

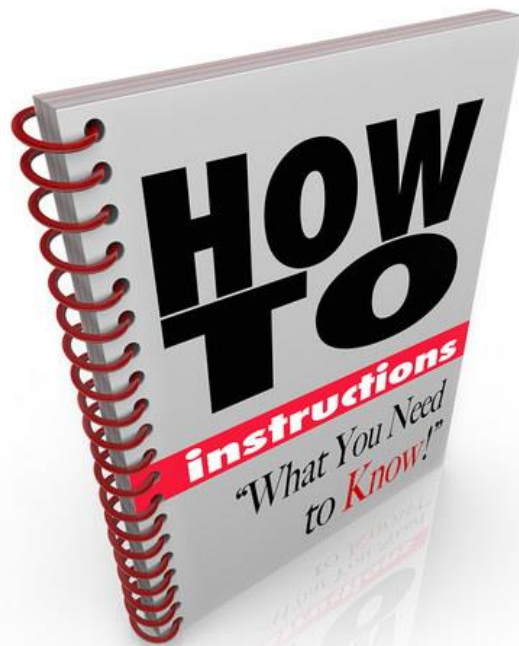


## Box Theory Software Tips

### Box Theory™ Software Tips

The following “Software Tips” are to assist customers in getting started with the Box Theory™ Software and methodology. They were originally emailed a few days apart for several months following the purchase of the product. These brief helps and how-to articles are now available in this pdf document with topic bookmarks (see left panel). The tips are listed in approximately the same order as they were sent to customers. (The links point to a website that no longer exists but you have access to everything you will need to download and use the software.)

Another tip, “All About Boxes,” was also included in the email series but is now available in a separate document titled: “Box Theory™: What is it?”



Software Tips Authored by Ron Carroll

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## Getting Started with Box Theory™ Software

I'm glad you are up and running with your Box Theory™ products. If you haven't already, please download and read the [Quickstart Guide](#), and let me know if you have any trouble getting started.

I highly recommend you attend the online Box Theory™ Business Systems Academy at [www.BoxTheoryGold.com/box-theory-business-systems-academy](http://www.BoxTheoryGold.com/box-theory-business-systems-academy) and follow the lesson outline. Some people, however, read the downloaded eBook first to get the big picture ("Box Theory™: Double Your Profit with High-Performance Systems and Processes"), and then review the chapters when working through the Academy outline. That's good, too.

You can go at whatever pace is comfortable for you. An hour a day—five days per week—should get you through the entire course in about twelve weeks. Some people go faster, depending on available time.

You will also be getting a short email every few days during this period. I don't want to bug you, but I'm hoping to pass on a few timely tips to get you off to a good start. **Be sure to add "Ron Carroll" as a contact or our emails to your safe-list!**

There are great possibilities ahead if you stay the course. The principles you will learn really do work and will elevate the way you run your business!

Send me a note at [BoxTheoryGold@gmail.com](mailto:BoxTheoryGold@gmail.com) if I can do anything to help you with the software or your business.

## Do You Need Another Free Activation Key?

Your Box Theory™ company database file can only be opened by one user at a time. It is recommended that one or two designated people become experts with the software.

While it is encouraged that *team members* “rough in” the flowchart of a business system or process using a [whiteboard](#), a person who is familiar with Box Theory™ Software will be the most efficient at completing the system development work.

If you have more than one person working in Box Theory™ Software, I recommend the software be installed on a file server or in a peer-to-peer networking arrangement where both people have access to the same company database file.

**For a second installation within your company, you can ~~request another activation key at no additional charge~~ use the same activation key code: BTGMC2020**

With the proper setup, you could also access Box Theory™ Software on your business file server from your home computer.

Note: To prevent problems of overwriting data, the database is locked to others when one user has the software open. Simple scheduling will allow more than one person to work on the same database.

It is also possible with the second activation key to have two separate installations on different computers—each having its own company database. If someone other than the business owner does most of the work in Box Theory™ Software, they can periodically email the owner an updated version of the .btg file. When going back and forth, be sure that the **most updated .btg file** is emailed and copied over the older one.

Upon completion of a single system, a person could also export and email a System/box (.box file) to the business owner for importing into their database (main-menu>System Framework>right-click on System/box name). Likewise, you can export and import parts or all of the Organization Blueprint (main-menu>File).

There are various ways to work with a single company .btg file, or to keep two separate files synchronized ([see Installation Options](#)).

Let me know if you would like another activation key.

## Get in The Zone with Box Theory™

Michael Gerber, author of *E-Myth Revisited*, said that business owners must spend time working on the business, not just in the business. I am a strong believer that insights and inspiration come when you are in ["The Zone"](#) working to improve your organization. Put yourself in a quiet place, undisturbed, preferably in the early-morning hours, and great ideas will flow.

Box Theory™ software provides an organized and methodical way to develop and grow your company. As you work on the business, jot down your ideas in the Notes area of the Home Page. By working a little every day, you will be amazed at what is accomplished in a few short weeks. The payoff can be enormous!

By the way, I leave my software open all day long. As innovative come to me, I write them down. When I'm back in The Zone, I incorporate those ideas into a system. Remember: Great ideas and learned principles are of *no value* until you put them into the components or procedure of a written system.

Make it a habit to spend time in [The Zone](#) every morning. I did, and Box Theory™ methodology is the result. The [Box Theory™ Business Systems Academy](#) is a good place to start.

See you in the Zone!

## Develop the Master Skill

By now, or soon, you will have read why I believe system building is the Master Skill of business owners and managers (eCourse Chapter 4: "The Solution"). A person who learns this one skill, and becomes a true Systems Thinker, sees the world in a profoundly different way. This skill will give you the same thrill and sense of power you felt the first time you successfully rode a bicycle. It's hard to explain, but you'll recognize the feeling when it comes.

The [Box Theory™ Business Systems Academy](#) is intended to help you first learn principles, and then apply them within the software. Your knowledge and skill will grow incrementally over a few weeks' time. You could say it's my "system" for helping you learn how to build and improve YOUR business systems. As with all systems, it's not perfect, and I welcome any suggestions to improve it.

Go through the lesson outline at whatever speed makes sense for you, but a word of caution. If you work too slow or sporadically, or try to squeeze the course in during your busy day, you will likely have a "system breakdown" and fail. If you rush through the course, you will deprive yourself of the inspiration that comes as you carefully ponder and apply the principles to your unique organization. Be steady and make progress each day. Your momentum will build in time.

I believe that what you are learning is something special, not because I wrote the book or developed the software, but because the principles are TRUE. If you stick with it, they will profoundly influence your business and perhaps your personal life.

Let me know if I can help!

## The Power is in You!

As I have mentioned, the power of Box Theory™ is found in its application of true principles and established laws that govern business success, such as the [Law of Cause and Effect](#). When you internalize these principles and laws, You will also become a powerful person. I have witnessed this amazing transformation numerous times. I know it will happen to you if you stay the course.

Keep in mind that the software is merely a tool to apply these time-tested principles in a more efficient way than ever before. However, YOU are still the key component to success. YOU are the architect of your business. Your knowledge, experience, and the inspiration you get while in [The Zone](#), is the driving force. YOU, plus the principles, plus the software, create an unbeatable team.

Do you need to have the software to succeed? No! Will the software make your system development activities more effective and efficient? Yes! And this is how the software will do it. Box Theory™ Software will force you to think properly. It will guide you to build systems and processes—and your business—in the right way, the best way. It will train your mind to see and act as a [Systems Thinker](#).

When you have created your masterpiece, when everything is organized and documented, when your people think like you do, YOU will have a remarkable business that runs itself.

Isn't that one of the major reasons you got into business?

Don't give up on your dream!

