

SOAR to SUCCESS

March 2016

MAGAZINE



MEGAN PATTON
PUTS HER CLIENTS
FIRST TO SOAR
TO SUCCESS

HOW TO
CREATE LOYAL
CUSTOMERS

PLUS:

- + How to Be Successful Every Day
- + Top 4 Things Every Website Needs
- + Using Editorial Calendars to Plan Social
- + Seven Strategies for Conquering Conflict at Work
- + The Seven Ingredients: A Recipe for Business Success

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PAT ALTVATER



The Power of Choice

Through my work with BizTV Shows® I have the opportunity to meet a wide variety of entrepreneurs. That's one of my favorite aspects of what I do – if we haven't met yet, reach out to me on email and let's set up a call.

I had the good fortune this month to hear, observe and talk with business owners who are fearless. That is so inspiring. I also observed some that aren't.

Are there things in your life that you know would be a good experience for you but you don't do it? Some examples include being vulnerable by appearing on camera or attending a new networking meeting.

Want to get over your fear?

I love this quote from Gregg Braden's book, *The Divine Matrix*, "We have all the power we need to create all the changes we choose."

But you have to choose.

Choosing to BE a certain way is the fastest way to change, because it causes an instant shift. Simply declare, knowingly and certainly, "I AM..." For example, "I AM a great networker." Or "I AM confident on camera." And then do not start thinking about what scares you; that only introduces delay and doubt! Just Do It!

We have another great line-up of articles for you in this issue. I hope you enjoy them and find some tips, tools, strategies or techniques that you choose to use to soar to success.

Pat Altvater

Soar to Success
AFP Marketing
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Megan Patton
Puts Her Clients First
to Soar to Success



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MEGAN PATTON

PUTS HER CLIENTS FIRST TO SOAR TO SUCCESS

Megan Patton always was interested in a variety of subjects as a young girl and sought to learn as much as she could about each one. She studied religion at Kenyon College and joined the Peace Corps, where she taught English in Nepal.

After her Peace Corps tour ended, she continued to look for the “next best thing” and went back to school to obtain an MBA at Case Western Reserve University. While working on her masters, she landed a job working in a start-up consulting company. Although, she was not doing consulting work, as the manager of the office she learned a great deal by watching and absorbing everything happening at that company.

After receiving her MBA, she secured a full-time consulting job with another firm. They specialized in the steel industry, where she was able to learn even more about strategic thinking, competitive analysis and creating a business plan that would actually help a business succeed.

She continued her upward movement and moved to a larger International Consulting firm where she was exposed to a variety of industries. This experience added to her education gave her a first-rate practical education in business planning and strategy.

After taking a couple of years away from work, when her third child was born, she was ready to continue her career, when an opportunity to join her father and brothers in business presented itself.





Megan's father was a retired CEO, and had begun a new phase in his life, a consulting firm. He asked his daughter to help with the business. She jumped at the chance and loved the idea of working with her father and brothers in this venture, which she has now taken over.

Megan's education and practical training has given her a strong background as a business strategist. She works primarily with the owners of a company to help them plan and ensure departments are working cohesively to keep the business heading in the right direction.

Her passion is to help business owners communicate their dreams and objectives and turn them into tangible goals for the business. She helps create a road map for the staff to keep the business profitable, yet stay within the guidelines established by the owner.

Megan shares, **"I love working with people and trying to pull out their passion, their**

best ideas, their hopes and their dreams for their company. The difficult part for business owners in implementing the strategies that will help them achieve their vision is that they get caught up in the day to day - there are fires to put out and sales to make and all those tasks that go into running a daily business. So what I help them do is to step aside for a minute, take a broader view and really focus on what needs to be done today and tomorrow to help achieve their goal. So it's very today thinking. It's very much about coming up with action plans that are implementable. They're challenging, but they're realistic and doable and that's what I love. That's what I get excited about."

Megan has a vision for her own company. She desires to be a trusted advisor for small to medium sized businesses in her local area of Cleveland. Her excitement about Cleveland and helping businesses in the area grow and thrive is evident. In addition, her vision also includes providing a

place for other coaches and consultants to join her and thrive in their own right.

Megan maintains a very flexible working environment for her partners and has several agreements in place with independent coaches and consultants. Adding other consultants to her business expands her sphere of influence. Plus, when confronted with a client issue, in which she may not be experienced, she can call on the other members in her practice to help solve the problem.

It is all about the client's needs for Megan,

"Ultimately I want my firm to be recognized as one that delivers excellence to their clients. Whether that means I'm delivering the product or somebody else is, that's okay as long as my client's getting the best solution possible."

She finds motivation from her clients when they are successful. A client that calls with a success story is what keeps her going and striving to help as many people as possible.

She said,

"That's the fun part, when you can start to see some clarity after being stuck in the muck. You see the things that are wrong and create systems, the boring stuff, but when those come to fruition and the client looks back at their plan and says, "Wow I did steps 1-7 and I actually had success." That's really exciting and it motivates me to keep doing what I do."

Megan maintains a busy schedule outside her own office and time management is a priority. She is currently the President of Cleveland Chapter of NAWBO and serves on several boards in the Cleveland area.

Megan is living proof that even the best coaches need some coaching from time to time.

"Time management is huge. I've had the opportunity to work with a wonderful time management coach, Lisa Crilley Mallis, with System Savvy Consulting, who has really helped me get those building blocks in place and smooth out my foundation, so that I'm



operating on a daily position of strength. It is so easy to get overwhelmed, with being a business owner, a volunteer, and a parent. There is so much that can derail you on a every day. I've been fortunate that I work with a great coach and believe every coach needs a coach."

Megan's one piece of advice for business people, **Be a sponge!** Take every opportunity to network, learn from others and even meet your competitors. Most people are willing to open up about their business, talk about their successes, as well as, their failures and offer advice. People love to be seen as mentors to someone who is just starting out. So, be a sponge and soak it all up.

Megan is very secure in her personal and business life right now and loves the flexibility working in her own business provides. She has control over what clients she accepts and still has the opportunity to help her community by serving on a various nonprofit boards. She can even take time to be involved with her children's school activities.

She has one child attending college, one ready to enter college next year and her youngest will start high school.

"It's a very exciting time, personally, watching my kids turn into adults, the next stage in their lives. It's been fun to be with them on that



Megan Patton with NAWBO Board Members

journey. My husband is extremely supportive of my career. He is my biggest supporter and advisor. He's successful in his own right and in the evening you'll find us talking about our business or other companies that we're familiar with. It's just a lot of fun right now."

Megan Patton has accumulated a wonderful set of experiences and memories. Her business is growing and she can't wait for what tomorrow brings, as she continues to "Soar to Success."

To learn more about Megan and her business visit: www.ODAStrategy.com.

To contact her directly, either email: mpatton@odastrategy.com or phone 440-655-4755.

THREE TRAITS NECESSARY TO SOAR TO SUCCESS

When Soar to Success asked Megan what three traits she has found in successful people that "Soar to Success", she listed three important features.

The first trait is **honesty and humility**. Many people give lip service to those two important items, but Megan believes that they are clear markers for success.

"When somebody is willing to honestly look at themselves, understand where their shortcomings are and have the humility to accept advice, whether it's from an external coach or from their own staff, that's a marker for success. People most open to growth, development, and change will ultimately be successful."

