

# STRETCH

## Unlock the Power of Less – and Achieve More Than You Ever Imagined

**SCOTT SONENSHEIN**

**SCOTT SONENSHEIN** is professor of management at Rice University. In addition to teaching award-winning courses and conducting academic research, he also consults with Fortune 500 executives in the technology, energy, healthcare, retail, education, banking and manufacturing industries, as well as non-profits. The companies he has worked with as a strategy consultant include AT&T, Microsoft and many other large enterprises. Scott Sonenshein lived the rise and fall of the dotcom boom firsthand while working at Vividence, a Silicon Valley startup specializing in web-based customer information. His research and expertise has been featured by a number of media outlets including *The New York Times*, *Chicago Tribune*, *Time Magazine*, *Fast Company* and *Harvard Business Review*. Scott Sonenshein is a graduate of the University of Michigan, the University of Cambridge and the University of Virginia.

The Web site for this book is at [www.ScottSonenshein.com](http://www.ScottSonenshein.com).

ISBN 978-1-77544-915-7

**MAIN IDEA**

Most people (and many organizations) have what can be termed a "chase" mentality – they assume to be more successful, they need to secure more resources, more capital for marketing, more employees, more customers, etc.

A much better approach is to have a "stretch" mind-set. Stretching is about making the most of what you already have and being resourceful enough to do more with what you now have at hand.



Stretching what you have rather than continually chasing more is a better way to live personally and a smarter approach to building organizations. Stretching rather than chasing delivers outstanding results, both professionally and personally.

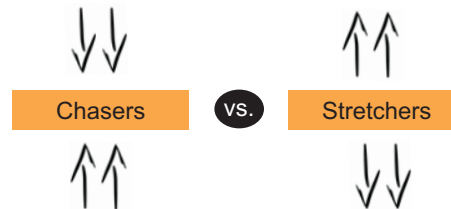
*"The road to stretching starts with a simple but significant shift in mind-set—giving up the belief that having more resources = getting better results and replacing it with the conviction that a better use of resources = getting better results. This change in mind-set takes us away from a dehumanizing rat race for resources that is impossible to win and provides us with a way to make do with and magnify what we already have. Develop the skills to stretch after abandoning the chase. Become an outsider and seek out new experiences in order to put resources to use in atypical ways. Get comfortable with working without a plan some of the time. Spark positive prophecies to enhance the value of resources. And combine resources in novel ways to make the whole much greater than the sum of the parts. Once you learn how to embrace and expand on the untapped value right in front of you, you'll unlock exciting possibilities to achieve more than you ever imagined."*

– Scott Sonenshein



**1. How to change your mind-set from chasing to stretching . . . . . Pages 2 - 3**

Having resources is important but it's difficult to be productive if you're constantly being distracted by looking for additional resources which are in other people's hands. There are lots of aspects where more is not necessarily better and you can in fact become incredibly successful if you instead concentrate on making more out of what you already have. Don't chase more and more resources – make better use of what you now have.



**2. The key skill set which activates stretching . . . . . Pages 4 - 6**

Stretchers find value where others cannot. They don't take things at face value but instead recognize the untapped potential which exists in most resources. Stretchers look to make maximum use of what is already at hand rather than getting hamstrung over what they don't have. They tap into the abundance which is always right in front of us.

**3. The downsides of overstretching . . . . . Page 7**

As with most things in life, stretching can be dangerous if taken too far. Too much of a good thing can be bad. Be careful to avoid the five dangers of overstretching: turning into a cheapskate, wandering on the road to nowhere, leaping without learning, being cursed by high expectations, and making toxic mixtures.

**4. Exercises you can do now to start stretching . . . . . Page 8**

There are a dozen things you can do right now to stop chasing and start stretching. The good thing about stretching is the more you do it, the easier it becomes. Start stretching today and advance your career, boost the performance of your organization and even raise more resourceful children. Stretch for a more satisfying life and career.

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