## **Your Foundation for System Development**

As you know, the primary purpose of Box Theory™ software is to develop your business systems and processes. And I'll bet you are getting anxious to tackle that first system.

However, it is important that you first have a clear understanding of who you are, where you are going, and specifically how you are going to get there.

That's the purpose for completing the 10-step Organization Blueprint. This exercise will later enable you to align your business systems with the mission, strategy, and goals of your organization.

By completing the ten foundational steps of the Organization Blueprint, you will better understand what your stakeholders want from the business, who your customers are and what they expect from you, and what is important to retain your key employees. You will also come to understand your business strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and the threats your organization may face. From this knowledge, you will formulate your unique business strategy and set measurable goals.

Finally, you will create an organization chart and identify your key business activities—the systems and processes that make your business unique. At the end of these foundational steps, your priorities will be set; you will be ready to tackle your first business system.

By the way, even if you have an established business, I recommend that you do this exercise and update it at least annually. The Organization Blueprint contains simplified principles taught by business colleges, and which are applied by large and successful companies. These same principles will also benefit YOU!

Happy planning!

## Tips When Writing in Box Theory™ Software

Michael Gerber of *E-myth Revisited* said, "If it's not in writing, it's not a system!" Box Theory™ Software is a tool for documenting all your business systems and processes.

We have tried to make writing your Organization Blueprint and System Documents an easy task; much of it is filling in blank fields. Whether you use complete sentences or short phrases is up to you. It will depend on your writing style, what area of the software you are working in, and who you think will eventually read the finished or printed documents.

As you fill out various forms in the software, I recommend you include adequate details to avoid confusion or misunderstanding. For example, in the "Purpose/Description" areas of the program such as the checklist tool, you should include enough information for workers to carry out the tasks without questions.

When writing a description, provide the specific name of the component document workers will use (e.g. "The Job Candidate Interview Form" or the "Quality Control Worksheet").

If a person is to perform a task in one of your software programs, refer to the specific area of the software by its actual name (e.g. "The Job Estimating Module," or the "Employee Personal Profile" section.)

Over time, you will have a lot of detail information about your business contained within the software. It is better to be *thorough* as you go rather than having to add more information later. Of course, as systems are improved, you will modify the documentation to reflect "the new best way."

Finally, you'll notice we have included a spell checker that will help you polish your documents for distribution. When you see a red line under a word you've typed, the software dictionary thinks it is misspelled. Right-click to see word options, or to add the word to your personal dictionary.

Do your best writing where it counts most!



## The Art and Science of System Building

I occasionally mention there is an art and a science to system building. Let me explain further.

The science of developing good systems includes the principles you learn regarding process, components, quality, speed and measurement.

The art of system building involves your unique business structure (Org Chart) and how the systems interrelate (System Framework). It is what you name a system or box, where each box fits into the structure, and how you define the beginning and ending points of a system—where one stops and another begins.

You and your business are unique. If ten architects are asked to design a 2000 square-foot home for a family of four, each would come up with a solution. However, no two designs would be alike. In the same way, your business is uniquely YOU! This is one reason you got into business—to do your own thing. The creative elements begin in the System Framework of Box Theory™ software.

One of the most head-scratching aspects of system development is deciding where a procedure starts and stops. In the natural flow of business activity, tasks may seem to run together in one continuous process. More likely, there are several separate systems, each with a distinct objective.

When you first lay out a system, I recommend that you establish the beginning and ending points—first and last step—before proceeding with the steps in the middle.

Here are a few things to consider as you try to identify each distinct and separate system.

- The task can logically be represented on a flowchart or checklist with a single box and an unambiguous name.
- The system has one *primary* purpose (e.g., deliver furniture; process an application). If there is more than one purpose, there is usually more than one system.
- Most often, there is also one primary measurement of system performance (e.g., number of deliveries per day; number of applications processed). Be careful here. A system can sometimes have more than one measurement. For example, you may also measure what percent of deliveries were on time, or what percent of applications were not completed correctly.

- There is a natural break in the system like the scenes from a movie (e.g., loading furniture on the truck is very different than delivering the furniture across town).
- Sometimes a system ends when a task is handed off to another person or team (e.g. a warehouse person loads the truck and a delivery person transports the furniture—two separate systems).
- The box or system is at the lowest level, the bottom of the hierarchy. You can see no benefit in breaking the system down any further in order to get the desired outcome.

The lower the level a system is on, the more details you control and the more precisely the system operates. By working on a system at too high a level (e.g., Marketing), you can miss a lot of important details. On the other hand, working on a system at too low a level can be burdensome and unnecessary (e.g. Daily Marketing Calendar). *Work at the level that gives you the desired result* (e.g., number of new leads). Most of the time, this decision will come naturally.

Sometimes a task or box seems like it belongs in more than one system. A recent example came from a home repair business where the owner needed to determine if a “thank-you” letter, requesting referrals, belonged in the customer care system or a lead generation system. My response was that “Send Thank-You Letter” was perhaps the last step (box) of the customer service cycle. A follow-up phone call seeking referrals belonged in the lead generation system in a box called “Customer Referrals.” Maybe you see it differently.

Remember, this part of system development is an art. It is up to you. Do what works. If you change your mind, you can move your boxes around until you are satisfied.

And have fun!

## Using a Whiteboard and Software Shortcut

I hope business is going well for you. When I'm working with companies, I often begin a new system in a team meeting using a whiteboard. I highly recommend that you read the following article that describes this process.

### [Four Easy Steps to Creating a New Business System](#)

In the last section of the article, "Proper Tools Reduce Time and Cost," I mention "you can have a person in the meeting quickly copying the flowchart and component notes from the whiteboard into the software. By the time the meeting is over, the system is well on its way to completion."

Now that you have the Box Theory™ Software, let me expand on this tip.

From within the Flowchart or the Checklist sections of the software, you can right-click to immediately "Add Components" to each step or box in your system. This is done on the fly while the whiteboard discussion is going on. You don't have to make a special trip to the Component Manager.

Adding components in this way is fast and easy! My assistant (a low-cost college student) can have the system roughed-in and ready to print by the time the meeting ends.

It's good to involve other people in your system development. I highly recommend the above method.

## **Eight Sources of Help in Box Theory™ Software**

As I've discussed, Box Theory™ is a new way of looking at your business—a new way of thinking. Even though the methodology is simple, and tasks are easy to perform, I realize that it will be a new experience for you. For that reason, I provide a great deal of help. Below are the sources you can turn to for instruction and examples.

1. [Quickstart Guide](#) - This guide arrives immediately after your purchase of Box Theory™ software. It provides a brief overview of fundamental principles and elements of the software that are important to understand when just starting out. A must-read.
2. [Main Menu Help](#) - From the main menu, you can view several documents that provide the same information contained in the Appendix of the Quickstart Guide. Topics include getting started guidelines, main menu functionality, navigating Box Theory™ software, and where to turn for help.
3. [Software Help](#) - At the bottom of the Task Window in each section of the software, there is thorough help for the specific tool or topic. These help areas deal primarily with software functionality—how Box Theory™ Software works.
4. [Video Help](#) - Video Help provides brief on-screen examples of how to use a specific software tool. The "Video Help" button (or "Video Tutorials" tab on the Home Page) will show the video through a web browser. The Flash videos are hosted on the Internet so that they can easily be added or updated.
5. [Principles](#) - In each section of the software, you have access to the underlying principles for building your organization and its systems. Most of the Principles pages are taken from the eCourse, Box Theory™: Double Your Profit with High-Performance Systems and Processes. You can view the entire eCourse from the tab in the Home Page area.
6. [Example Pages](#) - You will perform the important business-building tasks of Box Theory™ Software on the Action Plan page of the Task Bar located at the bottom of the Task Window. The Examples Page shows a real-world example of the Action Plan. Examples come from a variety of industries and business types.