The second important trait for success is **continued learning**. Every successful person has to have a passion for learning. They must keep current on the latest practices within their industry. Trade publications, conferences, and associations all become important means of continuing education. A successful person is active outside of their own business and keeps abreast of what's happening in their industry as a whole.

The third trait of a successful entrepreneur is a strong **work ethic**. It is critical that you work hard, keep on top of your business systems and stay active in your community.



3 P'S TO PERFECT MEETINGS

BY HOLLY KILE

Whether you are meeting with a new or existing client, your team or your child's teacher, there are three things you need to do to ensure the meeting goes well.

Meetings are a part of life. We meet with friends. We meet with colleagues. We meet with our team. We meet with clients. We meet with prospects. Not every meeting goes as well as planned. To ensure that your meeting (and the message you want to convey) goes smoothly, I recommend these three P's.

The first P is Be Punctual. Being on time is one way to start the meeting out right. Being where you are supposed to be at the right time sends a clear message to those you are meeting that you value their time and are anxious to meet with them.

The second P is Be Prepared. When you are meeting with someone, you should always be prepared for the conversation. That may mean preparing an agenda to stay on track and ensure everything that needs to be covered is discussed.

It may mean reviewing documents in advance so that you can talk about them and make decisions accordingly. It may just mean doing some homework so you know a bit more about who you are meeting and how you might serve them best. Regardless, being prepared is another clear statement of professionalism.

The third and final P is Be Present. When you meet with someone, turn off your cell phone, close your door and alert anyone that needs to know that you are unavailable. If you are distracted by television or people around you, select a meeting

location that will be distraction-free. When you are present, you are less likely to miss important details but more importantly, you are letting the person you are with know that you value their input.

Each of these 3 P's boil down to one simple concept: **Respect.** Respect the people that you are meeting with by valuing their time and contribution. Always Be Punctual, Prepared and Present.

For more valuable tips be sure to watch my video episodes of The Shift.

Holly Kile works with professional coaches and work-at-home entrepreneurs to help them create more time, energy and money through leveraging the power of virtual tools and teams. Using her extensive background in operations management, systems analysis/implementation and strategic business marketing, Holly works with business owners and entrepreneurs who struggle with figuring out how to effectively achieve their vision for their business. Holly is the president of HJK Global Solutions and founder of Connect Coaching Academy.

Connect with her at HJK Global Solutions and on



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2016'S POSSIBLE SECURITY PROBLEMS

BY JEANNE DEWITT

Experts predict that 2016 is going to be a busy year for cyber criminals, hackers and scammers. Let's take a look at what you need to know in order to keep your business safe.

If you think that only big corporations and prominent organizations are targeted by cyber criminals, you are making a deadly mistake. It might be tempting to sweep cybercrime under the carpet and assume that you are flying below the average hacker's radar, but that simply isn't true. In fact, it's the opposite.

So where does that leave you as a small or medium-sized business owner? Does it mean you need to be taking your cyber security even more seriously? You can bet your bottom dollar it does, as industry experts predict that 2016 is only going to become more of a minefield when it comes to online crime.

Among the unpleasant predictions being made, a number of experts agree that hacks of a destructive nature will be on the rise. The fact that hackers are using attacks for retribution rather than simple monetary gains means that a wider cross-section of organizations may well find themselves being preyed upon.

So what should you be on the lookout for?

1. Targeted apps. Apps are going to continue to be targeted in 2016. In particular, those mobile apps that request access to your list of contacts, emails and messages which can, in the wrong hands, be used to create the kind of portal that enables a cybercriminal to steal data or gain access to a company's entire network. This means that in 2016, hackers could be taking advantage of apps to do more than just steal your social media photos – they might have in mind the takedown of your entire company.

2. Social Engineering. Social engineering is a means of tricking an individual into disclosing revealing or personal information about themselves or their company. You might feel confident that you wouldn't fall for a cybercriminal's tricks, but what about your employees? Dodgy emails from a bizarrely named sender containing a link to an unheard-of-website are yesterday's news. Modern social engineering is highly evolved and extremely cunning, and has the potential to convince even the most streetwise internet user.

The sad fact is that there are people who want to do you harm – regardless of what kind of data you hold. People, no matter how well-meaning or vigilant, are the weakest link in any security chain, which means that ensuring your business's safety necessitates educating your staff and ensuring that your network is impenetrable.

Want to make sure that your business is as hack-proof as it can be? Contact me today.

Author, entrepreneur, IT expert and speaker, Jeanne DeWitt has over 30 years of IT experience helping businesses navigate their way through the ever changing world of technology. Starting CPU, Inc. back in 1986, along with her partner David Hood, she has now become an international, go-to-source for expert advice in the IT Industry including Cloud Services, Infrastructure Security and Support, Cybersecurity, VoIP Phone Technologies, Enterprise Resource Planning and Business Continuity Planning.



Watch Jeanne's video series

Connect with Jeanne at her websites, Hire An IT Expert and CPU Cloud Solutions as well as on



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TIPS TO GET READY TO FILE YOUR 2015 TAXES

BY TINA MOE, CPA

By now you should have received all or most of your 2015 tax documents such as your W-2's, 1099's, mortgage interest statements, brokerage statements from investment accounts, college education forms 1098-T and any other types of reporting documents you'll need.

One of the best ways to make sure you have everything is to

simply look at your prior year tax return to make sure you have everything or, if you have a tax professional, you can ask for a tax organizer that will serve as a checklist. If you own your home and still owe on your mortgage, chances are likely you will itemize and need additional information to do so.

Schedule A is used for itemizing your deductions and can be

found within the first 3 or 4 pages of your 1040. A tax organizer will also be helpful in providing a list of possible deductions for itemizing on schedule A. Be sure to look this over and gather additional information such as the cost to plate your vehicle in 2015, cash and noncash charitable donations, major medical expenses and unreimbursed employee business expenses. Using your prior year returns, as

TAX TIME

2015 CHANGES!





well as a tax organizer, is a great way to remind yourself of the information you'll need.

Be sure to also provide documentation on any other forms of income such as gambling winnings, unemployment, retirement plan distributions or self-employment income.

In addition, let your tax professional know if you had a new dependent to add or one to remove that no longer qualifies or if a dependent started college. If you have a new dependent, you'll want to provide their social security card and birth certificate for the preparer.

If you had a dependent begin college, you'll want to provide form 1098-T as well as a print out of payments made to the

college and any receipts for other expenses such as books, supplies and a computer.

Now let's talk about some tax law changes that effect individual taxpayers for 2015.

Stylishly late as usual, Congress finally passed legislation dealing with more than 50 tax provisions that expired December 31, 2014. The Protecting Americans from Tax Hikes Act of 2015 was signed into law Dec. 18, 2015. And we can all breathe a sigh of relief now that we know what laws apply to the 2015 tax returns.

Some of these tax provisions were made permanent and others were extended to December 31, 2016. Here are a few of the extenders:

- Tuition deduction is extended to Dec. 31, 2016 as well as the mortgage insurance premium deduction as mortgage interest.
- Provisions that were made permanent include the \$250 teacher supply deduction and this will be increased in 2016 and include professional development expenses. This is a little win for our educators!
- Also, itemizers will be able to deduct sales tax in lieu of income tax which is great news for no income states such as Florida and Texas.
- IRA transfers to charity in lieu of RMDs is made permanent as is the

enhanced child tax credit.

