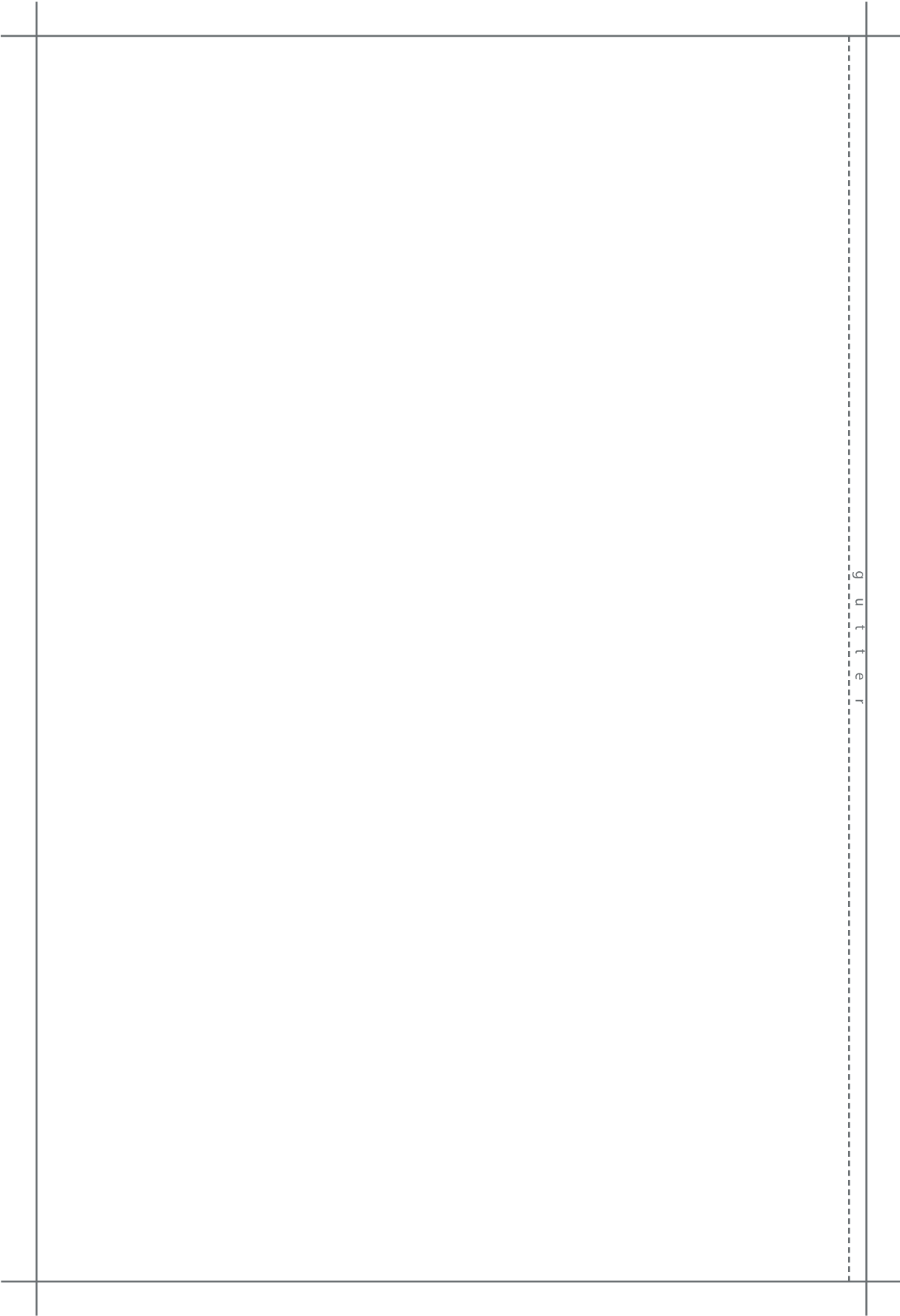
"As an elementary school teacher, my 'free time' is valuable. This book was very easy for me to sit and read at various points during the day. I found that many of the subjects that Steve wrote about are ones that I implement or will be implementing in my daily classroom, as well as my home life. Thank you for your words of wisdom!"