7. Worksheets – Worksheets are available in some sections to get you thinking and brainstorming about a specific task. In some cases, Worksheets provide a foundation for completing the Action Plan. In other cases, they are a tool for producing supplemental information. Worksheets are optional to completing the Action Plan.
8. Contact Ron – If I can be of help with the software or your business in general, please email me at [BoxTheoryGold@gmail.com](mailto:BoxTheoryGold@gmail.com).

Oh, and one more thing: Every few days—for several months after buying Box Theory™ software—you are receiving tips to enhance your experience. You can access all of these "Software Tips" at [BoxTheoryGold.com/software-tips](http://BoxTheoryGold.com/software-tips).

I hope this helps!

## Your First Boxes in Box Theory™ Software

Let's re-emphasize a few of things about "boxes" as you begin working with them. First, think of boxes as building blocks—each with a specific purpose—to accomplish the mission and goals of your organization.

In step nine of the Organization Blueprint, you first create boxes on an Organization Chart which shows your major business functions and activities.

The boxes of the Organization Chart then become the basis for the System Framework that you begin filling out in step ten. Gradually, the System Framework will grow to include all the systems/boxes in your organization.

In Box Theory™, terms like process, system, task, or step are all different words to describe a box. Up and down the organization, *every business activity is a box, even though you may frequently use these other terms.*

What goes on inside a box gets more specific and detailed as you drill-down in the organization. For examples, a marketing box contains a more detailed lead-generation box, which includes even more detailed boxes such as radio advertising, telemarketing, or direct mail. Problems are often solved and money is made by what you do in these lower-level systems or boxes.

As mentioned, not all boxes or systems are of equal value, so you spend most of your time working on the few that matter most—refining the important boxes so they get desired results, and fixing the broken boxes that are holding you back. You will ignore many systems/boxes until they become more significant as your organization grows or matures.

It is best to get your basic business systems organized in the System Framework before you actually start working on them. Moving boxes around, changing names, and configuring your organization is more convenient while the boxes are "empty." However, don't try to create all the boxes in your organization at the beginning. You'll likely end up re-doing many. Add the department level and two lower levels first. Then focus on the specific area of the business where you will be concentrating your system development work.

The name you give a system or box is a brief description of its role as a task or step within a process. I usually name high-level boxes by their business function such as Hiring, Payroll, or Website. As you create boxes at lower and more detailed levels, names will become more

specific, like "Interview the Job Candidate" or "Send Follow-up eMail." The box name should be descriptive enough to understand the nature of the system; however, it is best to use as few words as possible. You can add any amount of detail in the Purpose/Description field when creating a new system/box.

The Purpose/Description of a box is a statement that further describes the role or purpose of that box as a step within a process, or a task on a checklist. Write in the Purpose/Description field exactly what you want a person to do to carry out the task successfully.

When you add a system or box in either the Navigation Panel or the System Framework, the other is also updated. In addition, the new box is placed on your Flowchart grid and added to the Checklist. This will save time when you go to complete either of these items.

Think systems in general, but focus improvement efforts on specific boxes until you get the results you are looking for. Once you get the hang of it, the concept of boxes is very intuitive and logical. It will become second nature, and you will become a *boxaholic!*

Be sure to check out the video tutorials and Software Help screens for the Org Chart and Systems Framework sections of the software.

And keep up the good work!

## Are You Too Busy for Box Theory™?

The greatest barrier to success with anything, including Box Theory™, is getting started. Believe me. I know the challenge of small-business owners to carve out extra time to work on the business. Changing my work pattern to accommodate this task was one of the hardest things I've had to do in my business career. Now, all I can say is, "I'M GLAD I DID IT!"

If you haven't had a chance to dig into the [Box Theory™ Business Systems Academy](#), I hope that you will soon—not for me, but for YOU. The principles you learn and apply will eventually give you the free time you want. When you properly systemize your business, it will run smoothly and profitably, even when you're not around!

By the way, if you don't have an hour a day to work on your business, plan to spend two hours a day putting out fires, apologizing to customers, and baby-sitting employees. The statement is true: "If you don't have time to do it right you must have time to do it over."

System development may seem like an extra burden on the front end. However, with each new system or process, your overall workload is lightened. And who knows, you may even have fun with it, like I do!

Later, I'm going to tell you how to get out of the pick-and shovel-work of system development. But for now, I want you to go through the [Business Systems Academy](#) and learn the principles. They will make you a strong and effective leader.

It all starts in The Zone!



## Have You Discovered Box Theory™ Software Worksheets?

I hope by now that you spend time every day in [The Zone](#). Working on the business is the most valuable use of your time and essential to your long-term success. There are many things you can do during this quiet time. For example, you can study the experts, [review your leading and lagging business indicators](#), update your Organization blueprint, and create or refine your business systems and processes.

Today I would like to mention the Worksheets found in Box Theory™ Software. These aids will enrich your experience while in The Zone.

The “Worksheets” tab at the bottom of the task window is active in those areas of the software that a Worksheet is available. Worksheets are designed to stimulate your thinking and help you prepare for completing the "Action Plan." In some cases, the Worksheet is a tool for developing supplemental information such as a budget or an employee survey.

Here are the things you can do with Worksheets:

- Complete a “5-Whys” exercise to zero in on your mission statement.
- Brainstorm your personal and organizational values.
- Create a vision of what your future business will look like.
- Define your ideal/target customer.
- Create an employee survey to determine valued workplace characteristics.
- Answer questions that reveal your [strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats](#).
- Uncover your best business strategies.
- Convert your business problems into objectives.
- Prepare a system budget.
- Uncover quality problems using a [5-Whys Analysis](#).

These Worksheets will lay the groundwork for some of the most important work you do in [the Zone](#), and in Box Theory™ Software. All successful endeavors begin in the mind, and this is a good place to let your mind run wild.

## Save, Back Up, and Restore Your Company Database

Box Theory™ Software continually saves your company database while you are working. It also allows for a backup database to be created each day that you are in the program. You can click the "Backup Now" button in the upper-right corner on the Main Menu bar at any time to perform a manual save of your company's backup database. It's a good idea to do this occasionally throughout the day. You are also prompted to back up the database each time you exit the software.

In the "File" area of the Main Menu, you can select "Administration" to configure and manage your backup and restore functions. These processes work as follows:

Backup – Box Theory™ Software puts backup files of your company database in the "BTG Backup" folder located in your company folder. The file extension for all database files is ".btg."

Box Theory™ Software creates one backup file with your company name and the current date every day you are in the program. If you uncheck the box, "Delete Old Backup Files," an unlimited number of daily backup files is maintained. If the box is checked (by default), files are saved for the three most-recent days and a week apart for approximately a month. You will have up to eight backup files on your computer at one time. In File>Administration>Backup, select "Open Folder" to view your backup files. You can delete files manually at any time.

Restore – To restore a backup database, go to Main Menu>Administration>Restore. Here you will see a list of available backup files and dates. Select, open, and check the company .btg file you want to restore. Then, simply click the red button on the Main Menu that says "Restore Open Backup." This will make the open backup file your current company database. It will also rename the old folder with today's date. When satisfied, you can delete the old company (BTG) folder and its contents.

Restoring a Component Document Only – If you have a lost or corrupted document file (Word, Excel, PowerPoint, etc.) that you need to restore from a backup database, you can quickly do it from within the current active database. Right-click in the Component Manager module. Go to "Import Document>Restore Document from Company Backup Database." Select the system and then the document to restore. Click "OK" to import the document into the current system. You may need to rename it.

I hope you never lose anything, but just in case, we've got you covered.

## Expect a Big Payoff!

I recently talked with a business coach from Washington. He is a true [Systems Thinker](#) and teaches this principle to his students. Daryl got into coaching after selling his video rental store for a nice profit. He was able to do that after systemizing it so well that his employees could run the store without him. It took several years to refine all the systems, but Daryl said it was well worth it!