- Congress also made permanent the Enhanced American Opportunity tax credit but beginning in 2016, you will be required to report the federal tax id of the educational institution for the taxpayer claiming

the credit.

- The \$500 credit for non-business energy property is extended to Dec. 31, 2016 and updating Energy Star requirements.
- Lastly, the exclusion for personal residence

cancellation of debt is extended to December 31, 2016.

There are a lot of tax provisions included in this extender bill for businesses as well as individuals so be sure to visit my website at actservices-inc.com to learn more.

Tina L. Moe, C.P.A., CGMA, formed A.C.T. Services in 2002, and began building her business. Her practice has grown to a clientele more than 1,200 clients and a team of more than a dozen staff members. Tina attributes her business growth to being proactive with her clients, maintaining affordability and accessibility of the business owner herself.

Tina is a member of the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants (AICPA) and the Indiana CPA Society.

Contact her at: www.actservices-inc.com and on



Watch Tina's video series



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USING EDITORIAL CALENDARS TO PLAN SOCIAL

BY LYNNE WILSON

Creating a constant stream of social posts can be difficult. Planning social media posts in advance will ensure that you always have quality content to share.

When you plan your content ahead of time you can be sure that you are covering a wide variety of topics and not leaving anything important out. Sometimes when we are wrapped up in day-to-day tasks, we can forget some of the big picture items we meant to cover. Also when you work ahead you will have the time to proofread and make sure you are posting quality information. And of course you can find great images and make sure your content gets noticed.

Use my 4-step process to plan and create monthly content---

Step #1 is Research. No matter how much you think you know--always do some research. Find out what questions your audience is asking, what they are struggling with and what they really want to purchase. Also this isn't a one-time task--things can change. You should do some research before you begin each month's calendar.

Step #2 is Plan. Start with a blank calendar. Then plan how often you will post, where you will post it, what main topics your posts will be about. When you have a framework in place you can reuse it month after

month and just add in new content to the established schedule.

Step #3 is Create or Find content that fits into your framework. Content is easier to find once you've defined what you're looking for. Remember to have a nice mix of your original content and great content you find and share from others. Just open up a word document and have each page be one post. At the top, put the date it will be posted, write the post including the links, and insert the image you are going to use. Then just keep going for each day! You can do this for a week at a time or finish the whole month at once--your choice.

Step #4 is Schedule. Take all of your great content and get it scheduled! Open up your Word doc and just cut and paste into your scheduling tool. You can schedule directly in Facebook, but for some other channels you may need to use a 3rd-party tool. I like Buffer at www.bufferapp.com, but there are other tools out there-

find one that works for you!

Now you have all your content strategically planned, well-written and scheduled to post automatically! But don't think that takes away from you being spontaneous- it's actually the opposite. With all your core content ready to go, you can really take time to engage

with your audience and build relationships. You can pay attention to what they are saying back to you. This will give you MORE freedom, not less.

If you'd like an Editorial Calendar template just go to my website at www.mixstrategy.com/calendar. You can download one and get started today!

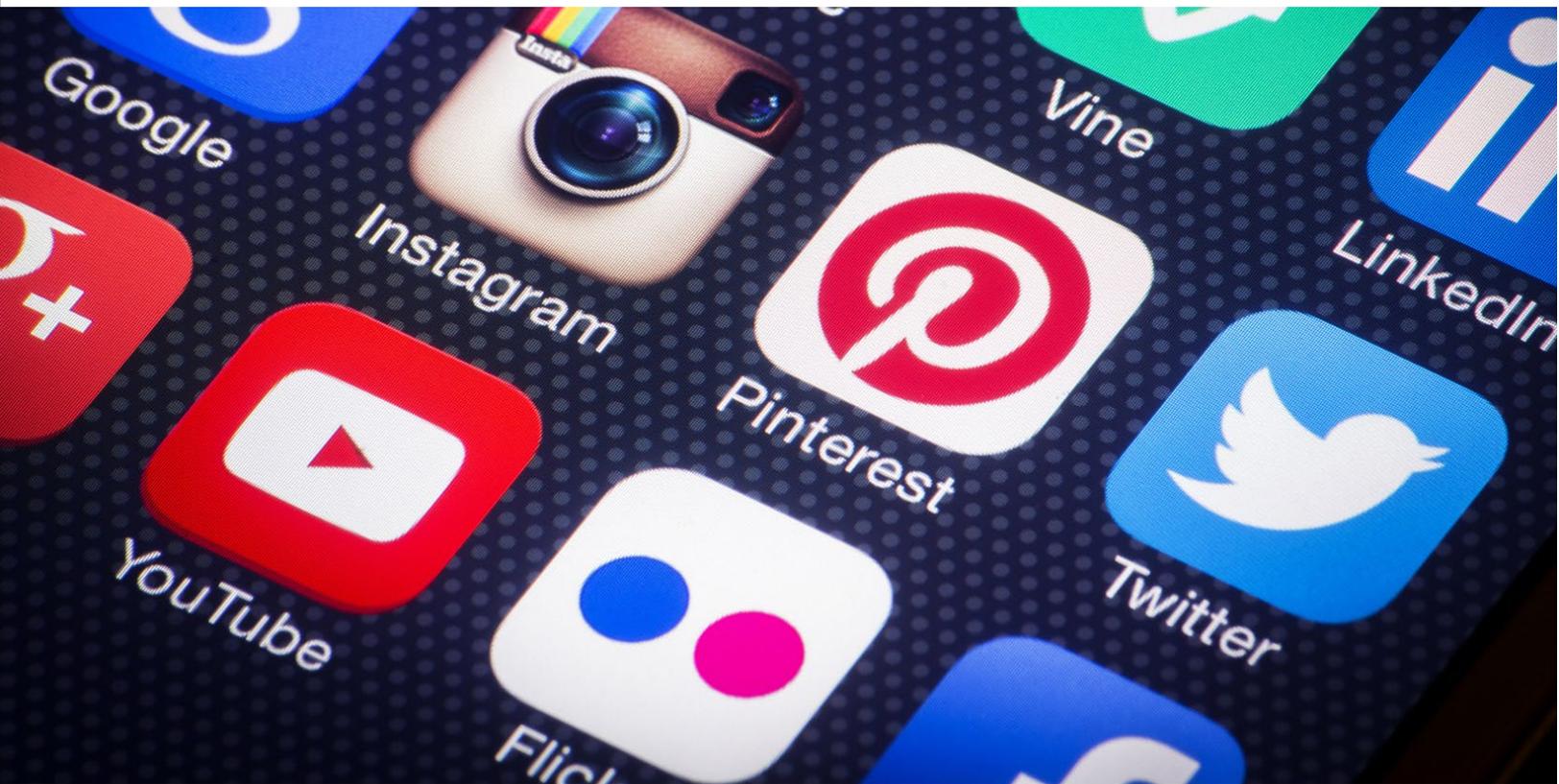
As a social media consultant, Lynne Wilson helps businesses of all sizes develop and grow an online presence through social media. Lynne's experience includes marketing/advertising on the client side, design work and social media content creation and account management.