Stacy Tarbell, Boonsboro Elementary School, Lynchburg, VA

"Steve has always demonstrated a high level of professionalism and integrity by building relationships and following through with his promises. This book offers a step by step plan and explanation of how doing things right can pay huge dividends in the short term and in the long run".

Gary Hoke, CEO, Hoke Distributing, Statesville, NC

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g u t t e r

The Domino Effect

Quotes, Quips and Common
Sense For Business and Life

by

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This book is printed on acid-free paper.

Dedication

This book is dedicated:

To my family, Debbie, Zack, Nicholas, Mario, and Mandy

To my parents and in-laws; Bob and Midge, Bill and Pat

My grandparents, sisters & in-laws, nieces and nephews, aunts and uncles, and cousins

To each of my friends and all of my acquaintances

To my past supervisors

And to

YOU, for wanting to take control of your own situation!

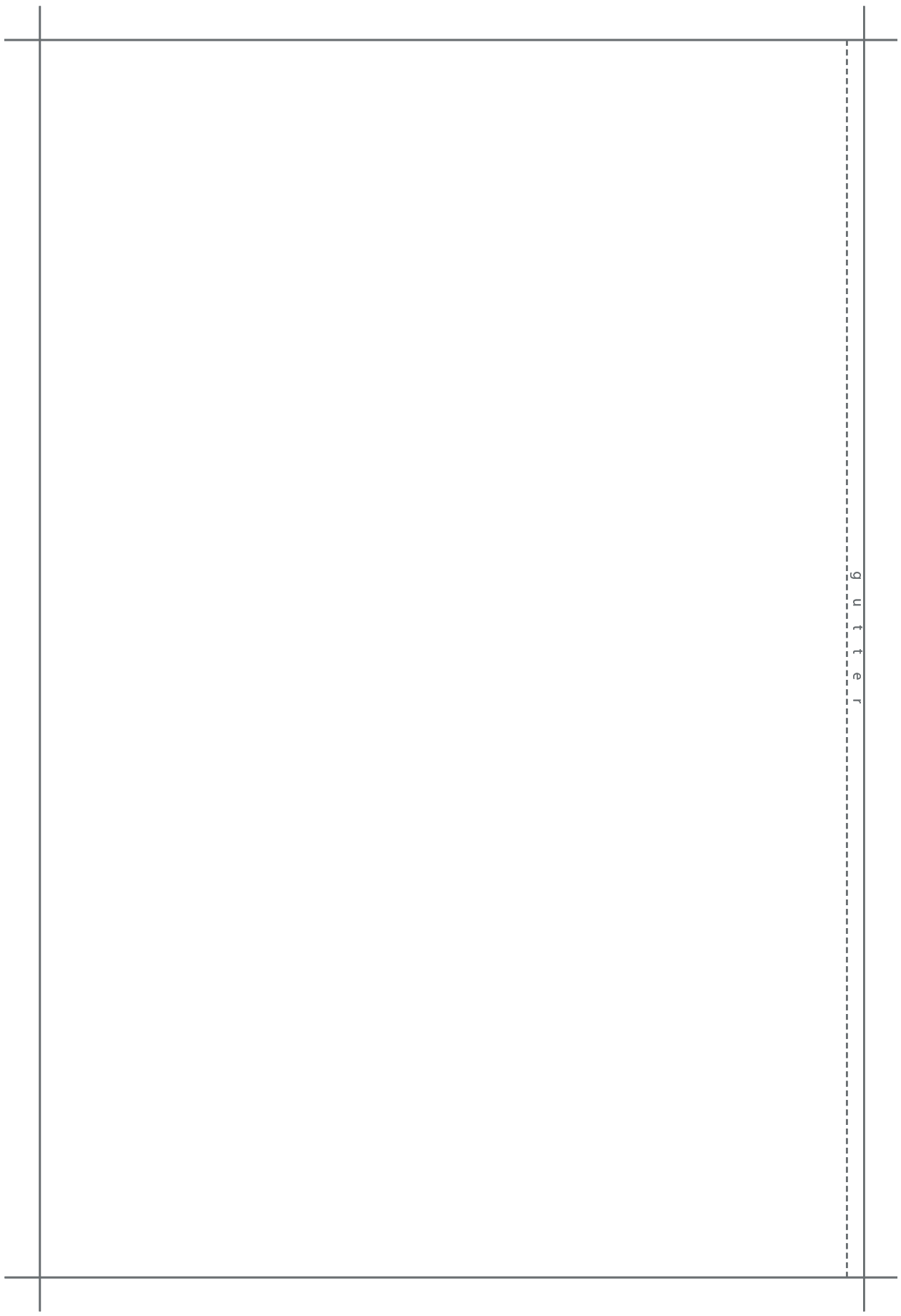


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Introduction

You encounter it everyday. People don't understand your desire to be a perfectionist or a person known for extreme excellence in your chosen career or life goals. People question why you spend so much time focused on reaching specific plateaus and every single detail associated with completing your goals. Some may simply call it planning, anal retentiveness, being overly organized, but it's more than that. It's about control, direction, micro-managing one's self, double dotting the "i's" and double crossing the "t's".