You, too, can expect a big payoff with your Box Theory™ business! And the larger your company, the bigger the payoff will be.

Customers will be impressed with your no-nonsense approach to giving them exactly what they want and expect—delivering on your promise.

Employees will like working in your clean, organized and smooth-running business operation—where frustration is at a minimum.

Shareholders (YOU) will love it when you show a healthy profit each month—a nice return on investment.

All these things happen when your business systems are carefully designed, fast and efficient, avoid costly mistakes and rework, and when you create a [“Results-Rule!” culture](#)(Randy Pennington).

There is no better use of a business owner’s time than overseeing the development of vital business systems and processes.

Keep going with the [Box Theory Business Systems Academy](#). Don’t give up. Expect a dramatic payoff. It takes some work, but it *will* happen!

Check out these **20 ways** that good business systems put money in your pocket!

[10 Ways Business Systems “Directly” Increase Profit!](#)

[10 Ways Business Systems “Indirectly” Increase Profit!](#)

## Did You Know...

There are a lot of rich features throughout Box Theory™ Software you may not discover for a while. In this tip, I want to share a few with you.

Did you know...

... you can export and import all or part of an Organization Blueprint or a System Document to and from another software user (Main-Menu > File or System Framework > right-click on a system).

... your software automatically keeps multiple dated back-up files (Main-Menu > File > Administration > Backup/Restore).

... you can choose an English or Spanish spell-checker, turn the spell-checker on or off, and even turn it off only in the Notes area to avoid excessive red-underlines where writing is less formal (Main-Menu > File > Administration > Preferences).

... you can create Bookmarks for instant access to any pages in the software (Main-Menu > Find > Create Bookmark).

... you can easily *include* or *exclude* supporting documents when printing the Organization Blueprint or a System Document (Main-Menu> Print> Document Options).

... you can duplicate or move a System/box *with all of its component parts* to any location in your company's system structure (Main-Menu > System Framework).

... you can quickly add system components when you are creating a Flowchart or Checklist—an important shortcut and best practice (Main-Menu > Box Theory Systems > Flowchart/Checklist).

... you can move a step on a Checklist by clicking on the left-side text box and dragging it to a new location. The step number will change accordingly (Main-Menu > Box Theory Systems > Checklist). On many lists, you can also click and drag line items up or down to re-position them on the list in a more preferred order (e.g., documents).

... you can import and export your Word, Excel, PDF and other system documents, and link to external documents on your hard drive and to the cloud—all of which can be opened from within the software (Main-Menu > Box Theory Systems > Components > Documents).

... you can save any document as a template for later use from within the Template Manager (see the button on the Home Page or Component Document Page).

... you can print blank data-collection forms to be used on-site for gathering data that is later entered and analyzed in Box Theory™ Software (see Pareto Analysis, Value-Stream Analysis, System Measurement Reports).

... you can create System Measurement reports in a snap with the Measurement Report Wizard (Main-Menu > Box Theory Systems > Measurements > Measurement Report Wizard).

Please let me know if you have any ideas or suggestions to improve the software.

## There is No Other Way!

I admit that I get a little fired up when people start talking about systems or processes. A person once said to me, “Yea, that’s one way to build a business.” Hello! Tell me another way. THERE IS NO OTHER WAY!

Everything in the universe works with systems—including your business. You’ve been creating systems all along, even though you may not have realized it. Your systems could be seat-of-the-pants, dysfunctional, and produce lousy results, but they are *your* systems. Whatever half-baked or remarkable way you get things done, is a system.

Knowing this, you also realize that poor systems and processes threaten your very existence as a business. They are responsible for lack of sales, unhappy customers, low productivity, weak profit and many other daily problems.

If you want to be in business, and you want to succeed, then you need to become a zealous [Systems Thinker](#). You need to elevate your loosey-goosey, [low-grade systems](#) to customer-pleasing, waste-removing, money-making, [high-grade systems](#).

*Focus on one system or process, and make it happen!*

THERE IS NO OTHER WAY!

## My Little "Secret" to Building Business Systems

The truth is, most system-building is pick-and-shovel work. It takes some inspiration in [the Zone](#) to identify problems, set priorities, and hatch the big ideas, but YOU don't have to do all the flowcharts, checklists, and other component documents. You should lead the charge and provide oversight, but let lower-cost individuals hammer out the time-consuming detail work.

Box Theory™ Software makes this a snap.

Over the years, the single best solution for me has been to hire part-time college students—usually business majors—to work under my direction. Students are bright, eager to learn, and inexpensive. Of course, they must understand the underlying principles of system development; they probably need to read the eCourse or attend the [Business Systems Academy](#).

I've used dozens of college students with great success. Some high-schoolers are also capable. This can be an invaluable learning experience for these students. Even secretaries with a little time on their hands can do some of the work—like creating forms or other component documents.

Spend YOUR time doing the things of greatest value (eliminating constraints) and get help with the minutia.

By the way, if you are just starting out, or feel that some of the detail work is critically important, by all means go ahead and do it yourself. Whatever works for you!

I've written a little more on this topic in a past blog. You can take a look at, [No Time for System Development - Try This!](#).

Remember, steady improvement wins the race!

## **Please Help Me Help You!**

I hope you are enjoying the Box Theory™ eCourse, software, and [Business Systems Academy](#).

I like to know a little about what my customers are up to, so could you please click the "reply" button and answer two quick questions for me?

1. What is the greatest challenge with your business?
2. What is your greatest challenge with implementing Box Theory™?

Thanks for the feedback!



## Your Component Documents

One of the unique features of Box Theory™ Software is its ability to manage all your component documents. Currently, the software officially supports Microsoft Office and Open Office products; however, you can easily import other document types and run them from within Box Theory™ Software.

When importing documents, you should avoid bringing large multi-media files into your company database. These files often exceed computer memory and will abort, or if they do import, will bloat the database and slow performance. Simply put, your Box Theory™ company database can handle standard business document files—even large ones—without a problem, but don't bog it down with extra-large media files.

If you do have a large file that you want to associate with a system, you can right-click from within the Component Manager and create a link to the file. The document will load and run from within the Component Manager just like your other documents; however, it will not be saved inside your company database (.btg file), only on your hard drive. In the Component Manager, a linked file name will be followed by "(link)."

One more thing: In a typical business system, you may have several documents you would print as part of the "System Document" such as forms, reports, and so forth. These documents are often given to workers to carry out their jobs. However, many documents listed in the Component Manager are likely to be a resource or supporting information you don't want to print as part of the System Document. *For those documents that you want printed, check the box, "Include when Printing System Document" in the "Edit Component Info."*

OK, just one more thing: Document files in Box Theory™ Software must have unique names, even if the document is used in a different business system. If you are attempting to name a file that is already in your company database, you will be prompted to give it a new name or slight variation.

## Your Ticket to Peace of Mind and More Free Time!

Almost everyone I know feels overwhelmed. What have we done to ourselves? I'm going out on a limb and bet that your to-do list is never-ending. I suspect that you may also feel that system development is important, but it's just one more thing to make time for.

Here are a few truths that I hope you believe by now.

1. Creating effective business systems and processes is the key to your long-term success.
2. You must consistently work on the business, not just in the business to make consistent progress (Michael Gerber).
3. Small daily improvements will produce dramatic results over time.
4. One system or process is the weakest link in your business operation. If you can improve that vital system, your business will leap forward. For the moment, all other systems are of secondary importance.
5. With each successful business system you create or improve, the task will get easier and your rate of progress will accelerate.
6. YOU CAN DO IT!

