



# InnovaSystems

## Improving Productivity with the 5 Choices

### Background

*InnovaSystems International LLC provides software-engineering and information technology services to the U.S. Government. It is headquartered in San Diego, California, USA, and employs 300 people at 18 offices and support sites. Its CEO is Chris Wollerman. By late February 2012, InnovaSystems' second group of 5 CHOICES participants had passed the 5 week post-training mark.*

*Wollerman notes that "employees are not required to take this; they must apply and be accepted into the program. At this point, we've reaching a tipping point where most employees are begging to get into the class, based on the buzz from our 75 employees who have been through it." As part of the employee's commitment, Wollerman asked them to share their experiences in letters. He has been kind enough to share one of those letters with us. It is from an employee who works in Software Quality Assurance:*

### Letter from 5 CHOICES Participant

Dear Chris Wollerman,

I would like to share with you briefly my experiences over the last five weeks, adopting the 5 CHOICES philosophy and using InnovaSystems Inspire! application to support 5 CHOICES.

Leading up to the 5 CHOICES program I had been very much in need of a system of organization for both home and work. Having previously gone through the [FranklinCovey] FOCUS training, I remembered feeling very inspired to adapt the system, but just found it very hard to do. So when the 5 Choices program was offered, I was eager to give it a try. I found the 5 CHOICES program, in conjunction with the Inspire! app to be invaluable to me for becoming more organized and productive.

This system worked for me. Spending time evaluating my various roles, and developing statements for those roles

first got me thinking of my responsibilities towards those roles. Then I could align meaningful goals to those roles. Having that reminder that my tasks and goals ultimately served my own mission statement for those roles motivated me to be true to completing my weekly tasks and stay on track. I also quickly adapted the 30/10 planning guideline and followed it daily. However, what I discovered was for me I needed a 60/25 planning guideline. So every Sunday night I spend an hour planning my week, and I spend close to 30 minutes every night within the Inspire!

**Most employees are begging to get into the program. —Chris Wollerman, CEO**

app. This also keeps me on track of my weekly big rocks as well as remembering all my various appointments and tasks. Up until 5 choices, I worked off of my memory and several hand-written lists I had floating around, and this system was not working for me. I was dropping the ball on some very important things. With the iPad, I maintained my master task list in one place and was able to manage it. I had my main calendar right there, and easily scheduled my tasks. Those two things along with having the Inspire! app right there provided me with one largely effective working system.

I knew when I began the program that I was overwhelmed at home, managing all I had to do. Through 5 CHOICES I became more productive in my roles outside of work. Using Inspire! helped me manage those roles more effectively, because it forced me to come up with my tasks for my weekly goals, so I pre-planned better. I became a more organized person at home; I stayed on top of things. And this transferred into my work life, for I could concentrate better, not being distracted by things I had missed at home. And as a result, this allowed me to be more organized at work.

At work, I wasn't overwhelmed with tasks or emails, but I didn't have an organized approach to my week. Using Inspire! to track my WIGS [Wildly Important Goals] kept them visible to me, and I was able to work towards them more frequently as a result.

I also began using the Tasks feature in Outlook, which is what I used for my master task list. Before 5 CHOICES, I never used Outlook Tasks. Once I started, I used those Outlook tasks to conduct my daily and weekly Inspire! planning for work, and I got more accomplished.

Lastly, I found it helpful during the last 5 weeks to have an accountability partner, and to send the weekly planning report to 5 CHOICES facilitators and my partner. This was an added step of accountability which helped keep me on track, and keep my honest. I remember hearing through FOCUS training that you had to do something consistently for 3 weeks in order for a habit to become lasting.

Having the partner and having to send weekly planning reports was an excellent incentive to stay engaged in the program. That aside though, I could see the rewards within the first week of the program. Evaluating my roles, and dedicating myself more to my roles became incentive enough. When I felt the sense of accomplishment, organization and productivity that first week of the program, I wanted to continue the trend.

At the close of these five weeks, I will continue to execute 5 CHOICES philosophies. It's become a way of living. I've started sharing pieces of 5 CHOICES with my two children, my daughter in college for planning her week, and my son at home so he can start some system of organization he can be responsible for. If I am able to keep my iPad, I most certainly will still use the Inspire! application and continue to sleep with my iPad at my side. The 5 CHOICES along with Inspire! has worked for me and is exactly what I needed to take more control over my tasks at both work and home. I've taken ownership of things instead of those things owning me, and I am a happier, more productive individual.

Thank you for the opportunity to participate in the program, and for investing in your employees.

Sincerely,

Employee's Name ■