Many times while growing up, your parents or teachers may have told you, "The more you study today, the more successful you'll be tomorrow". "The harder you try, the better you'll be". "No pain, no gain". Sports teams rarely go to compete without some idea as to the plays they'd like to run, or the specific ways they want to approach the contest.

There are a million ways to say the same thing. But it's hard for high school or college students, newly arrived professionals, or those without the passion for excellence to appreciate these messages. It's about understanding, appreciating and implementing the *domino effect*.

The Domino Effect is a structured, strategic, organized method to gain control of "out of control" or future issues, tasks, or projects. The basic concept is lining up dominoes or planned activities strategically placed to accomplish your goals. The Domino Effect is not "fortune" telling, it's "future" telling, it's not about reading

“palms”, it’s about reading and writing “plans”, and it’s not allowing others to suggest your future, it’s you taking control of your own future. It’s about setting up a plan, and more importantly action steps (dominoes) to accomplish your plan.

Those who don’t get the domino effect are those with excuses for everything, things are rarely ever right, and few things work in their favor. They have all of the wrong answers to the right questions, or ask the wrong questions at the right time. Some might say, “They sleep in the bed they make”, or “it’s their own fault”. They allow minor distractions to takeover their time and the focus. Procrastinators either understand this and don’t care, or haven’t come to realize the domino effect. Their lives are filled with stress, uncertainty, and constant struggle. Other people and situations control them instead of them leading other people and situations.