I will confess that you have to stick with it until you get in the groove. You have to get used to doing your work inside Box Theory™ Software. Eventually, it will become a habit, and you won't want to do it any other way.

You may already have many document files on your computer. Don't try to import them into their respective systems all at once. Add them as you go, as you tackle each new system. Let's keep things simple and focused while you are starting out.

So, get in [The Zone](#) every business day and make steady progress. If you are currently behind on your work in the [Box Theory™ Business Systems Academy](#), don't sweat it. Do the best you can, and the results will follow. With each completed system, your burdens will shrink and your peace of mind will expand. More free time is just around the corner.

Systems will make your life easier!

## Get Good Systems and Good People (2 counter-intuitive principles)

I hope your business is doing well.

I frequently say that good business systems and processes pay for themselves. They do—BIG TIME!

Today I want you to ponder on two principles that may seem counter-intuitive but are important to running a successful organization and saving money.

The first is this:

“If you need a new process and don't install it, you pay for it without getting it” (Ken Stork).

If you have a system that is sputtering along, you can be sure there are excessive mistakes, inefficiencies, and perhaps even customer dissatisfaction. To let the system continue can run up *direct* as well as *indirect* costs (see article links below). So, if you don't improve the system now, you'll eventually lose the money you might have used to install a new one. You will pay for it without getting it!

The second principle is this:

You always pay for the "A" employee. The lesser cost of a "C" employee, plus the hidden cost of lower performance, poor decisions, and costly mistakes, is equal to or greater than the higher cost of the "A" employee. Replace "C" employees with "A" employees—within the same job description—to improve system performance and lower costs.

What is an "A" employee? These people have a history of getting results. They aren't afraid of accountability and scorekeeping. They are self-confident and able to apply past successes to new assignments, but they are also teachable and eager to learn. "A" employees make good things happen in the business, especially when their personal goals are aligned with your company goals.

Keep these two principles in mind, and remember, [Systems Thinkers](#) find ways to save and earn money that many business owners never discover!

Never Stop Improving!

## The Day We are All Working Toward

For most of us, owning a business is both challenging and exhilarating. However, our ultimate aim is to create a business that not only prospers, but enables us to pursue other life goals and dreams—to spend more time with family, enjoy hobbies and recreation, and participate in charitable causes. Our business should eventually give us the freedom and opportunities to fulfill our life purpose.

Most small-business owners go to work every day and battle in the trenches to survive, make a buck, and be their own boss. However, so much more is possible for the [Systems Thinker](#). A business owner who builds upon a foundation of highly-effective systems and processes, can look forward to one or more of the following:

- A business that runs itself (Get out of the daily rat race).
- Having a manager to run the business for you (Become an absentee owner).
- Selling the business for top dollar (Buyers value turn-key operations).
- Replicating or franchising the business in other areas (Fully documented systems are the key to replication).

Box Theory™ Software is your tool for creating fully organized and documented business systems—the key to sustained profitability and growth. Building permanent value into your business each day is the only path to the personal freedom you seek.

There is no other way!

## Box Theory™ Software Underlying File Structure

I thought it might be important for you to understand how Box Theory™ Software stores your personal component documents—Word, Excel, Publisher, PowerPoint, and so forth.

In order to organize your business—like it has never been organized before—we have developed a file structure within the software that keeps track of every document you create and the business system it is associated with. Your documents are created, stored and retrieved using the Component Manager in the “Box Theory™ Systems” section.

However, your documents are also duplicated on your computer's hard drive in the company folder that was created at the time of installation. This is the same folder that contains your Box Theory™ company database, or .btg file (Box Theory™ Gold).

If you chose the default at installation, you will find your company folder followed by (BTG) in “My Documents.” Here your component documents are organized by file type.

You will potentially see folders such as Text, Spreadsheet, Graphic, Database, Pdf, Template, Other, and Temp. These folders only appear as you create documents that go into the specific file type. For example, if you never use Microsoft Access, the “Database” folder will not be listed.

***Important Note:** If you discontinue using Box Theory™ Software, you have easy access to all the files you created within this program.*

Box Theory™ Software regularly synchronizes your company database with the duplicate files on your hard drive. If you update a file in Word, for example, outside of Box Theory™ Software, the synchronization will update the file within the software the next time you open it.

If you lose a file on the hard drive, Box Theory™ Software will put it back during the synchronization. If you add a new file to your company folder, and Box Theory™ Software doesn't know what system it belongs to, it will put the file in the Template Manager, and you can later move it to a specific system.

You don't really have to worry about managing any of this; it all happens behind the scenes. Synchronization takes place when you open and close the software, and it checks at intervals while you are working.

It is a good habit to create and use your document files from within the software and to close open-documents before exiting the software. If you happen to exit the software and discover that you still have an open and unsaved document, just save it as usual. The synchronization process will update the file inside the software the next time you load it.

Keep in mind that if you create a document and save it somewhere on your hard drive other than in your company folder, it will not be known to Box Theory™ Software and not included in the synchronization process. Box Theory™ Software only knows what is in your company database (.btg file) and your company folder on the hard drive.

The name of your company, its file folder, and database are always the same. Any renaming of the company inside the software will automatically rename the file folder and database.

If you don't quite follow this explanation, don't worry about it. Everything happens the way it should without special attention. All you need to know is that you have a copy on your hard drive of everything in your company database.

## You're Doing It Anyway!

I sometimes ask people what method they use to build their business. They usually look at me with a blank stare and say, "What do you mean? What methods are there?" Most small-business owners and entrepreneurs really don't know what method they use. That's because there is only one method, and everyone uses it. They just don't realize it.

You and everyone else uses the *systems method* to develop and manage your organization. It may be true that your systems are rudimentary, invented by workers, undocumented, constantly changing, seat-of-the-pants, inefficient, unreliable, or downright frustrating, but hey, they are YOUR systems.

Good or bad, systems and processes are what make your business go-round, day in and day out.

Whether you recognize it or not, your rough or polished business systems are the framework of your enterprise. And how well they work determines how successful you are.

So, guess what? You've been building systems all along, even before you discovered Box Theory™ Software. And you will continue to create and refine your systems and processes.

HOWEVER, NOW YOU HAVE A TOOL!

Box Theory™ Software will allow you to:

- Design, create, organize, document, manage, store and print all your business systems.
- Build high-performance systems and processes that get consistent results.
- Grow a business in the right way, and that will stand the test of time.
- Create systems better, faster and cheaper than ever before.

You have a tool that incorporates powerful and proven principles that will enable you to delight customers, minimize waste, and make more money. So, if you are going to build systems anyway, you may as well do it with Box Theory™ Software.

There is no tool like it!

## Examples of Successful Business Systems

Sometimes it's good to see how other companies have solved problems by creating or improving their business systems and processes. Below are ten brief case studies that illustrate some of my experiences helping business owners like you get dramatic results using a systems approach.

### **Business: Retail home décor**

#### **Improved Systems: Cash Register Checkout and Price Labeling**

A large home décor retailer, looking for opportunities to improve his bottom line, decided to create a "Mystery Shopper" system to see how accurately his Cash Register Checkout system was ringing up sales. A mystery shopper's basket load of merchandise was pre-calculated and then compared to the customer receipt after checkout. The business owner was shocked to discover a 1.5% error rate—cost \$150,000 per year. By improving procedures at both the cash register and how products were price-labeled, we were able to minimize errors and recover lost sales.

### **Business: Mail-order books and home-schooling supplies**

#### **Improved System: Order Fulfillment**

A distribution company with \$2,000,000 a year in revenues was marginally profitable. After looking carefully at their operation, we were able to help streamline the business and reduce the number of people it took to process and fulfill orders. An effective operations manager continued to refine the system and eventually reduced labor from approximately 12% to 7% of sales. The company saved over \$100,000 in labor the following year.

