

Assessment 2 - Using Primary Data

Examining LifeHacker's "How I Work" Series

Linda L. Lampert

New Jersey City University

Assessment 2 - Using Primary Data

Examining LifeHacker's "How I Work" Series

A chief executive officer, better known as a CEO has a lot of responsibility and needs to manage his/her time effectively in order for them to be productive at what they do. When I was given the task to choose a group of people, I thought CEOs would be an interesting group of people to examine. As an emerging leader, I wondered if I would discover any outstanding themes that enable this particular group of people to be more successful than the average person.

The group of ten CEOs that I examined consisted of eight men and two women. Nine out of the them live in the United States and more than half are either from New York or California. This was not surprising to me since a lot of major companies are located in these two states.

Do you know anyone that does not own a smartphone? They have become more than just an accessory. In fact, they have become such an integral part of everyone's lives that it is something many people will not leave their home without. It would be safe to assume that CEOs all have some kind of smartphone. The interesting question would be, do they prefer one brand over the other? Once in awhile a conversation will come up about what brand of smartphone is best. Some people love their smartphone so much that this conversation can even get into a heated debate. Interestingly enough, evidence from these interviews shows that this group of CEOs do indeed prefer one brand over another. A whopping, nine out of the ten CEOs owned an iPhone at the time of their interview. I will not go into further discussion about what model they each had because the interviews did not take place all at the same period of time, making this information irrelevant. However, the fact that ninety percent use the same kind of phone is worth pointing out.

In this day and age, technology such as a smartphone is an extremely useful tool and it can even be compared to a handheld computer. Nonetheless, some people do not view them as the be all and end all. For example, Anant Agarwal (Orin. 2/22/17), CEO of edX, expressed in his interview, that he considers his ballpoint pen to be his mobile device and his iPhone and iPad mini to be a supplement of that. It should be noted that two out of the ten CEOs utilize more than one kind of phone. Their second phone mentioned was not Apple brand.

Naturally, if a theme was present among mobile devices, you may wonder if the CEOs that prefer Apple brand phones also prefer the same brand for their computer? In examining the data, there was a theme. Out of out of the nine iPhone users, eight of them use some type of MacBook for their computer device. According to this data, it is safe to say that Apple is an overall favorite among these CEOs.

The early bird gets the worm is a saying that we have all heard at one time or another. With that being said, I was curious to examine the sleep patterns of CEOs. Are they generally early risers? I did not find an overwhelming theme to show that they are. In fact, only four out of the ten mentioned that they are morning people. The absence of a theme here could validate the belief that whether you are an early bird or night owl, it does not matter. Some people simply work better at night, while others are more productive in the morning. As long as you are aware of what time of day you work best, you can use that to your advantage to be the most productive. Since we all know that adequate sleep is a key part of a healthy lifestyle and can provide numerous benefits I was interested in looking at the CEOs sleep patterns more closely and examining how much sleep these successful individuals get each night. Unfortunately, however, there was not enough data for me to make a concise conclusion. There were only a few CEOs

that told their interview how much sleep they get each night. Among those that mentioned it, the amount of time varied from five to eight hours of sleep a night. A few of them stated how they would really like to get more sleep.

One of those was, Amir Salihefendic, CEO of Doist (Orin, 2/5/17). He talked about how he is a terrible sleeper, but does his best to have some kind of routine. He said, “Right now I go to bed at around 1AM and wake up at around 8AM. This is something I’m actively trying to improve as I’d love to get around eight hours of sleep per day”. Even without getting eight hours of sleep a day, he is still successful. This fact could help substantiate the idea that everyone is different and some people simply require more sleep than others. It would be interesting to see more data to come to a better conclusion as to whether or not the amount of time someone sleeps is actually a factor as to whether or not you are successful.

When asked how he recharges, Emmanuel Schalit, CEO of Dashlane said, “Exercise, exercise, and exercise more” (Orin, 3/22/17). Since physical activity or exercise can improve your overall health and well being, I presumed that this would definitely be a more evident theme among the CEOs. However during their interview, only half of them mentioned the fact that they workout regularly. However, I also thought that this could be due to the fact that there was no exact question that asked whether or not they exercise regularly.

Sometimes, we can have so many things swirling around in our heads, making it hard to stay focused. Many of us deal with this by utilizing to-do lists. I know that I write to-do lists all the time. They help me stay organized and focused. Rather than thinking about all of the other things that I need to do, I can be more productive by giving my full attention to the task at hand. Interestingly enough, this was the biggest theme that stood out during my research. Although the

CEOs methods varied, each and every one of them use some kind of task management system.

Carlos Watson, CEO of OZY Media (Orin, 12/12/14), talked about how important to-do lists are for him. He stated that, “Everyone who works with me knows to number things in email if they want a response. Every project needs to have a list, and every item on that list needs to have an owner and deadline”.

By viewing their success, it is evident that whether it is a daily to-do list or a long term list, it is great to write down what you want to achieve and outline the steps to get there. During Summer Institute I, doctoral students are asked to create a timeline of their goals. It can be assumed that this is why. It is basically a long term to-do list that gives you a picture and a time frame of how you can achieve your goals.