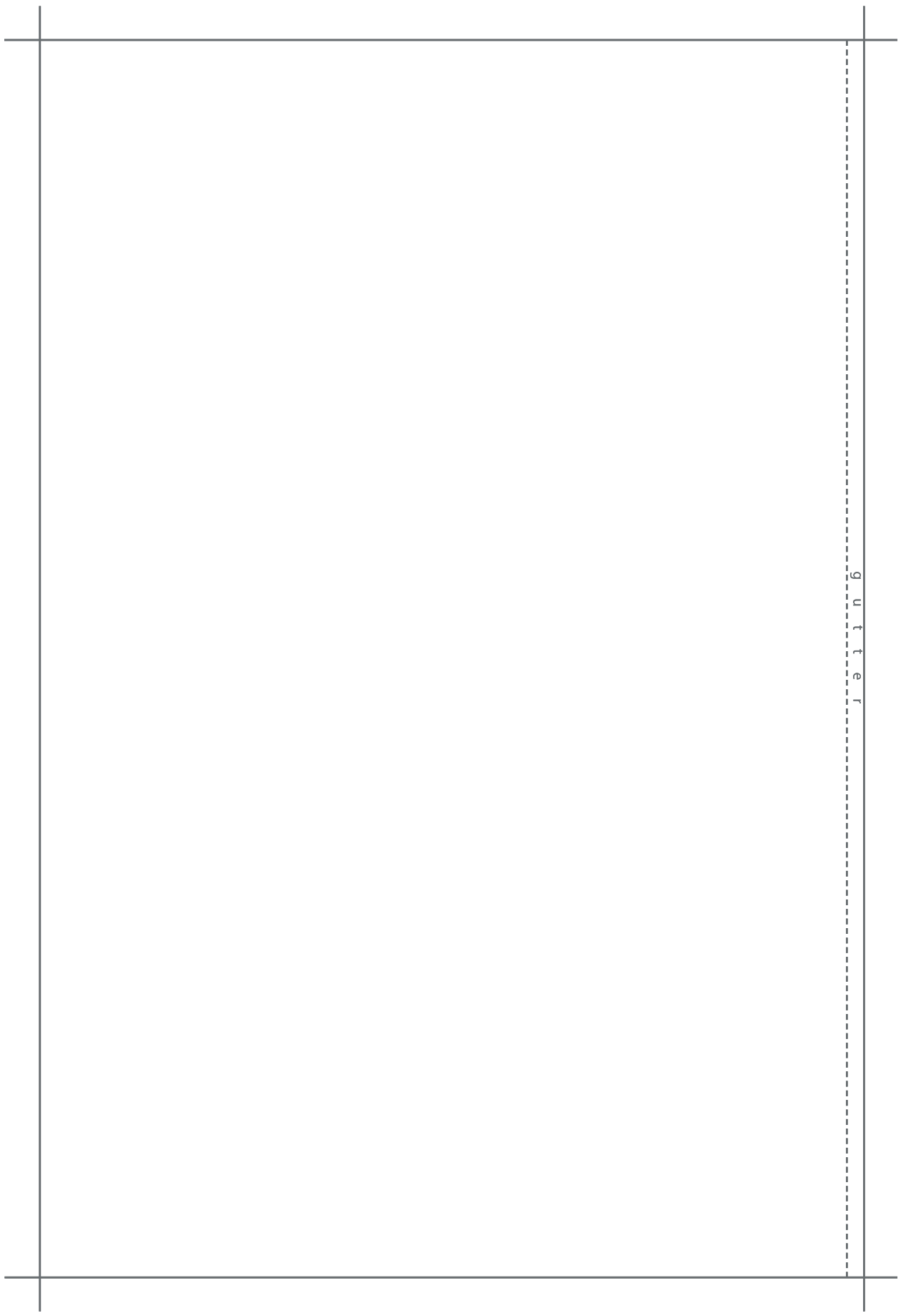
Some say the definition of insanity is to do the same thing the same way day after day and expect different results. This book offers ideas on how to do things *differently* day after day expecting different results, better results. If you’re not making the progress you expect, it may be that your goals are not clearly defined, or it may be that you don’t have a plan to reach your goals at all! You are saying it to yourself right now, people don’t plan to fail, they fail to plan.

This book is all about *the domino effect*, and how you can learn new habits, strengthen the habits you have, or help others develop habits. Shared are personal experiences, various quotes, and scenarios to offer examples and support as you travel down the road. There is also a planning sheet included to help grow your

domino strength. A lot of information can be found on our web site too, www.dominoeffectonline.com.

This is written so that professional dominoes and personal dominoes are intermixed, because, after all, they are in most people's lives anyway. And it's not a 50/50 mix; it's 70%-75% professional: 25%-30% personal, which is how most working individuals divide their "awake" energy.

I've purposely kept this simple. You'll find no clinical studies or psycho mumbo jumbo. I hope you'll find this book easy to read, simple to understand, and practical and logical in nature.