Lynne provides ongoing support as well as content and posting services on all social media platforms. This is perfect for business owners who need to spend their time running the business.

Contact Lynne at her website and also on



Watch Lynne's video series



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BUILD YOUR LEADERSHIP TEAM FOR A STABLE COMPANY

BY CINDY ALLEN STUCKEY



What would happen to your business if you stopped working there today?

Most businesses are too big for one person to try to balance. If almost everything in your company ultimately falls on you to handle, that's a lot of pressure and you probably don't get much time off. After all, if you were gone, what would happen to the company?

Let's look at another way to help you move from working **IN** your business to working **ON** your business by building your leadership team.

Here are the 4 considerations to help you do this.

1st –WHO is your leadership team?

THE PEOPLE RESPONSIBLE FOR A PARTICULAR DEPARTMENT OR DIVISION. This could be your sales manager, production manager, manager of client services, controller, store or facility managers, marketing directors, crew chiefs, vice presidents, etc.

2nd –WHAT does a leadership team do?

Its job is to ASSIST THE OWNER IN WORKING ON THE BUSINESS, AS OPPOSED TO WORKING IN THE BUSINESS. They help the owner create business goals, transform those goals into strategies, and break those overall strategies into action steps. They are also responsible for making sure the action steps are actually executed all the way to completion. This team is accountable to each other; while the employees are accountable to their respective leadership team member.

3rd –WHEN should your leadership team meet?

You should meet with the team PRIVATELY AND UNINTERRUPTED at a minimum of a couple hours per month to discuss the strategic plan, operating plans, and measures. Even if you're a solopreneur, you should do this—hire a professional business coach or meet with another business-owner friend to make sure you spend time working ON your business each month. Don't try to do it alone.

4th –HOW should a leadership team work?

You, the business owner, should let them know what's going on with the business goals and which ones are and aren't on track. Then you need to ask each one to identify possible reasons for being off track—by looking at the entire business; not just in their department. Make sure to take notes to capture all the ideas and then develop action plans.

If you're the sole source of all the knowledge and answers, your business can never grow larger than your personal knowledge. At the same time, you're creating a business that is completely dependent on you. Creating a smart and functioning leadership team allows you to be able to have more control and balance in your life.

I invite you to my website for more tools to help you work ON growing your business.

After many years in the business world, Cindy Allen-Stuckey, founded Making Performance Matter (MPM) to empower business owners and leaders to achieve sustainable high performance. She does this by providing strategy planning and execution; business and executive coaching; and facilitation and leadership development. Cindy is certified in Human Performance Improvement through Association for Talent Development, is a Certified On-Site Extended DISC Facilitator, and is a Certified Results Life Coach. MPM is a National Certified Women's Business Enterprise (WBE).

Connect with Cindy at Making Performance Matter and on



Watch Cindy's video series



Making Performance Matter works with organizations to close the gap between their business strategy and execution by focusing on their only real competitive advantage -- **their people.**

Contact MPM

<http://makingperformancematter.com>

cindy@makingperformancematter.com

812-269-8676



TOP 4 THINGS EVERY WEBSITE NEEDS

Do people land on your website and think what next?
Does your website give you a clear path to buying from you?
Are your visitors leaving without telling you how to keep in touch with them?

BY LEE DROZAK

Remember, you don't want your website to be just an online brochure, you want it to be a sales generating, client attraction machine. Compare your website to the following four most important elements every website needs to generate leads and keep your ideal people coming back and see how it stacks up.

**TIP NUMBER 1,
A CLEAR PERSUASIVE MESSAGE**
Studies show you have 3-5 seconds to tell your visitors what your site has to offer. You

need to start with a clear and simple headline. It's important to let your customer know right away why you're a better choice to do business with over your competition.

I tell my clients to forget about buzzwords and industry jargon and use words that make sense to your customers. For example, you don't see a photographer talking about lighting and film speed. Instead, they talk about capturing memories.

**TIP NUMBER 2,
GIVE THE VISITOR WHAT TO DO NEXT**

If you have a site that has lots of information but doesn't tell your visitor what to do next, you're losing money. This doesn't need to be complicated. It can be as simple as call me, buy now or learn more.

Be persuasive but not elusive. The action should encourage your visitor and lead them down a particular path.

**TIP NUMBER 3,
EASY NAVIGATION including
your menu bar**

We all know people aren't as patient as they used to be, so it's important to make everything on your website easy to find. Many people choose to put every page in their navigation bar.

Studies show too much information overwhelms, and your visitors won't take any action when they're overwhelmed.

You don't see people leaving your site because they have too many choices. I recommend you keep you the choice between five and seven items in your navigation.



**TIP NUMBER 4,
PROMINENT CONTACT
INFORMATION**

Visitors landing on your site are often in the research or information gathering phase and they may want more information or to ask you

additional questions.

Make sure they can easily find how to reach you, whether it's by phone, chat or email. And I recommend this on every page. You don't want to lose a potential client just because

you've made it difficult to get in touch with you.

Implementing these four tips will be a good start in the process of creating a client attraction website. For more tips, visit my website.

Lee Drozak, a WordPress Website & Digital Marketing expert, helps small business owners and self-employed renegades by developing and designing websites that are not only beautiful and reflect your personal brand but also have the proper layout and coding to help you step out of the shadows and stand out in a crowd. Lee offers a wide range of programs and services for WordPress websites – from a one-time re-design to being your right hand for ongoing changes and updates to your website.



Watch Lee's video series

Connect with Lee at her website and on



LET'S DO BUSINESS

IN ANTHONY WAYNE



Accelerate Your Opportunities. Do Business Here.

Over 77 square miles make up the City of Waterville, Monclova Township, the Village of Whitehouse, Waterville Township, and parts of Swanton, and Providence Townships.

Anthony Wayne is the land of opportunity.



REFRESHING YOUR IMAGE

FOUR REASONS TO REDESIGN YOUR SITE

BY KAREN LEONARD

Website Design



1 UPDATING TO CURRENT WEB STANDARDS

Just a few years ago, mobile devices weren't as popular as they are today. Today, all websites need to be accessible via mobile device — and this is just one example of an area in which web standards have changed. If your website hasn't been updated in a few years, it will likely both look out dated and function poorly on modern devices. Modern security standards have also changed: there are many new requirements for those who process credit cards that you may not be properly following if you haven't updated your e-commerce portal.

2 REACTING TO YOUR CUSTOMER'S NEEDS

Your clientele from three years ago is not identical to the clientele you have now. Not only can your customer base have shifted, but their needs may have changed. Remodeling your website to emphasize the services and products that you are selling more of now is an excellent way to maximize your own revenue. Take a look at your data analysis to identify the areas of your website that your customers spend the most time on. You can increase the ease of use of your website by making these pages easier to find. You can also redirect

customers to other areas of your website by updating these specific sections to connect to the areas of your website you want your customers to visit.

3 GETTING YOUR CUSTOMERS TO "SEE" YOU AGAIN

Aspects of your website can easily blend into the background simply due to familiarity. By refreshing your site, you'll not only excite your customers, but you'll also get them to explore your entire site again looking for new changes and products. If you've found that your customers haven't been as active on your website as they have been in the past, it



could simply be that it's time for a change. Once you've started making changes you can further refine them to improve the customer experience even further.