### **Business: Human services**

#### **Improved System: Payroll**

A business owner with several hundred employees felt embarrassed and frustrated every payday when he heard about angry employees whose paychecks were wrong. Our data sampling for six pay periods (Pareto Analysis using Box Theory™ Gold software) revealed twelve factors that contributed to the payroll problems, including data entry errors, failure to update employee raises or benefits, incorrect payroll deductions, direct-deposit errors, and so forth. However, we also discovered that most payroll mistakes come from two of the twelve sources (Pareto 80-20 Rule)—*information not getting to the payroll department on time and mistakes on the hourly timesheets*. By quickly addressing just these two problems--modifying system procedures--employee complaints dropped to a minimum.



**Business: Computer sales and service****Improved System: Inventory Management**

A young man began a computer company on a shoestring. First, he provided networking services and tech support. Then he ventured into retail sales. Finally, he moved into wholesale and retail sales of off-lease laptop computers and accessories. The ever-changing company continued to grow but struggled to make a profit. The business owner did not properly manage inventory, one of the most difficult systems for many small business owners. By creating an effective warehouse system for storing, labeling and counting parts, and an air-tight system for tracking the receipt and shipping of goods, the company was able to get inventory under control and significantly increase profit.

**Business: Group homes for people with disabilities****Improved Systems: Customer Invoicing and Staff Scheduling**

An absentee owner of a business with nearly a million dollars in revenue had negative equity and was on the verge of going out of business. Upon investigation, we learned the company was not profitable for two primary reasons. First, they were not billing the State for all services performed. Each month they prepared an invoice with various service codes for each client in their care. Without a good system, they relied on memory and prior month billings to prepare the invoices. As a result, some service codes inadvertently dropped off over time. Among other things, we added to the system a reference sheet that showed the maximum potential billable codes for each client. Any monthly billings that fell short of the maximum were verified. We also improved their staff scheduling system to avoid excessive employee overtime. Since then, the business has substantially grown and prospered.

**Business: Retail home and garden****Improved System: Store Appearance/Cleanliness**

A business owner walked into one of his stores unexpectedly on a Saturday proceeding Christmas. He was shocked by the degraded appearance of the store. All the shopping carts were scattered in the parking lot, restrooms were dirty, and the front of the store was cluttered and chaotic. Having been exposed to Systems Thinking, the owner avoided confronting employees on the spot. However, on Monday morning he brought the staff together to create a checklist for solving the problem. Now, on busy days when normal custodial service isn't enough, the store workers complete the 5-minute cleaning checklist every two hours. The store always looks tip-top.

**Business: Manufacturing of gift products****Improved System: Accounts Payable and Inventory**

A manufacturing company with yearly revenues of \$3,000,000 thought they made a profit of \$130,000 for the year. The "accountant" was a good business manager but not actually trained in accounting. The owners relied on the accounting information to make important management decisions. The company had a large inventory and accounts payable, but their accounting system did not properly handle the monthly cutoff of accounts payable and its relationship to the inventory count. After correcting the system procedure, we discovered that the company had \$160,000 operating loss for the year--a negative profit swing of nearly \$290,000. The company averted disaster, and with a tweak to the accounts payable system and the system for valuing inventory, the company got back on track.

**Business: Home electronics****Improved System: Satellite Dish Installation**

Customers were told to expect about two weeks (80 hours) for installation of their home satellite system. Some orders were lost to competitors who had a shorter lead-time. We discovered excessive downtime between the system steps from customer order, to parts acquisition, to installation. By changing the procedures, parts suppliers, and the scheduling system, we were able to reduce the idle time by an average of 48 hours per job. Shorter lead-time for installations increased sales by 20%. Faster system cycles lowered cost and increased profitability by 38%.

**Business: Manufacturer of framed art and gift products****Improved System: Assembly of Framed Pictures**

This manufacturer worked in a very competitive market where every penny counted. After reading the "Game of Work" by Charles A. Coonradt, the production manager implemented an assembly system where team performance was measured and logged every two hours. Productivity was rewarded with daily incentives. Teams continually tried to better their best. The employees played the game (system) with enthusiasm, morale went up, and productivity soared. Everybody won!

**Business: Accounting office****Improved System: Hiring**

To reduce the time, it takes to for hiring student interns, a savvy business owner created a step-by-step hiring system. One of the components of the system was the "Hiring Packet," a red 9"x12" envelope that contained all the forms (components) necessary for a candidate to go through the company's hiring process. The packet included an employment application, a telephone interview form for the receptionist to screen applicants, a job description, two manager interview evaluation forms, W-4 and I-9 government forms, an employment agreement, and a 30-day evaluation form. The envelope also included information about the company and a copy of employee policies that were given to the candidate to read. The person's resume and required references were added. The Hiring Packet traveled through the process and remained active until the 30-day evaluation was complete. Documents were then put in the employee's permanent file. The Hiring Packet, a component of the hiring system, saved a great deal of management time, and helped insure that the best candidates were hired.

## Box Theory™ Document Print Wizard

Printing goes above and beyond in Box Theory™ Software. You can print any individual page or document as you normally would print with the document open, or from the "Print Current Page" option on the Main Menu.

In addition, you can print an entire group of perfectly formatted documents such as the ten parts of your Organization Blueprint. What's more, you can print a Systems Document with all its component parts such as the flowchart, checklist, policies, job descriptions, and measurement reports, as well as the component documents you have created in Word or Excel—all with a single click on the "Print" button.

Because there are potentially many printable pages and documents within the software, you have two ways to narrow down the number of items you print in a Systems Document. When you create a flowchart, checklist, component document or measurement report, you are given a checkbox to "Include in Printing." When this box is left unchecked, your supporting, secondary, or incomplete documents will not be included in the printed System Document.

Secondly, when printing the multi-part Organization Blueprint or the Systems Document in the "Print" wizard on the Main Menu, press the "Document Options" button to select the specific documents that you want to include or exclude. Checked boxes will print; unchecked will not. Use the level-viewer to also include documents in the lower-level subsystems. With the print wizard, you can completely customize your major documents.

Note: Sometimes you may want an individual document to start at the top of a new page in a larger System Document. If so, click on the check-box until a dark square fills the box. This tells the printer to start a document at the top of the next page.

*You can use the "Show Preview" button to see how your complete document will look and make necessary adjustments before actually printing the entire document.*

The printing feature alone will save you hours of gathering, organizing, and collating documents. It is a powerful tool, designed to make your life easier.

Happy Printing!

## Learn from the Big Boys—Process Improvement

In the world of big business, an entire discipline has emerged in the last few decades to help companies deliver higher-quality products and services, and to eliminate waste and inefficiency from business processes.

Toyota is the father of [lean](#) manufacturing. Motorola is the first to apply the principles of [Six Sigma](#). Eliyahu M. Goldratt, in his novel, “The Goal,” introduced us to the [Theory of Constraints](#).

Each of these methodologies for improving business processes takes a different approach. However, all three provide valuable principles and insights for small-business owners.

For example, each methodology considers “waste” to be the major barrier to success. In Six Sigma, waste is the variation from acceptable standards—errors and delay. In Lean Thinking, waste is any step in a process flow that does not add value to the customer. In the Theory of Constraints, waste is the constraint—the weak link or bottleneck—that limits a system's throughput.

For the most part, small-business owners and entrepreneurs have little knowledge of these disciplines. The reason is that their application can be difficult and involved, requiring specialized training, expensive people, and sophisticated methods such as statistical analysis. The methods would seem to be overkill and out of reach for most small-business owners.

However, the basic principles of each discipline are profound and very applicable to the small-business environment. They are the basis upon which companies of the 21st century will need to be built in order to compete. They are the key to taking your business to the “next level”—and keeping it there.