Obsessive Compulsive Dominoes and Other Domino-Related Rules to Live By

Those who have worked or do work and live with me laugh at me because of my obsessive compulsive behavior. Some call it obsessive compulsive disorder. I call it obsessive compulsive dominoes. Have fun laughing at these; if you will, or understand how these recommendations may help you better accomplish your goals. Most of the concepts that you'll read here will show up again later in the book, and will be discussed in more detail. These beliefs will help lay the foundation for domino effect thinking.

Don't Ever Be Late

Being late for anything is difficult for domino-heads. I hate feeling rushed. Usually, for a business appointment, I'll arrive in the parking lot of the client a good 10-15 minutes ahead of time, or even a half hour ahead of time, then find some where to go park, make phone calls or update my notes etc...Why? One never knows what's going to happen that may make you late. A flat tire, an extra stop, air traffic control, bad directions from your favorite travel web site, construction, there are a million things could happen to make you late and since I don't like to wait for people, I especially don't like people waiting for me. Whenever possible, I give myself plenty of time in my schedule for travel related delays. I usually go into the reception area about 3-5 minutes before the actual meeting in case I need to sign in, or to give my client a chance to make last minute preparations for our meeting. If I need to set up a display or presentation, my client is aware that I'll be there around 15 to 30 minutes before the meeting, but won't need him there until the scheduled time, and to let the receptionist know that we're

meeting and I'll need access to our meeting room well in advance. It always works out well that way!

For personal "get togethers", parties, dinners etc...I like to be right on-time. Not late, not early. My wife on the other hand always wants to show up thirty to forty-five minutes late. It drives me nuts. Almost to point where I've suggested that we take separate cars so I can be there on time, then I realize what kind of dominoes that sends to our friends, so instead, the longstanding joke is that we're always late because of her. If we are there before everyone else is, or anyone else is, it doesn't matter. Then we have time to talk to the hosts before the craziness begins, or help set up, which is always appreciated. Sometimes, friends of ours who know my wife's tardiness trait will tell her a party starts thirty minutes earlier than it really does, so we're not too late.

Instead of Pretending to be Someone You're Not, Become Someone You Want to Be.

Do you know someone who seems to overcompensate for being someone they are not, by calling extra attention to themselves, talking louder than everyone else, overly dressing for any occasion, always having the Bluetooth earpiece on and always uses the term "I" or "Me" instead of "Us" or "We". Acting all high and mighty when in reality, most of the time they're pretending to be someone they're not. Think about it for a few minutes. They always have a problem with something that they think is out their control and often beat their chest in order for making up for the fact that they are not in control to begin with. Those who have their dominoes set up know who they are, and are, who they want to be. Therefore, they don't pretend, they live the life.

Put It Away in the Same Place You Found It

As mentioned, my co-workers make fun of me for always putting away things exactly where THEY took them from. They may laugh, but I always know where everything is, and that, my friend, is called trust and dependability. These are two major traits that are imperative when wanting to climb corporate ladders or expecting to climb pay scales.

Getting my kids and my wife to put things away is like pulling hair, or teeth for that matter. I'm constantly suggesting that they need to put stuff away. Every so often I'll grab a box from storage, load it up with things they leave laying around and put it in the attic or basement to see how long it is before someone asks the whereabouts of one of those items. It's amazing how often "out of sight-out of mind" comes to play. I should sell it all on E-Bay! I'm not perfect mind you, I leave shoes around the house a great deal, or a magazine, or my laptop. But compared to the others in this house, I'm pretty "O-C".

Handle Paper Once and Watch your Free Time or Productivity Triple

I try to handle paper once, perhaps twice depending on what I'm involved with. It gets one of the three "F's": filed, followed up, or forwarded to my in-box for filing or follow up at the end of the day or beginning of the next day. Keeping a cluttered desk is detrimental to domino types because we need structure, discipline and control. An out of control in-box or desk top is tantamount to craziness. It's too easy to lose important items, miss golden opportunities or deadlines, or feel overwhelmed with a messy desk or cluttered in box.