4 REACTING TO YOUR COMPETITION

While your website has been stagnating, your competition may have been improving. Updating your website is

an ideal way to react to the advances that your competition has made. While you don't want to copy the changes of your competitors, you can look to them for ways in which you can improve your own customer service. Do they have more methods of contact? Better social media integration? A faster checkout process? All of these things could be funneling your customers straight to them.

Regular updates to your website keep your website looking fresh, trendy, and trustworthy. Older websites indicate poor technology to many customers, making them wary of making purchases and reducing their company loyalty. A new website is often an excellent way to recapture the attention of your existing clientele while drawing in new customers.

Karen Leonard is the co-founder and Chief Marketing Officer of Innovative Global Vision, Inc. (IGV), a website design and digital marketing company in Ohio. With over 17 years' of experience in the IT field, Karen has a passion for helping small businesses grow. She works closely with her extraordinarily talented team of developers, designers and marketing specialists to help businesses increase profits through their website and build deeper, more profitable relationships through the use of online marketing tools.



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REEVALUATE YOUR LIFE

BY DEITRA HICKEY, PHD

Now that the New Year has settled in, I intentionally like to dissect every aspect of my life and decide, what's working...what's not? What do I want to change, what would make me happier and more productive?

I absolutely love the topic of "New Year, New You" because it I think it is such a power move to do something for yourself to drastically improve your relationships, profession, and quality of life. I like to dissect this subject into these three categories:

Let's start with relationships. Simplistically put, take a keen look around at the people in your life and decide, who "fills your bucket", who makes you laugh, who is positive in general and is there when you need them. Also, notice individuals in your life who may drain you, are somewhat selfish and are often negative. Assess whether or not you are getting anything positive through your relationship

with them. Simplistically put, spend more time with those people that enhance your life and either eliminate or reduce your time with the others. Take a look at where changes can be made and take action. They say we are greatly influenced by the people we surround ourselves with. They can make a difference in your mood, your actions and your life.

Next, your career: Are you happy and fulfilled? Are you doing what you love and have intrinsic motivation each and every day carried by a passion to make a difference? It doesn't matter what you do, from a teacher, to an accountant, to an artist, a car salesmen, a janitor, or an entrepreneur... whatever you do, make sure you rock it! Do it with pride and strive to be the best at it. An enormous amount of our time is spent doing our jobs and though it may seem easier just to continue with your normal day to day, if you're unhappy or not

A NEW
YEAR
A NEW
YOU



fulfilled--take a close look and see what changes you can make either within your organization or by transitioning completely. It takes courage but you won't be sorry!

Lastly, your quality of life: In addition to your relationships and careers, this is going to include your health, your mental peace, your perspective and your life balance. Make sure you are honoring and listening to your body. Give it what it needs and remove what may be contributing to any

ailments, fatigue or mood. It may be getting more sleep, eating healthier, committing to quit smoking or lose weight, or taking up that hobby you have always wanted to try; it may simply be to *schedule* some quality time for rest and relaxation in your daily life. Whatever it is, remember, you deserve it!

To talk more about this or for more information, call Serenity Health & Wellness Center at 419-891-2181. You may also visit SerenityHealthMaumee.com or DeitraHickey.com

Dr. Deitra Hickey has a passion to help others find balance and reduce stress through her motivational speaking and wellness professional developments. She enthusiastically brings humor and real-life analogies to her audiences in a powerful, relatable manner. Deitra developed strong will and resilience early on by taking care of two paralyzed parents after witnessing both of them being shot. Deitra dedicated her life encouraging others to capitalize on life's challenges to reach their maximum potential.



Connect with Deitra at her business, Serenity Health and Wellness Center, her website and on



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THE STEERING WHEEL OF LIFE

DO YOU HAVE YOUR HANDS ON THE STEERING WHEEL OF LIFE? OR ARE YOU HOLDING ONTO THE REAR VIEW MIRROR?

BY JAMIE SUE JOHNSON

I am assuming, you do not drive your car by placing your hands on the rear view mirror, nor do you only look in the rear view. You drive your car by placing your hands on the steering wheel and use the rear view mirror and side mirrors as tools.

In coaching we use the 5 Pillars for Success as our steering wheel for life. The five pillars are: Foundation, Fitness, Friends & Family, FUN and FUNd\$. © And we set our course by making choices in this moment, now, to fulfill on our success forward, not backwards.



How many of us, are driving our lives by what happened in the past? Someone did something, said something, and you are still hurting over it.....you could also remember the good things that happened and bring those to now. Where are you holding on to your past, where are you suffering, settling and surviving because of regrets, disappointments, guilt or non-forgiveness? Where are you bringing your past into the present, right now in negative form? What you focus on grows.

What if you now remember something from your past you enjoyed, had a good time doing, was living fully? That is now in your present moment. How does that make you feel, right now? Where are you winning in work and life? What you focus on grows.

As your coach I support you in creating strategies based on

your vision, to close the gap between the present, **NOW** and that **Future State you want to create, to drive your Destiny.**

If you don't know where you are going, any road will get you there but if you are interested in living a life you love and loving the life you live, let's Design it! and use my free ebook at KnockEmAlive.net to Drive your Destiny.

In my video series, I discuss retraining your brain and using your imagination to create the Vision of where you want to go. So in my ebook's worksheet I ask you to write down what would you do if you knew you could not fail?

Next let's take a look at how you are sabotaging yourself.

Have you ever put on make-up while driving? I've done this - have you? Or have you

seen someone else doing it as you went driving by?

What about texting and driving or emailing. These are dangerous acts when driving a \$20,000 or more vehicle at any speed. So what whacky, cracky things are you doing instead of driving your destiny? How are you sabotaging your future instead of driving to it and fulfilling on a life you love.

Stop by KnockEmAlive.net and download my free e-book Drive your Destiny and use the worksheet on the back to take a moment to drive your destiny.



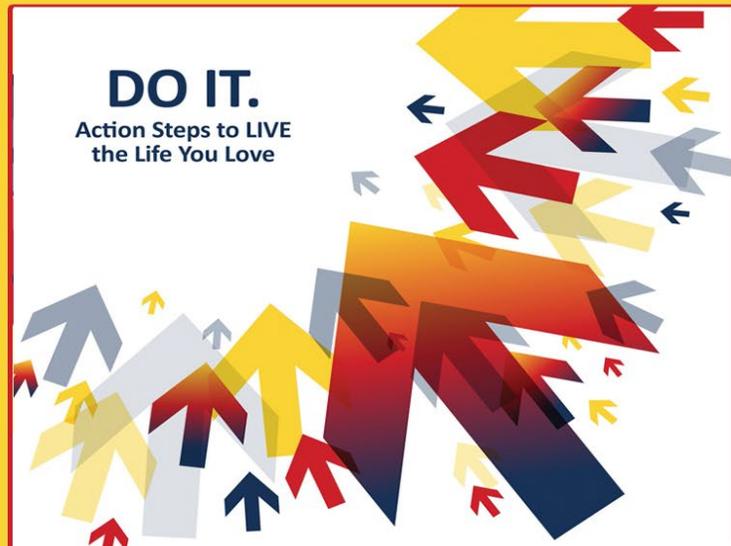
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Jamie Sue Johnson is a certified professional coach, certified professional coach trainer and certified laughter yoga instructor.