Box Theory™ Software is the first and only product to bring these powerful principles to the small-business community—closing the gap between the big boys and the entrepreneur. Box Theory™ incorporates *all three* process improvement methodologies into the everyday task of creating effective business systems.

As you plan for the future, don't be without the best tool available for growing a prosperous business.

And never stop improving!

## Expand System Information with the Unique Level-Viewer

Systems in your business are interrelated and often interdependent. For example, the success of your human-resource system depends, in part, on having a good hiring system. Hiring the best people relies upon an effective job interview—a step or subsystem of hiring. Subsystems are more detailed activities as you “drill down” in your organization.

The unique “Level-Viewer” tool in Box Theory™ Software allows you to focus on a single system or see an expanded view that includes the details of lower-level subsystems.

Go to the "Box Theory™ Systems" area from the main menu. In the upper-right corner of most pages (e.g. Checklist, Components, People, etc.) you will see "Display Content for" and a drop-down list of levels or subsystems. Below this are also numbered boxes. Box "1" is the current level. There are additional numbered boxes for each lower-level system you have created. The over-sized box represents the level you are currently viewing. Click on any numbered box to view system information through that level. There is also a grey line under the level you prefer to show (the default). The preferred or default view can be set by right-clicking on any of the numbered boxes.

Below I have described the differences in the available views.

- Current Level (edit system box) – By default, the Level-Viewer displays the "Current Level." The current System or box is always the one highlighted box on your Navigation Panel. For a simple system or one that is not so important, you can perform the basic tasks within Process, Components, People, Quality, Speed and Measurement for this one System/box. You may not need to work any deeper to have an adequately performing system.
- 2 Levels (edit system steps) – If you created a flowchart or checklist and want to develop or improve the individual steps within the system—more detail—you can display "2 Levels (edit system steps)." You will see the Current System/box and the steps within that system. You have full software functionality to edit and work on either of these levels.
- 3 Levels and more (view by steps) – Box Theory™ software knows how many levels of detail you have created and will give you the option on the drop-down menu to display three levels, four levels, and so on. These levels will display the components, policies, reports, etc. within each step of the current box down to the bottom level.

For example, you can see all the hiring system and subsystem policies on one list. You will do most editing on the first and second levels. For three levels and more, the primary purpose is to view information; however, text editing is still possible.

- All Levels (combined view) – This special view is helpful if you want to see all components, policies, reports, etc., that are contained in the Current System/box and all its subsystems. This is displayed as one list and not separated by the individual steps.
- All Levels (system owner only) – If you select "All Levels," you will see everything down through the organization. However, if a subsystem has a different owner, and you want to exclude their system from your view or printed report, you can select this option.

Keep in mind that 3 Levels and beyond have restricted editing functionality. If you want full functionality, right-click and choose "Go to System." (You can also get there from the Navigation Panel.)

NOTE: When the mouse cursor hovers over items on a list, it will display the System/box that the item is associated with.

I have tried to explain this tool the best I can, but frankly, it is far easier to use than to explain. You will probably use the first two levels a lot and "All Levels" occasionally—the in-between levels, not so much. Once you get the hang of it, you will find the Level-Viewer to be a handy feature. Play around with it when you have completed systems that are two or three levels deep.

Cheering You On!

## **"As CEO, I finally know what I am supposed to do!"**

Entrepreneurs come from a variety of backgrounds and have a vast range of experiences, knowledge, skills and talents. No two are alike. Working with hundreds of business owners over my career, I have seen all kinds.

The entrepreneur with big ideas often likes to see his dreams fulfilled but let other people do as much of the work as possible (nice if you can afford it).

The business owner with a sales personality attracts people and creates valuable relationships. He paints a wonderful picture but often struggles with the details and executing on his promise.

The technician-type business owner loves to create the products and services but sometimes gets caught up in fussing and tinkering to get things just right. He may struggle with managing operations or the marketing side of the business.

The numbers person likes to measure and analyze but is usually not an innovator, marketer, or even operations person.

You get the idea. People are what they are.

However, every small-business owner needs to be one thing above all the rest. He needs to be a Systems Thinker. He needs to possess the [Master Skill](#).

After one of my two-day system-development workshops, I walked a young entrepreneur out to his car. He said to me, "I finally understand what I should be doing as CEO!" He got it! I was thrilled.

What you are learning with the Box Theory™ eCourse and software is the expertise to be a successful business owner and CEO, and what it takes to have an outstanding organization.

Now, if you are a personality who finds it difficult to do the system-development work, that's OK. You don't have to do it. However, you cannot abdicate the responsibility for getting it done. It is your primary purpose, regardless of who you assign to do the pick-and-shovel work.

Recently, a new student of the [Box Theory™ Business Systems Academy](#) said to me, "I get it. I see the importance of it. I just don't want to do it."



This person is an attorney starting a new business, and her background and skills are better applied to other areas. However, she is hiring someone to make sure the job gets done because she wants an organization with a reputation for [excellence](#).

And that's the way it is. Do it yourself if you love the work. [Get a college student, assistant, or other](#) if you don't. But you have to find some way. You can never stop being the CST—Chief Systems Thinker.

## Building a Business is Like Eating an Elephant!

Recently, I read an article about how to tackle and complete a big task or project. The premise of the article was a familiar theme to me—break the task down to smaller, more manageable sub-tasks. How do you eat an elephant? One bite at a time. It's the same idea.

This is a true principle, and it makes a lot of sense. It is also one of the underlying premises of Box Theory™ methodology and software.

BREAK YOUR BUSINESS DOWN INTO BOXES (SYSTEMS). DETERMINE THE VITAL FEW BOXES THAT DRIVE THE SUCCESS OF YOUR BUSINESS. ELEVATE THOSE BOXES TO HIGHER PERFORMANCE LEVELS.

Build your business by developing boxes according to the priorities established in your System Framework. As you improve the lower-level boxes, the performance of higher-level boxes naturally become better.

The key is to commit time each day in [The Zone](#). Work on your business an hour at a time, a box at a time. Eventually, you will eat the elephant; you will have a smooth-running business that gets good results, even when you're not around.

When you think about it, there really is [no other way!](#)

## Have You Had a Breakthrough Yet?

With every skill comes a moment of breakthrough—when the task is suddenly easy, and you can perform it at will. Do you remember the first time you could balance on a bicycle and ride anywhere you wanted? It felt great didn't it?

My son spent two years in Argentina. There was a moment when he stopped worrying about his Spanish. He could suddenly understand and speak Spanish without thinking about the words. He had a breakthrough.

Like looking at a grandfather clock with its springs and gears exposed through the glass, the converted [Systems Thinker](#) suddenly sees all the systems and subsystems at work in the business. He or she notices when component parts are broken, when things aren't humming along as usual. Systems Thinkers are not only aware of what needs to be fixed, but they know exactly how to fix it.

I have seen numerous people have this breakthrough. It is exhilarating for them and for me. At the moment of breakthrough, I know the person is ready to tackle new projects with confidence. It's hard to explain, but they become somewhat of an "expert" at *everything*. They are able to find solutions in a newly discovered and systematic way. They get it!

If you haven't had the breakthrough yet, keep going. It will come. I promise! And when it does, send me an email and let me know. I love to celebrate victories with my customers and friends.

I look forward to hearing from you soon!

## Define Your System Objectives

Measuring system performance and providing [feedback](#) to the team is the catalyst to process improvement. Measure a system 1) if it drives your company goals, 2) if it is a constraint to the sales throughput of your business, 3) if it will motivate people to a higher level of performance, or 4) if the measurement is an important leading indicator for managing business operations.

You decide which systems are useful to measure; only spend time measuring if you expect a tangible benefit.

Most often, there is one primary measurement of system performance (e.g., number of deliveries per day; number of applications processed). However, there may be secondary measurements you have an interest in. For example, you could measure what percent of deliveries were on time, or what percent of applications were not completed correctly.

