

Tips for Making this the Best Year Ever!

Create a vision for your company.

A vision statement crystallizes what you want your company to look like in the future. It is a clear image of the end result. (Even though you may never really have an end)

"Nothing was ever achieved without dreams, goals, and actions!"

Create a vision for yourself.

Describe your future the way you would like it to be. Avoid slipping into the negative of what you think your future may really be. Allow yourself to dream big. Now write it down!

Set personal and professional goals

Set goals that will take you closer to your vision statements. Start with only 4 or 5 goals for each personal and professional vision statement. Make sure each goal is necessary and sufficient. Also, each goal needs to be **SMART**. Specific, Measurable, Attainable, realistically high, and Time bound. And again, *write it down!*

Have fun

I have never heard anyone laying on their death bed saying: "I wish I would have worked more". Take time for yourself, family, and friends. Enjoy life!

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We're Working on the Wrong End of the Problem!

"The illiterate of the 21st century will not be those who cannot read and write, but those who cannot learn, unlearn and relearn." – Alvin Toffler, Futurist

Today, like never before... you must be open to change to be successful. You and your organization must constantly change and evolve to survive. You've heard it...we face more change in a year than our grandparents faced in a lifetime. For us that means Technology, Customers, Markets and Competitors.



HOWEVER; most people (even entrepreneurs) choose death over change.

In *Change or Die*, Alan Deutschman asks, "What if you were given that choice? We're talking actual life and death now. Your own life and death. What if a well-informed, trusted authority figure said you had to make difficult and enduring changes in the way you think, feel and act? If you didn't, your time would end soon--a lot sooner than it had to. Could you change when change mattered most?"

THE BAD NEWS: Although we all have the ability to change our behavior, we rarely do. Research shows odds of nine to one...when faced with the dire need to change, we won't. How many of you made, and stuck to, a New Year's resolution? We are 60 days into the New Year...how's it going? Will you make it through the month? The odds are not in your favor.

Insanity – doing the same thing and expecting different results. We KNOW we should change, but habits, attitudes and behaviors make us regular practitioners of insanity.

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ONE MINUTE IDEAS

It's Tax Time

The IRS has an excellent web site resource to help in preparing your 2008 income tax. There is a [Tax Info For Businesses](#) section that provides forms and publications along with an all the tax info you need for your business. In addition, there is a [Frequently Asked Questions](#) section and an [e-file section](#) for free Federal on-line filing to those who qualify.

Check it out at www.irs.gov



Frustration & Venting

When people come to you and vent feelings and frustrations, they probably want to do just that – vent. Listen to them to really hear what they are saying. Don't try to solve the problem unless they ask.

The toughest thing about success is that you've got to keep on being a success. Talent is only a starting point in business. You've got to keep working that talent.
- Irving Berlin

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Dedicated to helping individuals, teams and organizations achieve their dreams and goals.

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What is the answer for businesses, entrepreneurs and professionals, wanting to create and maintain a competitive edge? John Kotter, a recognized leadership expert, says, *"The central issue is never strategy, structure, culture, or systems. The core of the matter is always about changing the behavior of people."*



There you have it. To change your results, you must change your own and others' actions.

THE GOOD NEWS: Change is possible and the formula includes common ingredients. So what's the secret to significant, sustainable change? It's not tough to do, just tough to maintain.

Deutschman's Relationship, Repeat and Reframe model includes: Building relationships with someone or a group that believes in you and that you trust. Utilizing the new relationship(s) to learn, practice, and master new success habits and skills. And, through the new relationships and repetition, begin to look at things in ways that would have been foreign to you before.

To HAVE you must first BECOME. Rarely do people consider what they have to change about themselves to meet their goals. To have a six-figure income – become a person with skills and capabilities worth someone paying you that amount. For a great relationship with spouse and children – become someone they see as worthy of the relationship. To have a single digit golf handicap – become a golfer with the skills, discipline, and attitude required for that level of play.

If, when faced with death, only 10% of people will make sustainable change, how can organizations hope to make change stick? Too many people look for a fast fix. Change is a process, not an event. The best thing you can do is become someone who learns, unlearns and relearns...faster than your competition.

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Keeping on Track

Every month or so you should step out of the day to day of doing business and evaluate the course of your organization's actions.

Ask yourself these questions:

- ✓ Are we working towards our most important goals?
- ✓ Are we getting closer to or further away from our vision?
- ✓ What should we be doing?
- ✓ What is our next step?
- ✓ What should we not be doing?



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A Life Success Idea *“Habits of Excellence”*

Do you have a new goal you've recently set your sights on accomplishing? If you want to maximize the possibility of achieving this goal, the following three ideas will be extremely helpful.

Excellence Habit #1: DISCIPLINE - Discipline is the *ability to give yourself a command, and follow through to completion*. The great writer Thomas Huxley said, "The most valuable result of all education is to make you do the thing you have to do, when it ought to be done, whether you like it or not. It is the first lesson that ought to be learned. And however early one's training begins, it is probably the last lesson we learn thoroughly."