And by handling the piece of paper once, imagine how much time you'll save from constantly moving it from one pile to another pile to another pile etc...This makes logical and practical sense doesn't it?

Clean Up Your Documents and Server at Least Once a Month

As a follow up to the last OCD listed, it's also important, in any size organization to keep the business server cleaned up, or your "My Documents" file on your "C" drive for the same reasons listed previously. If you're the one with the knowledge of where everything is kept, and non-dominoes are looking for it, guess who they'll turn to first. And guess who is seen as reliable, responsible, smart, intelligent, on top of his/her game etc... You will!

The same thing applies with email inboxes. Once every few days my emails are organized and put into the appropriate folders for easy access. I keep everything except junk email, and even then, if I think I may want to refer to it down the road, I put it in a special folder.

Don't Make a Commitment Unless You Are Going to Keep It

"I'll get that to you by the end of the day". Three days later, three weeks later, three months later,...it's still not there. Whether in a business setting or personal situation, people make promises every day that they don't keep. Is it a pacification domino that's being set up, or do people really just commit to things thinking that they can deliver when in all reality they cannot? It's probably a good mix of both. I've rarely made a commitment that I wasn't able to keep. Reports, analysis, plans, etc...they're always on time and always complete. One has to think through the time and re-

sources it will take to accomplish that promise then set the action plan and time frame (dominoes) accordingly.

Use Your Manners, It Is a Lost Art

“Please” and “Thank You” still go a long way in building positive dominoes into your relationship and your success. If you’re in sales...“Thank you for your time, please sign here”! Offering praise, condolences, or using “appropriate language” (*will be discussed in a forthcoming chapter*), it all adds up. Knowing the right things to say at the right time is an art form, and practicing your art form makes you exceptional!

Even non-verbal manners are important to domino types. Opening doors for others, shaking hands, smiling, the mannerisms you use, it is all about ... PRESENTATION Dominoes (*also covered in a later chapter*)!

Always Offer to Drive, but Keep a Clean Car

I love to drive others for several reasons. As the host, others relax and enjoy themselves. And being in control of the vehicle strengthens my comfort level within the conversation. As the driver, I can either engage or disengage in the conversation depending on the topic and the “road” it’s headed down. If it’s a topic that I’d rather not be part of, I can perform as if I were concentrating on the road, instead of what’s being said. You can learn a lot more by listening than by talking.

That said; it’s imperative to keep your car clean and maintained inside and out.

I can't tell you how many times I've taken a RENTAL car to a car wash before a lunch or dinner meeting, vacuumed out any debris and hosed it off before going to a client's office. A rental car! Yes! I even clean out the rental car before returning it to the agency. Why? It's amazing how business cards, notes, MP3 players, medicine, or money can unexpectedly fall out of a pocket, brief case or coat. You wouldn't believe how many little things that mean a great deal can be found by going through the rental car before turning it back in. Try it on your next few trips.

Organize Your Clothes by Color

I know, a little too crazy for most, but when you think about it, it really isn't. If you're in a family like mine, where half the family is early to bed early to rise, and the other half is late to bed, late to rise, then you've gotten dressed in the dark more than once. I know exactly which side of the drawer my khaki socks are on, and where the green socks are. In my closet, my shirts are organized that way too. This helps me know what I have, and what needs to be washed or dry cleaned for future meetings or events.

The funny thing is that for all of the years I've done that, my wife still mixes up my colors. UGH! Once a month I re-organize.

Check the Weather along Your Route and at Your Destination before Packing or Leaving

It sounds silly but with today's restrictions at the airports and the crazy weather patterns crossing the country, isn't it worth taking 5 minutes and checking out weather.com, or watching the weather channel to know exactly what to expect? Pack what you need, and plan your travel accordingly. Why pack extra clothes if the forecast calls for highs in the 80's and lows in the 70's. Or, why pack shorts