

LAW 7: The Power of Leveraging Others' Work

Law 7 of *The 48 Laws of Power* highlights the importance of leveraging the work, knowledge, and talents of others while ensuring that credit remains firmly in one's own hands. Throughout history, those who mastered the art of delegation and recognition management have reaped the benefits of innovation and progress without expending unnecessary effort. By controlling the perception of success, individuals can build powerful reputations while utilizing the skills of others to further their ambitions.

A prime example of this law in action is the rivalry between Nikola Tesla and Thomas Edison. Tesla, a visionary inventor, played a crucial role in developing alternating current (AC) electricity, but his lack of business acumen and failure to claim credit left him overshadowed by Edison and later Westinghouse. In contrast, Edison, who did not necessarily invent all the technologies attributed to him, excelled in marketing and securing patents under his name, ensuring that history remembered him as a pioneering innovator while Tesla faded into obscurity.

Another illustration of this principle comes from the fable of the tortoise, the elephant, and the hippopotamus, where the tortoise, despite its physical limitations, orchestrates a tug-of-war between the two larger animals. By cleverly positioning itself as the mediator and strategist, the tortoise achieves success without exerting direct effort, proving that intelligence and manipulation often triumph over brute strength. This parable mirrors real-world power dynamics, where those who direct efforts rather than execute them personally often emerge as the true victors.

This law also manifests in the business world, where corporate leaders and entrepreneurs frequently capitalize on the ingenuity of their teams while taking the

public credit for breakthroughs. Steve Jobs, for instance, was not the sole creator of Apple's most groundbreaking products but was instrumental in shaping their vision and marketing them as his own. His ability to recognize, refine, and present the work of others as revolutionary advancements solidified his legacy, demonstrating the immense power of perception and branding.

The strategy of utilizing others' talents extends beyond business into politics, where successful leaders often surround themselves with expert advisors and claim responsibility for policies they did not personally design. Figures such as Franklin D. Roosevelt and Winston Churchill relied on their teams to craft military strategies and economic reforms but were ultimately credited with steering their nations to victory. This demonstrates how effective delegation, coupled with public recognition, can enhance a leader's influence and ensure historical remembrance.

While this law advocates for strategic appropriation, it also warns against blindly giving away one's work or failing to assert ownership. Tesla's story serves as a cautionary tale, emphasizing that brilliance alone is insufficient if one lacks the ability to secure recognition. Those who naively assume that merit alone will grant them power often find themselves outmaneuvered by those who understand the politics of credit and reputation.

Even in creative industries, artists and writers who fail to protect their intellectual property risk having their work repackaged and profited from by those with greater business savvy. The painter Peter Paul Rubens, unlike many of his contemporaries, skillfully built a workshop of talented assistants, allowing him to produce and claim credit for a vast body of work without exhausting himself. This approach not only elevated his status but also secured him financial success and artistic dominance in his era.

Ultimately, Law 7 teaches that power is not just about effort but about visibility and control over perception. Those who master the ability to harness the strengths of others while maintaining the image of personal success ensure their long-term dominance. Whether in business, politics, or creative fields, the individuals who rise to

the top are not always the most talented, but rather those who understand how to turn collective efforts into personal triumphs.

