

The habits of transformational Insight leaders: a summary

The importance of habits in becoming transformational

In [IMA summary 018](#), we suggest that all Insight leaders should have a **personal plan** in which they detail their ambition for becoming a transformational leader. But it's not enough to just create a design, we also have to change our behaviours.

A **habit** is a behaviour that has been repeated enough times to become automatic. We can use habits to make small changes - 1% improvements - that over time make big differences.

Habits are the '**compound interest of self-improvement**', so just like money multiplies with compound interest in a bank account, the effects of habits multiply as we repeat them. They might look like they make little difference at the time, but when we look back, we can appreciate the benefit of them. The more we adopt and stick to habits, the more they shape how we think about ourselves in the first place.

Habits will be **personal** to everyone, so what works for one individual might not work for another. However, it can still be beneficial for us as Insight leaders to **share** our own learnings about habits with our team members, to encourage new approaches and behaviours.

Source for best practice on 'habits' - James Clear, *Atomic Habits*

Habits can help us as leaders to...

- Become more transformational
- Focus less on technical responsibilities
- Embrace more entrepreneurial aspects
- Focus on, and sell, a vision for Insight
- Develop a sense of perspective on your role



So, how do habits work?

All habits proceed through 4 stages in the same order:

	Adopt good habits	Break bad habits
• Cue	Make it obvious	Make it invisible
• Craving	Make it attractive	Make it unattractive
• Response	Make it easy	Make it difficult
• Reward	Make it satisfying	Make it unsatisfying

"Small habits can make a meaningful difference by providing evidence of a new identity."

Top tips and habits from IMA leaders

Habits can help us with time management, personal development, improving our business knowledge or being more entrepreneurial:

Become a 'student of your own business' – diarise time with stakeholders proactively to find out what's on their minds. Learn more about your business which will help you to identify how Insight can help with any issues.

Liz Lamb, Card Factory

Make yourself an expert on a current hot topic and become established as a 'thought leader' in the business e.g. running workshops and sessions about AI.

Jenny Syddall, Carlsberg

Remember the importance of delegation (for you and your team members) – find people who you can delegate tasks to that are either of interest to them, or a key strength of theirs; this will help to stretch them, but also help to free up your time.

Richard Turner, HM Land Registry

Adopt an essentialism mindset and 'only do, what only you can do'. Think about what you are expertly placed to as an Insight leader that only you can do to the same level, then try to free up as much time as you can to focus on these things.

Parveen Bdesha, IMA - previously eBay & News UK

Stay close to who key stakeholders are, and when new leaders join the business, get a session in their diaries early on to brief them on customer insights. Do the same with graduates to raise awareness and create natural cohorts of allies that grow over time.

Joanne Pearson, Jaguar Land Rover

Make it your business to know your business. Get input from other business leaders when developing your Insight strategy and plans - playing it back to them in their own language will make it richer, and enable people to see their own thoughts reflected in it.

Helen Passard, Suntory

Analyse your own time – look back and colour code your diary by how your time was spent e.g. in the last 3 months, and how effective it was, which meetings gave you energy (or drained it!) – use it to help you shape how you make decisions going forwards.

Scott Mangto, Sky

Put time aside to focus on strategy and development, for example the last Friday of every month. Give your team license to do the same (encourage a team wide initiative) and share reflections.

Christine Stoddart, IMA - previously Wilko, DFS & William Hill