

TRO and GTD

How is Total, Relaxed Organization Related to *Getting Things Done*?

[Total, Relaxed Organization](#) (TRO) is inspired by the principles taught in David Allen's book, *Getting Things Done*. Built solidly on that foundation, TRO fits well within [David Allen's own official definition](#) of what GTD really means. No question about it, TRO is definitely a GTD-type "contextual productivity" system.

However, GTD doesn't just refer to David Allen's action management system: it is also a *registered trademark* of the David Allen Company. And there's the rub. Because Priacta is not affiliated with or endorsed by the David Allen Company, Priacta is always careful to describe TRO as "GTD-type," "GTD-inspired," or "based on the principles of GTD." Anyone offering commercial coaching and training tools cannot say they *are* GTD unless David Allen approves and licenses that trademark to them.

So why not license the GTD trademark? We can't—and that is the really interesting story.

TRO: NOT Just a GTD Knockoff

TRO does four things with GTD methods that GTD *per se* hasn't really done and *maybe can never* do on its own:

- Ongoing innovation,
- Merging with other valuable systems,
- Providing tool-specific training instructions, and
- Actually measuring and proving the results.

In other words, we cannot license the GTD trademark because we step outside the bounds of what David Allen is doing, wants to do, and probably can ever do with his official GTD. Here why.

Ongoing Innovation: Where is GTD 2.0?

David Allen seems confident that his basic system works well and does not need overhauls. However, as wonderful as it is, the basic framework of GTD is at least a decade old now. *Making It All Work* isn't GTD 2.0--it doesn't change the fundamentals and raises many new questions.

So, Priacta analyzed where GTDers (users of GTD 1.0) are struggling--huge weekly reviews and monolithic lists, for example--and we fixed those issues. We also improved things by borrowing and blending in best practices from other powerful systems. [See here](#) for an unofficial list of some benefits of TRO training over traditional GTD.

Merging Systems: David Allen Meets Stephen Covey

TRO combines Covey-esque principles with GTD concepts in the way it deals with GTD's 20,000+ -foot views. As a result, GTD's huge weekly reviews all but disappear in a TRO implementation. The system becomes simpler, not more complex. We also sneak in the

benefits--but none of the complexity--of Covey's urgency/importance grid to give you self-ordered lists that are unstressful to work from. It's fast and easy, without destroying the intuitive nature of David Allen's approach.

David Allen could hardly recognize the validity of Covey--they are competitors! However, Priacta can recognize and merge them both, and more. Kevin Crenshaw, CEO and Head Coach of Priacta, sees his/our role as "the Richard Clayderman of Time Management." (Richard Clayderman is the world's most successful pianist according to the Guinness Book of World Records. He succeeds with brilliant arrangements and combinations of established, well-loved melodies--taking them to a whole new level. That's what TRO does with GTD principles, Covey principles, and others.)

Tool Specifics: The Missing Instruction Manual

David Allen's books and seminars are specifically (and wisely) tool agnostic. This creates a huge social network of blog articles on *Doing GTD with My Favorite Software Program*. That creates community and drives traffic. It opens the doors for a whole spectrum of GTD software creation. The David Allen Company and the online community both benefit financially from that win-win, friendly relationship. (If David Allen started pushing his private brand of solution too much or rigorously enforced the GTD trademark in the software arena, it would damage the growth of the community and therefore his revenues. He benefits from general, loose adoption while maintaining the full rights the GTD brand for training and coaching.)

However, that arrangement also creates confusion. Most folks read the book, search around, and get lost trying to implement a specific combination of tools. The web has thousands and thousands of options. *People just need to know what to do, what buttons to push to set things up and get to work.* That's part of the value [TRO training](#) delivers. Choose a [specific combination of tools](#), and you get customized training steps. The tool combination is important! Your processing methods must change if you're using a Win Mobile device, for example, or you lose visibility of your tasks on the road.

Actual, Measured Results vs. Seminars

Because GTD is tool agnostic and offers few official, step-by-step guides for implementation, and because there is so much room for individual implementation, ***it appears almost impossible for David Allen Company to actually measure and publish the results of their trainings.*** Furthermore, failure rates are generally high for almost all types of seminars, regardless of the company. Why? Seminars not designed to change, but to teach. And David Allen Company sells seminars, lots and lots of them. Tracking and publishing the success rate would not be pretty. (Quick reality check: do a quick Google search for "GTD wagon" or "GTD failed attempt" without the quotes.)

TRO training, on the other hand:

- Is tailored for specific tool combinations,
- Is designed to actually train and change on-the-job,
- Actually follows-up to encourage long-lasting habits, and
- Measures the productivity gains of all trainees in real time.

Therefore, we can [publish actual statistical results](#). We can even measure the relative effectiveness of training using this software tool vs. that tool, coaching vs. not coaching, etc.

Actually, this may create a dilemma for David Allen Company. [New FTC regulations](#) require companies that use testimonials to "clearly disclose [with those testimonials] the results that

consumers can generally expect." I don't know how they could possibly do that given the limitations above, so GTD testimonials on the David Allen Company site may become a thing of the past. Fortunately, the blogosphere is doing a great job, for now, of touting GTD externally.

Because Priacta doesn't have that dilemma, we can and do publish [testimonials](#) along with our [live statistics](#). (Interestingly, this is an area Franklin Covey has traditionally listed as one of their [competitive advantages](#)--the fact that they can actually "measure the impact of the delivered training and tools.")

TRO is Contextual Productivity 2.0

GTD is not and could never be patented. Companies who acknowledge the genius and source of those principles (David Allen) can sell their own trainings and tools; they just can't infringe on his trademark. That just means that they can't create any likelihood of confusion that they are selling David Allen's official "GTD" system or trainings.

Priacta certainly seems to be doing that right. People don't call or email us asking for GTD coaching or GTD training. Instead, they ask us, over and over, for training and coaching *improving on* his system.

And that's exactly what Total, Relaxed Organization does.

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