SMARTCUTS

How Hackers, Innovators, and Icons Accelerate Success

SHANE SNOW

SHANE SNOW is a journalist and self-confessed geek. He is cofounder and chief creative officer of Contently Inc., a web-based platform which empowers freelance journalists to do what they love. He is also an adviser to Visual.ly and a published contributor to *Mashable, WIRED* Magazine, *Fast Company, The New Yorker, Time, The Washington Post* and *New Scientist.* He was previously the founder of Brave Media LLC and assistant editor at *Scroll Newspaper.* Shane Snow is a graduate of Columbia University's Graduate School of Journalism and Brigham Young University - Idaho.

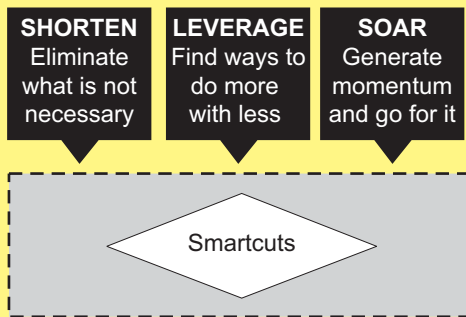Shane Snow's Web site is at www.shanesnow.com.

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MAIN IDEA

In the 1860s, oil tycoon John D. Rockefeller took 46 years to make a billion dollars. In the 1980s, Michael Dell achieved billionaire status in 14 years. Bill Gates took 12 years. Jerry Yang and David Filo of Yahoo achieved the same milestone in four years, while eBay founder Pierre Omidyar took three years. In the late 2000s, Groupon's Andrew Mason did it in two years – and was then fired from the company he founded.

Admittedly there's been inflation along the way but the undeniable fact is people are achieving much more in less time today than ever before. They're doing this not by taking shortcuts which land them in hot water but by taking "smartcuts" – they break conventions and find smarter ways to get more done than anyone else. Smartcutters hack their way to success.

Smartcutters by-and-large employ nine principles which can be grouped into three classes:

SHORTEN Eliminate what is not necessary

LEVERAGE Find ways to do more with less

SOAR Generate momentum and go for it

Smartcuts

The key to achieving more is not to pay your dues or even to play by everyone else's rules. Instead, you should hack your way to success. Figure out what smartcuts you can take by thinking laterally and then go out and break the rules.
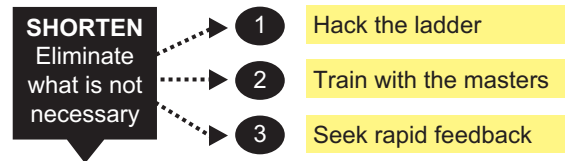
"Increasingly in today's culture, 'hacking' is something done not just by criminals and computer scientists, but by anyone who has the capability to approach a problem laterally. (This is the original usage of the term.) You can make incremental progress by playing by the rules. To create breakthrough change, you have to break the rules."
– Shane Snow

The Nine Principles of Discovering and Applying Smartcuts

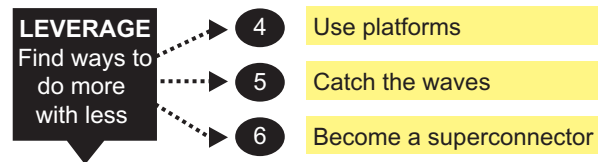**SHORTEN** . . . . Pages 2 - 4

Smartcutters work incredibly hard. They use "hacker" style thinking to figure out a shorter path to success than others have ever noticed before. They eliminate the unnecessary cycles so they can get there faster.
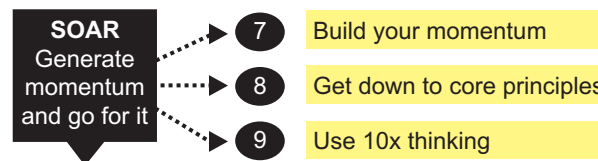
SHORTEN Eliminate what is not necessary
- 1 — Hack the ladder
- 2 — Train with the masters
- 3 — Seek rapid feedback

LEVERAGE . . . . Pages 4 - 6

Once smartcutters shorten their path, they then try and look for ways to achieve more with their inputs. They find smart ways to scale, to harness the underlying forces and to also benefit from the input of others. They leverage so they can do more with less.

LEVERAGE Find ways to do more with less
- 4 — Use platforms
- 5 — Catch the waves
- 6 — Become a superconnector

SOAR . . . . Pages 6 - 8

Smartcutters are big believers in momentum. They get moving from one foothold to the next and keep going until they find the fastest way to get to the top of their fields. Smartcutters know momentum is a better predictor of future success than experience.

SOAR Generate momentum and go for it
- 7 — Build your momentum
- 8 — Get down to core principles
- 9 — Use 10x thinking

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