



Happy Valentine's Day!

Head Start Roadmap



The Office of Head Start (OHS) announces the [Head Start Road Map to Excellence](#) video of Yvette Sanchez Fuentes discussing the new priorities and vision of OHS.

Are You a Hedgehog or a Fox? Why Simple is Better

By: [Mary Eule Scarborough](#)

The following contains a paraphrased excerpt from Jim Collins' brilliant book, "Good to Great" (2001, HarperCollins Publishers, New York, NY). Here Collins discusses Isaiah Berlin's famous allegory about certain types of people. Even if you've heard it before, it bears repeating.

Once upon a time, there was a fox. This particular fox was a very sly and cunning creature and a rather intelligent one as well. Each day he schemed, invented and reinvented complicated strategies - all devised to outwit and attack the hedgehog. Then, as soon as he was satisfied with his latest brilliant plan he would pay a visit to the hedgehog's den and circle it continuously... until the perfect moment arrived for him to pounce. And from an outside vantage point, he had every reason to be confident. After all, he was fast, sleek, crafty, sure-footed and striking. He looked like a champion; especially compared to his prey. The hedgehog, a funny creature with an odd appearance (part porcupine and part armadillo) enjoyed his simple life... waddling around searching for food, taking care of his home and resting.

One day the little hedgehog crossed directly in front of the fox - who waited in cunning silence - as he went about his daily routine. "Aha" the fox thought, "I've got you now!" With that, he leapt out and with lightening fast speed ran straight for the hedgehog. The hedgehog, sensing danger, saw the fox and thought, "Here we go again. Will he ever learn?" Rolling up into a perfect sphere, he became a ball of sharp spikes, with daggers in all directions. As the fox drew closer he saw this and called off the attack, and vowed to devise a new plot to get the hedgehog. Each day for the rest of their lives some form of this battle took place and despite all, the hedgehog always won.

What Does This Story Have To Do With Marketing Your Business? Everything.

Berlin argues that, like the fox, some people choose to chase too many things at the same time. Because they view the world as excessively complex, they can never shape a single unified philosophy or vision. So, they operate on too many levels and simply cannot manage it all.

For example, these are the folks who: 1) Waste precious time unnecessarily reinventing the wheel whenever they're called upon to perform a task; 2) Use ten words when three would suffice; 3) Avoid making decisions because it never seems like the exact right time; 4) Worry excessively about "what-ifs" down the road; 5) Over analyze things until they feel paralyzed; 6) Jump at every opportunity instead of focusing on their most important strategies.

The end result? They're confused, overwhelmed, distracted, frustrated and stressed. Their personal lives take a big hit and their businesses suffer. In short, they are opportunist instead of true entrepreneurs.

In contrast, "hedgehogs" are adept at taking complicated concepts and condensing them into their most elemental parts. Their methodology for unraveling any challenge is therefore, quite simple. They identify the most important components needed to solve their problem (i.e. ingredients and procedures) and focus their efforts there. They understand that true genius ' and the ability to get things done ' relies upon making things simpler, not more complex. (And what better example of this is there than Einstein's Theory of Relativity formula, " $e=mc^2$ "?) As a general rule, "hedgehogs" do not value anything that doesn't materially add value to their focused ideology and thus, are masters at shortening their learning curve by developing dependable problem-solving methods and tools. So next time you find yourself overwhelmed, stop, take a deep breath and think like a hedgehog... you'll be glad you did!

Our Pledge: The KY T/TA State Office pledges to provide timely, current, and interesting monthly newsletters for the Head Start and Early Head Start communities and others interested in the field. In keeping with our mission to be more "green," we will provide our easy to read newsletter via email.

We would like to hear from you and encourage your suggestions for newsletter content. Contact the editor: [Christine Killen](#)

[mailto: @stginternational.com](mailto:@stginternational.com)

STG International, Inc – Member of the Head Start National Training & Technical Assistance Network