Jamie Sue's philosophy of the 5 L's, Live, Love, Laugh, Listen and Learn are her foundation for causing shift in the world. She delivers engaging and entertaining keynotes, seminars, business coaching sessions and laughter yoga classes that provide energy, creativity, inspiration and most importantly accountability so you get the results you want.

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HOW TO BE SUCCESSFUL EVERY DAY!

BY JOAN WASHBURN



A client and I were recently talking about the definition of success. She had been very successful in her previous position, but now she was starting her own business and she was filled with doubt and worry about being successful. She felt the definition of success changed with things like your age and other circumstances over which you had little or no control. She was seeing the definition as limited to the top 3 definitions of a Google search:

- » the accomplishment of an aim or purpose,
- » the attainment of popularity or profit,
- » a person or thing that achieves desired aims or attains prosperity.

While studying at the Academy for Coaching Excellence, I was taught a definition of success that ensured I would achieve my goals and at the same

time brought me a great deal of relief. It did the same for my client when I shared it with her. I trust it will do the same for you:

“Success is consistently doing what you said you would do with clarity, focus, ease and grace.”¹ Let’s look a little closer at this definition.

People who have **clarity** know their purpose and have a well-defined plan to accomplish it. They know what is important to them and they know the next step they need to take to move closer to making it happen.

They are not distracted by every “Shiny Object” that comes along, but are able to **focus** their energy on the implementation of their plan.

¹Mastering Life’s Energies, Maria Nemeth, Ph.D., MC

When you are going for something important to you things are not always easy. That we all know! However, we can implement our plan with **ease**. My favorite definition of the word ease is "freedom from concern, anxiety; a quiet state of mind". Successful people have learned to simply take the next step that is front of them to take. This eliminates the need for a lot of stress and struggle.

And last, but not least, **grace**. St. Therese of Lisieux states "Everything is a grace." Successful people are grateful for all things, even unforeseen

obstacles, set-backs and daily challenges. They are willing to say "Yes!" to, and learn from, them all.

This definition of success is all about taking purposeful, usually small, steps every day toward a goal, dream or the vision you have for your life. It's not about doing big, or a lot, of things. It's not about money or prestige.

The thing I love most about this definition is this: "Success" is not an end game – you can experience it every single day!

Joan Washburn coaches busy professionals to reclaim a sense of order and balance in their life—to essentially bring "calm to chaos" if you will.

When we are overwhelmingly busy, more often than not, our priorities fall victim to circumstance. Her ultimate goal as a coach is for her clients to break free of what is not working for them, discover what they really want for their lives, then support them as they make it happen!

Connect with Joan at Washburn Endeavours and on



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"Joan is an excellent coach, oozing with a fabulous mixture of compassion, wisdom and good humor. I highly recommend her coaching, workshops and trainings to anyone who is looking for new tools to use to deal with the challenges of life. You will learn new skills by using coaching tools and begin to take action in your life in lots of new ways!"

-Penny Kowal PhD

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WORDS & GRAMMAR

BY LILLIAN ZARZAR



Have you noticed how our grammar has evolved since the technology of our world has had an impact (not has impacted – that’s a tooth!) on our speech? Nouns such as “text” and “message” have become verbs. While the evolution of language is certainly part of the transformation that occurs as new vocabulary is added to language, correct grammar and spelling are still important!

These are a few of the blunders noticed recently. See if you can spot which side is the correct phrase (see answers at the end of this article):

Left	Right
1. Me and her went to the meeting.	1. She and I went to the meeting.
2. Him and I are good friends.	2. He and I are good friends.
3. You can respond to Barb and me.	3. You can respond to Barb and myself.
4. Where are you at?	4. Where are you?
5. He had went to hear the speaker.	5. He had gone to hear the speaker.
6. I am orientated to the process.	6. I am oriented to the process.
7. Make sure you get one for Jon and me.	7. Make sure you get one for Jon and I.
8. This is she.	8. This is her.
9. Fewer than twenty people attended.	9. Less than twenty people attended.
10. What a nice compliment!	10. What a nice complement!
11. She is the person who made a difference.	11. She is the person that made a difference.
12. The book is interesting that is on the shelf.	12. The book that is on the shelf is interesting.
13. You're the best!	13. Your the best!
14. Its_time to make it happen.	14. It's time to make it happen.
15. Many <u>players</u> won awards.	15. Many player's won awards.

As you can see, in writing and speaking, credibility rests on your command of language. Using words correctly increases your chances of being heard. Communicating effectively is paramount in obtaining support for your ideas, in persuading others about your causes and in offering information that can assist those you want to influence.

Even as language evolves while new words are introduced and old words are attributed new meaning (yes, even "impact" is a noun becoming a verb!) the foundation of correct grammar and spelling is still indicative of an individual worthy of your consideration.

Answer Key: 1 right, 2 right, 3 left, 4 right, 5 right, 6 right, 7 left, 8 left, 9 left, 10 left, 11 left, 12 right, 13 left, 14 right, 15 left

Lillian Zarzar, Certified Speaking Professional, (highest earned designation by the Global Federation of Professional Speakers) offers interpersonal communication insights through thought-provoking sessions as a Trained Demartini Method® Facilitator with the Demartini Institute in Texas.

She is member and past president of the National Speakers Association-Ohio and adjunct professor, Communication Studies, Ohio University.

Zarzar was quoted in Self Magazine, highlighted in Columbus Business First, appeared on Fox 8 Good Day Columbus, and has written articles and books including Conversations on Success.

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ATTITUDE TRUMPS EVERYTHING!

BY ROCHELLE FORREST

I am filled with gratitude as I consider the importance of Attitude. In this article, I will share 3 tips that will keep you in your Happy State! Attitude: check, check, check!

Through every adventure and obstacle that life offers, you will find out attitude will win over skill every time! Attitude is vitally important in all that you do and the successes that you have! What is attitude and how does it contribute in your life?

Attitude is not a smile or a frown.

Attitude is the combination of your thoughts and feelings expressed through your actions and your Beingness.

Attitude will set up your cause and your effect in your life.

Examine all areas of your life. You could have an amazing attitude at church, gym and work, yet in your personal relationships or maybe finances you have a poor attitude. The goal is to have an upbeat attitude in all areas.

WE know we become what we think about, so do these three things to shift your attitude:

1st become aware of your overall attitude; don't forget to pay attention to all areas of your life!

2nd notice your thoughts. They are your choice! In all areas of your life, observe what you are consistently thinking?



3rd determine where you could do better. Make a note to yourself indicating where you need to make just a little shift in your attitude!

Each day begin by thinking to yourself, "What do I want my day to be? For my life to be amazing, what does that look like and how am I being?" Start each with gratitude for anything that you can think of and also think of what you can do today to bring joy to one person or our world.

Once you implement these changes, you'll notice that your attitude will shift and soon you'll be living the life of your dreams.

Holistic Transformation Coach, Author, and Motivational Speaker, Rochelle Forrest, R.N., encourages individuals to step fully into their soul purpose and live their full potential. Wouldn't you like to wake up each morning feeling as though it was Christmas? Rochelle Forrest has that much joy and enthusiasm for life. Her mission is to teach you to find it too. Re-Ignite Your Inner Light and the companion workbook are Rochelle's action oriented tools that can light your path.