As previously stated, there was no evidence of a particularly favorite to-do list manager among the group of CEOs. Their preference actually varied greatly. The biggest commonality was in regards to Evernote. Three out of the ten CEOs prefer to use this app. On the other hand, two of them prefer the ‘old school’ method and use regular old pen and paper. In fact, Anant Agarwal, CEO of edX (Orin, 2/22/17), talked about the piece of paper that he had crumpled in his pocket. He said, “It’s not high-tech, it is super portable, never runs out of charge, works on airplanes, but you better believe that if I add a task to this scrap of paper, then it will get done.” He does have a good point. Additionally, I know that it is a really good feeling when you can physically cross an item off of your to-do list. However, I would imagine that if you are someone that can rely on a piece of paper, you must be very organized because you can easily misplace or lose a piece of paper. I supposed this is why Max Levchin, CEO of Affirm and Co-Founder of PayPal (Orin, 1/25/17) uses somewhat of a hybrid method. He is an Evernote user and mentioned

that although he does not use it for everything, he does use it daily. He stated that during the workday, he will sometimes write notes on paper or email them to himself then at the end of the day, he goes to Evernote.

This method would not work for Brad Smith, CEO of Intuit (Orin, 4/12/17). When he was asked about his time-saving shortcut or life hack, he stated that, he never touches something more than once. Going back to something to put it on a different to-do list would be counterproductive to his method that works best for him.

There was no commonality among the remaining five CEOs. They each prefer a different application or program. With this all being said, whatever the method, this is clearly a habit that they all consistently do daily. Perhaps this is a major key factor that helps these individuals to be the effective and successful people that they are.

In conclusion, it was interesting to delve into the life of these ten CEOs. I am happy that some of their healthy habits are something that I already do. As I move forward in my career, I think some of the takeaways will be helpful for me to organize myself and work productively.

References

Bradley, A. (6/7/12). I'm Katia Beauchamp, Birchbox co-founder and CEO, and this is how I work. Retrieved from *Lifehacker*,

<http://lifehacker.com/im-katia-beauchamp-birchbox-co-founder-and-ceo-and-th-1795889433>

Miller, T. (3/12/14). I'm Kathryn Minshew, CEO of the Muse, and this is how I work. Retrieved from *Lifehacker*, <http://lifehacker.com/im-kathryn-minshew-ceo-of-the-muse-and-this-is-how-i-1542207484>

Orin, A. (12/12/14). I'm Carlos Watson, CEO of OZY Media, and this is how I work. Retrieved From *Lifehacker*, <http://lifehacker.com/im-carlos-watson-ceo-of-ozy-media-and-this-is-how-i-w-1789566473>.

Orin. A. (3/25/15). I'm Ken Lin, CEO of Credit Karma, and this is how I work. Retrieved from *Lifehacker*, <http://lifehacker.com/im-ken-lin-ceo-of-credit-karma-and-this-is-how-i-work-1693113047>

Orin. A. (1/25/17). I'm Max Levchin, CEO of Affirm and Co-Founder of PayPal, and this is how I Work. Retrieved from *Lifehacker*, <http://lifehacker.com/im-max-levchin-ceo-of-affirm-and-co-founder-of-paypal-1791439921>

Orin. A. (2/5/17). I'm Amir Salihefendic, CEO of Doist, and this is how I work. Retrieved from *Lifehacker*, <http://lifehacker.com/im-amir-salihefendic-ceo-of-doist-and-this-is-how-i-w-1792387791>

Orin, A. (2/8/17). I'm Luis von Ahn, CEO of Duolingo, and this is how I work. Retrieved

from *Lifehacker*,

[http://lifehacker.com/im-luis-von-ahn-ceo-of-duolingo-and-this-is-how-](http://lifehacker.com/im-luis-von-ahn-ceo-of-duolingo-and-this-is-how-i-wor-1791884794)

[i-wor-1791884794](http://lifehacker.com/im-luis-von-ahn-ceo-of-duolingo-and-this-is-how-i-wor-1791884794)

Orin, A. (2/22/17). I'm Anant Agarwal, CEO of edX, and this is how I work. Retrieved

From *Lifehacker*, [http://lifehacker.com/im-anant-agarwal-ceo-of-edx-and-this-is-how-i-](http://lifehacker.com/im-anant-agarwal-ceo-of-edx-and-this-is-how-i-work-1792627484)

[work-1792627484](http://lifehacker.com/im-anant-agarwal-ceo-of-edx-and-this-is-how-i-work-1792627484)

Orin, A. (3/22/17). I'm Emmanuel Schalit, CEO of Dashlane, and this is how I work.

Retrieved from *Lifehacker*, [http://lifehacker.com/im-emmanuel-schalit-ceo-of-dashlane-](http://lifehacker.com/im-emmanuel-schalit-ceo-of-dashlane-and-this-is-how-i-1793489222)

[and-this-is-how-i-1793489222](http://lifehacker.com/im-emmanuel-schalit-ceo-of-dashlane-and-this-is-how-i-1793489222)

Orin, A. (4/12/17). I'm Brad Smith, CEO of Intuit, and this is how I work. Retrieved from

Lifehacker, [http://lifehacker.com/im-brad-smith-ceo-of-intuit-and-this-is-how-i-work-](http://lifehacker.com/im-brad-smith-ceo-of-intuit-and-this-is-how-i-work-1794268430)

[1794268430](http://lifehacker.com/im-brad-smith-ceo-of-intuit-and-this-is-how-i-work-1794268430)