



[Back to Story](#) - [Help](#)

## Beat Down Bureaucracy



Sonja Carberry

Fri Dec 21, 6:18 PM ET

Tired of slogging through bureaucratic quicksand? Declare mutiny, says Christine Comaford-Lynch. In "Rules of Renegades," she describes starting her first business as a revolt against her employer.

Since then, she has launched and sold five companies, become an angel investor and helped other CEOs accelerate their businesses as founder of Mighty Ventures.

Comaford-Lynch says renegade doesn't always equal rebel. "What it is is having an amount of passion and commitment that exceeds the norm," she told IBD.

Robert MacDonald was passionate about selling insurance, but disliked the bureaucracy. The self-described business contrarian rejected insurance industry conventions to found LifeUSA, which he later sold for \$500 million.

MacDonald described his experience in "Beat the System: 11 Secrets to Building an Entrepreneurial Culture in a Bureaucratic World."

Every company starts with a renegade vibe, but growth brings bureaucracy.

"You cannot eliminate it," MacDonald told IBD. "You can inoculate yourself against bureaucracy by doing the things you did when you were an entrepreneurial company coming up."

Take a hard look at how you work. Ditch pointless routines and revive those entrepreneurial habits.

Keep in touch. "When I started the company, I made sure to talk to every single person in the company every day," MacDonald said. As LifeUSA grew from 50 people to 5,000, he tried to keep that spirit up, taking "over an hour each day simply to walk through the company."

Talk dreams. "Reminisce about the future," he said. Startups are good at creating a story about who they are and where they're going. Keep telling your tale as you grow.

Simplify. MacDonald didn't like number-heavy reports, because generating them took time away from valuable tasks.

He wanted to know "what are we doing better today than we did yesterday," he said.

Let go. Delegate, MacDonald says, to empower your employees. "If you don't care about the details of a decision, let others make it."

Start small. Even if you're surrounded by bureaucracy, "you can create an island of entrepreneurial spirit in your department" MacDonald said.

Comaford-Lynch calls this being an intrapreneur.

Leap, then improvise. Comaford-Lynch launched a human resource firm in response to Microsoft's demand that contractors like her become employees.

Within a day, 35 contractors became her clients and Comaford-Lynch had to learn how to generate payroll -- pronto.

"I dove into business books and found out something super-fast," she said. "To some extent, all first-time CEOs are making it up as they go along."

Use an illusion. Comaford-Lynch recommends thinking existentially. "Everything's an illusion, so you might as well pick an empowering one," she said.

Take the jewelry maker too intimidated to pitch her line to Saks Fifth Avenue. After reading "Rules for Renegades," the jeweler replaced fear with a new illusion: confidence. "Now her jewelry is displayed there right next to Cartier's," Comaford-Lynch said.

---

Copyright © 2008 [Investor's Business Daily](#)

Copyright © 2007 Yahoo All rights reserved. [Copyright/IP Policy](#) | [Terms of Service](#) | [Help](#) | [Feedback](#)

NOTICE: We collect personal information on this site. To learn more about how we use your information, see our [Privacy Policy](#)