Learn more at her website and the website of her philanthropic endeavor, Tummies, Minds and Spirits. Also connect with her on



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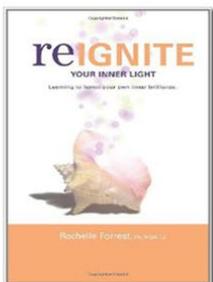


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THE HEART OF SUCCESS

BY DEB REIS, NP, MSN

February is Heart Month and there is greater awareness on physical heart issues. But, have you considered your energetic heart and how it affects our health, wellness and success? Let's take a deeper look at how your energetic heart affects YOU!

February is heart awareness month. Great heart health includes nutritious foods, exercise and stress management. However, we have not given a lot of attention to the energetic nature of our heart center.

The ancient Egyptians believed that the heart, rather than the brain, was the source of human wisdom, as well as emotions. Notions of physiology and disease were all connected in concept to the heart.

In recent times, there are many organizations looking at this phenomenon. One organization is HeartMath; they have been doing scientific research

on the heart center. What they have discovered is that the energy field of our heart extends beyond our physical borders. **They theorize that we receive information into our system primarily through our heart field.**

I recently did a video on the energy of our words. If we consider that our heart energy field is a major way we receive information, this may give an explanation on the language we use about our hearts such as heartfelt, heart ache, heart break, heartless, heart focused or unchain my heart! There is even a medical diagnosis called Broken Heart Syndrome. We may see this with couples who have been together for many, many years and one dies. The survivor is so depressed and in such grief that the heart gives up and the surviving spouse dies in 6-12 months.

You might be saying to yourself, this is interesting information but what does it have to do with my success, my business! Well, there is the obvious, if

you are not healthy then success may not matter. However, there is a greater correlation. Many believe that the heart center relates to what we do for our living. If we are in a job that is not “feeding” our heart center, then we may be at greater risk for health issues. If we use words such as heartless, heart break or heart ache, we may affect our immune system health.

So, does your business come from a place of heart centeredness and compassion? Or, does your business drive come from something else?

We are in a new year and a time to evaluate your position in your business and how you wish to lead.

For more information or consultation, please visit my website.

Debra Reis is a nurse, teacher and author specializing in holistic health and supportive therapies. She is the director and an instructor for the Certification in Clinical Aromatherapy program for the Institute of Spiritual Healing & Aromatherapy and nationally known expert in the area of essential oils for cancer care. Deb is also a Nia Black Belt instructor with current research and recent publication in the area of Nia benefits for women with a breast cancer diagnosis.

She is the founder of the Supportive Therapy Engagement Program (STEP) to assist organizations to implement and integrate supportive therapies into a patient treatment plan for better outcomes.

Connect with Deb at DebraReis.com and on



Watch Deb's video series



The Procedure is Over, But the Pain Lingers On

Yes, the bypass was successful. The chemotherapy worked. The kidney was a perfect match. Does this mean that your job is over?

Modern medicine is truly miraculous. There seems no end to the ways we can cure diseases and repair injuries. But medical procedures can be brutal on the body. Patients are often left with distressing side effects and unpleasant consequences of treatment.



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BY KRISTIE KNIGHTS, LPC

THE ROLE OF THE COLLABORATIVE DIVORCE COACH

As any Family Law Attorney will attest, a divorce is fraught with conflict and intense emotion. Every day creates a balancing act between emotions and logic that will enable a client to move towards resolution. Litigation creates an elevated level of intense emotions, which may hinder the process.

The Collaborative Process integrates support for the client in three critical areas; legal, financial, and emotional. A collaboratively trained Lawyer, neutral Financial Specialist, and a neutral Divorce Coach oversee each area. These experts form the Collaborative Team.

By definition, the Collaborative Divorce is a process by which two people at odds with one another, endeavor to peacefully and amicably settle their differences. The goal of the Collaborative Process is a non-litigation settlement. Clearly, this is a challenge! Thus, it is essential to incorporate specially trained and licensed mental health practitioners (Divorce Coaches) into the negotiations. They play a vital role in assisting the divorcing parties as well as the entire Collaborative Team to stay focused

and working on the problems at hand. These practitioners assist in dealing with the triggers and psychological/emotional challenges that invariably surface in the course of a successful Collaborative Divorce.

Let's take a closer look at the role of the Divorce Coach. A Collaborative Divorce Coach is a licensed mental health professional working in private practice. However, to be credentialed as a Divorce Coach, one is required to attend training in both the Collaborative Divorce and Collaborative Process. The Collaborative Divorce Coach role encompasses, but is not exclusive of, the following:

The Collaborative Coach focuses on assisting clients in the process of negotiating their Collaborative Divorce. The Coach is a neutral voice in this capacity.

The Collaborative Coach is one component of the Collaborative Professional Team. They work in conjunction with the lawyer and a neutral Financial Specialist.

The Collaborative Coach is focused solely on the client during the Collaborative Process. Once a resolution is attained, the relationship ceases.

The Collaborative Coach instructs the clients in effective and peaceful communication. The purpose is to explore goals and find resolution in a safe space.

The Collaborative Coach facilitates the meetings, maintaining a neutral stance to manage client emotions, communication pitfalls, and conflict. All of these components are used to encourage forward movement towards resolution.

The Collaborative Divorce Process is a cost-effective, problem-solving approach designed to reduce the level of conflict between spouses. The ability to refrain from litigation allows clients to save time and money; thus, it is a win-win practice for all involved.



For further information, to find a Collaborative Team member, or to receive training, contact the Collaborative Law Association of Southwestern Pennsylvania: www.clasplaw.org.

Kristie Knights is a Licensed Psychotherapist, Collaborative Divorce Coach, Professional Speaker, Author, and Co-Owner of the Life Balance Center in Mars, PA. She facilitates a Divorce Recovery Seminar Series entitled Release, Recover, & Renew geared for clients going through the divorce process. In her private practice, she has helped guide hundreds of clients, both nationally and internationally, to lead a life of joy and purpose. Kristie is a contributing author to Inspired Entrepreneurs: A Compilation of Women's Triumphs in Business and Life.



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Kristie Knights is a
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<http://kristieknights.com/>
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THE 7 INGREDIENTS

A RECIPE FOR BUSINESS SUCCESS

BY MICHAEL KAPLAN



Let's say you want to bake a cake that you have never made before? How do you know how to make it?

You find a recipe of course.

Why then do we start a business without knowing the recipe for success?

Most business owners know how to do the tasks of the business, but haven't learned a system for how to run a business. They complain about putting out fires all the time, working long hours, and not getting what they want from their business. The problem is that they

don't have a tried and true recipe for success.

There are **seven critical ingredients**, that make up the recipe, to create a business that serves you.

As you see in the graphic, **Leadership** lies in the center, as the business is always an expression of its owner.

Leadership is about finding the heart of your business and the essence of your unique product or service. It's about understanding your values, discovering why you do what you do (your purpose), setting the vision for your business and creating your culture.

BRANDING

is what your customers say about you after they have experienced your product or service. It's what differentiates you from your competitors. It guides all your activities, including slogans and colors.

FINANCE

is having a real time view into how money is moving through every aspect of your company, from the prices you charge to your long term budgets, and making sure it's all in line with your vision, your values and your brand.