In the System Objectives section of the software (or on the System Dashboard), first check to see if the system has direct influence on a Balanced Scorecard goal. If so, add this company goal as a reference. Then determine the most relevant measurement(s) for the current System/box. The software prompts you to choose productivity, quality, timeliness, cycle time, resource utilization, or costs. You can read an explanation of these on the Principles page or in the Software Help.

Like the company Balanced Scorecard, you will write the system objective, unit of measure, and target goal (see the software Measurement Examples page).

After deciding what you want to measure, go to the Measurement Report Manager and quickly create your report for data entry. Remember: You don't have to measure every system!

Remember: [Numbers are the Language of Improvement!](#)

## The Measurement Report Wizard

The Measurement Report Manager contains two sections. The first section displays measurement reports created with the Report Wizard. The second section displays measurement reports created with a spreadsheet program such as Microsoft Excel. In some cases, a spreadsheet will give you a little more flexibility.

The Measurement Report Wizard is one of my favorite parts of Box Theory™ Software. I've always dreaded the time it takes to create and format a spreadsheet. With the Report Wizard, you can produce a fully formatted report in minutes.

I highly recommend that you read the Software Help under "Measurement" for a full explanation of what to measure, how to measure, and an explanation of the Wizard itself. Once you are acquainted with this feature, using it is a snap. However, there are a few things I would like to emphasize.

- On the first page of the Wizard, you can check a box to indicate if the current system measurement is a [Key Performance Indicator](#) that you want to watch closely. KPIs are updated on the Home Page of Box Theory™ Software for easy monitoring.
- By answering a few questions, the wizard will create your report for you. As you answer questions, keep in mind that some of the words you choose will become column headers. To get more columns on a page you can use smaller words that mean the same thing, or abbreviations. For example, you can write "Number," "No.," or "#." After the report is created, you can also select a column line and drag it to increase or decrease its width. The text in the column header will wrap to another line if necessary to fit in the available space.
- On the final page of the Wizard, you will see a summary of information describing your report. You can go backwards to make any corrections. Before creating the report, you can also see a preview of what the report will look like.
- When the "Percent" checkbox appears at the top of the report, you can choose to have the values in the "Total" column expressed as a number *or* a percent. Check or uncheck this box to suit your preference.
- After creating the report, you can quickly perform data entry from the Main Menu of the software. You can also view data for any time-periods such as weekly, monthly or quarterly. The selected report will include the date in the "Date" field. If the date

is 11/22/2016, and you selected Monthly Report, you will see the entire report for November 2016. Simply change the date to see past information.

- You can only enter or edit data in the primary view you specified in the Wizard. All other views are read-only. Totals appear at the bottom of the report. If you change views, the totals will also change to reflect the new time-period.
- Click the button to print a blank report form for hand-recording measurement data at the system location.
- Be careful about editing a report format that already has data in it. Changes that eliminate columns will cause a loss of information. In some situations, it may be better to create a new report.

Again, be sure to read the "Software Help" page to take full advantage of this great little tool!

Remember, measurement leads to improvement!

## Focus-Finish-Focus-Finish!

If your business is like most others, there are a gazillion things going on at any one time. Yes, you are a believer in [Systems Thinking](#); however, you may still have trouble getting to the important task of system development.

You're not alone. Believe it or not, I have the same challenge.

The solution is to narrow your focus to a single business system or process that could make a difference in your company—the bottleneck or weak link that is limiting sales throughput. Working an hour a day on your business amounts to twenty-two hours a month or sixty-five hours a quarter.

In that amount of time, you can accomplish amazing things—IF YOU STAY FOCUSED!

At the end of a month or quarter you will see success, including happier customers, more productive employees, and a bigger bottom line. When one business system is done, start the next. Each successful system will recharge your batteries.

You know the old saying, “If you keep doing what you’ve always done, you’ll keep getting what you’ve always got.” If you want a better business, you need better systems and processes. [There is no other way!](#)

Even with limited resources you can accomplish a lot with one hour of focus per day. If you can afford to hire some help, [get a college student or assistant](#) to document your business systems using Box Theory™ Software.

Focus-Finish-Focus-Finish-Focus-Finish. This is a key to making steady improvement!

## **Export and Import a System/box**

Recently, I created a sample flowchart in my Box Theory™ Software to help a customer with one of his lead generation systems called "Valpak Advertising." After completing the flowchart, I went to the System Framework from the main menu and located the system. I then right-clicked and selected "Export System/box" from the drop-down menu. A file was created with the system name and a ".box" extension, which I saved to my hard drive.

I emailed the Valpak Advertising.box file to the customer as an attachment. He saved it to his hard drive, went to the System Framework, right-clicked on the Lead Generation system, and selected "Import System/box."

In this way, I was able to send the customer a copy of my sample flowchart.

In fact, I can share all the components of a specific system—flowchart, checklist, component documents, measurement reports, and so forth—using the export and import functionality. All subsystem components of the System/box I select are also included.

This is a great feature for collaborating with others inside or outside your organization. One day I hope our community will be sharing their successful systems and processes.

Oh, and by the way, you can also export and import your Organization Blueprint (except System Framework) from the "File" area of the Main Menu.

Let me know of other features you would like to see.



## Box Theory™ Software is a Breakthrough Product

“Let me explain a breakthrough. It’s when you find a method of doing something that dramatically accelerates your ability to accomplish your goals” (Chet Holmes, *The Ultimate Sales Machine*).

By this definition, Box Theory™ Software is a breakthrough product. I have created business systems with and without this amazing tool and have discovered that it does dramatically accelerate your ability to accomplish goals. In a fraction of the time you now spend, you can create customer-pleasing, waste-removing, profit-generating, and growth-producing business systems and processes that blow away the competition!

Box Theory™ Software does this in two primary ways. First, it focuses your thinking on the six essential elements of a good system—process, components, people, quality, speed and measurement. You now have a *software system* that keeps you on track for creating effective business systems. And it is easy enough that a [low-cost student or assistant](#) can do most of the work for you!

Secondly—and this is bigger than you may realize—the software enables you to quickly organize, document, edit, collate, print, store, and retrieve all parts of your written business systems.

In the old days, I spent half my time formatting and organizing my system-development work, and then searching for documents on my computer when I later needed them. It was even more difficult to [keep track of the documents](#) my employees created, or to re-create a business system that was only in their head, and went with them when they left the company.

With Box Theory™ Software you can build smooth-running business systems or processes *fast* and *right*. A little [devoted time every day](#) will give you a fully documented business before you know it.

Send me a note if I can help!

## **This Could Be the Start of Something Big!**

If you've stayed on course, you should be about finished with the Box Theory™ Business Systems Academy. However, don't give up if you're behind! The best is yet to come.

One customer recently said to me, "I really do want to have a good company, and I can now see that I need to spend at least an hour a day working on my business. I am determined to get going!"

If coming to that conclusion is all you've accomplished so far, you're on your way, and that's fantastic!

Disciplining yourself to work on your business consistently may be the hardest thing you have to do, BUT IT IS THE MOST IMPORTANT THING YOU HAVE TO DO!

Elbert Hubbard, American writer and philosopher, defined self-discipline as, "The ability to make yourself do what you should do, when you should do it, whether you feel like it or not."

Small steps every day will add up. The payoff can be enormous!

I am truly grateful for your interest in Box Theory™ products, and I know they can help you achieve your business goals—even during our difficult economic times.

Call or email me if you have any questions about your business or Box Theory™ Software. Let me know how I can make your system development work easier. Do you have any suggestions for the product? I always appreciate hearing from you!

Creating effective business systems and processes is the path to success. I know this is true and I hope you do to. There really is no other way!