A great tip on how to be more disciplined in any given area is to focus on both the physical and the mental. If the goal is more sales, focus on the physical tasks - (making more calls, marketing etc.) - but also address the mental - (read books to keep your mind centered on positivity while doing the task.)

ACTION STEP - If you choose to act on this habit, set the goal and write it down. Then create a plan over a three month period to read a book about discipline and doing scheduled tasks that maximize the possibility of your goal being realized.

Excellence Habit #2: PERSISTENCE - Persistence is the *ability to persevere with a chosen path/plan especially in the face of opposition*. To quote Napoleon Hill in Think and Grow Rich, "***There may be no heroic connotation to the word 'persistence', but the quality is to the character of man what carbon is to steel***" Recognize that to succeed we must try, over and over and over again. Persistence is the life-blood of success. If this is the key to success, what is failure? Failure is simply the decision to stop trying. Walt Disney went bankrupt six times before succeeding, and while learning from each setback, he didn't stop trying. Thomas Edison estimated that he failed 10,000 times before he successfully invented the light bulb. Can you fathom that level of persistence? A commitment to persist greatly enhances your success potential.

ACTION STEP - Once you've decided on your new goal, write down all possible obstacles that, in the past, may have prevented you from achieving it. Now that you know most of the obstacles, write down a 'solution idea' addressing each one, so you have a persistence plan in place for success.

Excellence Habit #3: FOCUS - Focus is *the ability to give your full attention and concentration to one thing until it's completed*. A perfect example of the power of focus is the difference between regular light and laser light. The photons in regular light go in all directions simultaneously and are therefore diffused. The photons in laser light go in one direction, hence it's ability to cut through steel, or perform delicate eye surgery. The difference? FOCUS. Culturally, we are taught what to focus on, but never how to focus. If you can get yourself to do the following action step, your focus will expand immensely.

ACTION STEP - The greatest activity to enhance focus is mental concentration. Try this exercise for five minutes twice a day, and you'll focus much better. Sit in a comfortable, straight-back chair and begin by taking a few deep breaths. Now imagine the outline of a leaf, and begin mentally tracing it's image while silently repeating the word 'focus' over and over. If the mind wanders, no matter, return to mentally tracing the leaf and watch the magic occur over the next few days.

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“It makes a great difference in the life of a race, as it does in the life of an individual, whether the world expects much or little of that individual or of that race.”

Booker T. Washington, 1911

TTI Research Update

Personal skills are becoming more important in the workplace as well as success in life.

Since July 2008 TTI has been studying the relationship between age and personal skills with specific groups of freshman students from two Midwest universities. Currently, they are working on collecting the same information from seniors and plan on a longitudinal study.

The current findings reveal:

- Freshmen business students have mastered 1.97 personal skills on average
- Freshmen engineering students have mastered 1.86 personal skills on average
- Freshmen business students have some mastery of 6.54 personal skills on average
- Freshmen engineering students have some mastery of 6.32 personal skills on average
- Freshmen business students had the most mastery in the following areas:
 - Interpersonal Skills 64.7%
 - Goal Orientation 63.9%
 - Teamwork 50.0%
- Freshmen engineering students had the most mastery in the following areas:
 - Continuous Learning 55%
 - Planning & Organizing 54%
 - Interpersonal Skills 49%
- Freshmen business students had the least mastery in the following areas:
 - Futuristic Thinking 1.05%
 - Decision Making 8.42%
 - Flexibility 8.95%
- Freshmen engineering students had the least mastery in the following areas:
 - Futuristic Thinking 4%
 - Decision Making 8%
 - Flexibility 11%

“Our souls are not hungry for fame, comfort, wealth, or power. Those rewards create almost as many problems as they solve. Our souls are hungry for meaning, for the sense that we have figured out how to live so that our lives matter, so that the world will at least be a little bit different for our having passed through it.”

Harold Kushner

Ten Commandments of Handling Difficult People

1. Use the 101% Principle. Find the 1% you agree on and give it 100% of your attention.
2. Love people more than policies, but love truth more than people.
3. Give others the benefit of the doubt.
4. Learn to be flexible where you can.
5. Check your own attitude.
6. Don't overreact to conflict and disagreement.
7. Welcome the conflict. Make it a learning experience.
8. Provide an escape for the person in conflict. Let them maintain their dignity.
9. Take a risk. Give people a second chance.
10. Take the high road. Be generous and believe the best about others.

(from The Maxwell Leadership Bible – The Law of Connection, Galatians 3:6 – 4:31.)

Think about this

At this point in your life, if you were to die tomorrow, what would your legacy be? What would others say about your life?

At this point in your life, if you could start your adult life over and re-write your life script, what would you do differently?

Anthony Campolo, sociologist, shares a study in which 50 people over the age of 95 were asked: “If you could live your life over again, what would you do differently? A variety of answers revealed three consistent themes:

...I would *reflect* more.

...I would *risk* more.

...I would do more things that would *live on after I am dead*.

It is not too late as long as you are still breathing and living. That's the beauty of life. Each day we have a new opportunity to intentionally change. “So what are you waiting for?”

(Adapted from Maximum Impact monthly mentoring leadership growth series, volume 13, number 5.)