MANAGEMENT

is finding the right balance between systems and people. Creating a place where people love to work because they are empowered to achieve great results.

These first four ingredients are called "disciplines." The last three critical ingredients are called "activities." They are delivery, sales and marketing.

DELIVERY

is about how you treat people after they have bought from you. It is about giving your customers the experience that they received more value than they paid for.

SALES

is the dialogue you have with people who have shown interest in your product or service where you proudly show off your product or service and, at the same time, are willing to turn away the wrong customers for the long term health of your business.

MARKETING

is everything your business does actively to attract new customers. This is where you develop a strategy and a set of systems that ensures that your brand message is not just delivered consistently but maximizes your results.

We've found that most business problems show up at the level of activities; such as, not enough leads, not enough revenue or poor quality or customer service. And we jump in to work on a problem at the activity level too, don't we? But, that might not take us to the root of the problem, which is most likely found in the disciplines - leadership, branding, finance or management.



For example, let's say our symptom is not enough leads. So, on an activity level we would probably look to Marketing and say **WE Need More Leads!** But when we shift to look deeper within the disciplines, maybe it's a management issue. Perhaps salespeople aren't being held accountable for working their leads efficiently. Do you see how the shift to focusing on solving problems at the discipline level makes a difference?

Another way to think about it is that the three disciplines are internal functions that define ways of being and thinking, while the three activities

represent what all businesses actively do.

So you see, problems in the disciplines realm typically cause symptoms in the activity realm. Once you look at solving issues by looking for the root cause within the disciplines, you'll find that real, long term POSITIVE change occurs in your business.

If you need help in determining how well your business uses these 7 ingredients, schedule your free business breakthrough coaching session where we can work together, one-on-one, for 60 minutes.

Michael Kaplan is a seasoned business owner with a skill for creating successful businesses, leadership transformations, and personal growth with owners and managers of mid- sized businesses. He has a passion for people development. Kaplan has more than 36 years of experience in sales, business coaching and entrepreneurship. In 2008, he opened his own coaching business, Strategic Solutions Coaching, and developed his business coaching system, GPS (Growth Producing Strategies) for Business™ that gives business leaders a new way to look at their businesses to accelerate growth. As a Certified EMyth Business Coach, he has access to the most comprehensive business development system anywhere.



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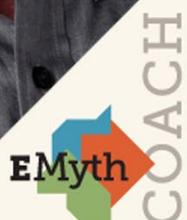
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HOW TO CREATE LOYAL CLIENTS

BY DIANE HELBIG

The best way to build client loyalty is to show them how much you value them. This means going beyond what's expected. In both B2B and B2C there are ways you can surprise and delight your customers so they value you as much as you value them.

Two of the most effective methods are giving attention to your clients and providing them with something extra.

Attention

Pay attention to your clients and learn about them. Use a CRM system to keep track of the things you learn so that you can refer to them later. That CRM system can be as simple as a card file that you write notes on or as sophisticated as a cloud based program like [Salesforce](#).

With that same system keep track of what they purchase. If you sell B2C take notice of the buying cycle of your customers. Now, reach out to them



prior to their next expected purchase to ask about what they need. It's a reminder and shows that you are paying attention.

If you sell B2B determine if that buying cycle gives you an opportunity to set up a delivery system. Could you create an automatic delivery

process that eliminates the client's need to take time to buy? Maybe you even stock items just for them!

Something Extra

Everyone loves a bonus – especially unexpected bonuses. If you sell B2C send your customers an unexpected coupon. Renew their membership without charging them for the renewal. If there is usually a renewal charge this will delight your client.

If you sell B2B, give your customers an unexpected discount or something for free, like shipping. You

don't have to do it all the time. The unexpected surprise is what creates the impact. You are giving without asking for something in return.

Whether you sell B2B or B2C you can give in unexpected ways and times. Holidays are typical. Use the [Chase's Calendar of Events](#) to find out of the ordinary holidays that you can use to be giving to your clients. Send them a gift card to someplace

other than your company. Invite them to lunch once a quarter.

Focusing on growing your business can take your attention away from your clients. However, it is those clients who create your success. You stand out from your competition when you create an experience that surprises and delights your customers. And you build loyalty when you show you care.

Diane Helbig is an international business and leadership change agent, author of *Lemonade Stand Selling and Expert Insights*, speaker, and host of *Accelerate Your Business Growth* Radio show. As president of *Seize This Day*, Diane helps businesses and organizations operate more constructively and profitably using her expertise in small business, sales, social media, networking, and leadership.

Diane is the creator of the Clarity of Course Sales Training Program and the founder of Business Opportunity Network™, a business referral/mastermind program with chapters throughout the United States.

Connect with Diane at Seize This Day and on



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IMAGINE THE POSSIBILITIES

BY THE MERIT GROUP

Starting a new business, a new job, a new relationship, or buying a new car, a new house, or any number of life changing decisions is scary. So why have we all taken on these life transitioning events sometimes multiple times in our lives? What has been our inspiration behind taking on these challenges? What has deemed the risk worth taking? Facebook Co-Founder Mark Zuckerberg said, "The biggest risk is not taking any risk... In a world that is changing really quickly, the only strategy that is guaranteed to fail is not taking risks."

Risk is a natural progression in attaining success and improving upon what has become common, albeit successful. Growth becomes stagnant unless we continue to take risks and make continual improvements. In order for growth to continually regenerate, focus on following these five simple steps:

- **Step 1 - "Imagine the Possibilities."** Hopes, dreams, wishes, opportunities... regardless of the exact name you give them, these thoughts tell you that you'd like to make your business, career, relationship thrive. No idea is too great or too small, keep them all on the drawing board. Revisiting possibilities that may have not initially become a priority need to be revisited at a later date.
- **Step 2 - Set NEW Goals.** Goals should constantly be reviewed and reevaluated. Continually examine your vision statement and expand it into realistic goals. Create a goal statement for every key area of your vision statement. In order for goals to be your roadmap of success they must be S.M.A.R.T. (Specific, Measurable, Accountable, Realistic, and Time-bound).

- **Step 3 – Establish a plan.** Breakdown each goal into simple action steps and they MUST be written down. Writing down action steps makes them more concrete, attainable, and provide a greater consciousness to committing to the end result. Also while accomplishing each action step a sense of accomplishment for each step completed is a driving force to keeping a plan progressing.
- **Step 4 – DO IT!** Let no barriers, no excuses and no circumstances impede your progress of maintaining a constant growth.
- **Step 5 – Chart your progress.** Maintaining a visual of progress being made is a recipe for success.

If you would like support in “Imagining the Possibilities” and achieve the positive outcomes derived from calculating risks in your business, we are eager to team together with you to get the results you desire. Visit our website at www.themeritgroupindy.com or call 317-805-4896 today!

Look for more small steps that produce **BIG** results!

Shamara Cox has worked with businesses partnering in strategy, technique and implementation. Shamara is the proprietor of Shamara Cox LLC, Partner at The Merit Group LLC, CEO of BLING Sorority and Founder of Pressed Oil Life Ministries, Inc.

Terry Dove Pittman was Authentication Deputy for former Indiana Secretary of State Todd, where she acted as International Liaison/ Special Deputy between the State and many foreign embassies and foreign nationals. She is a Partner in The Merit Group.

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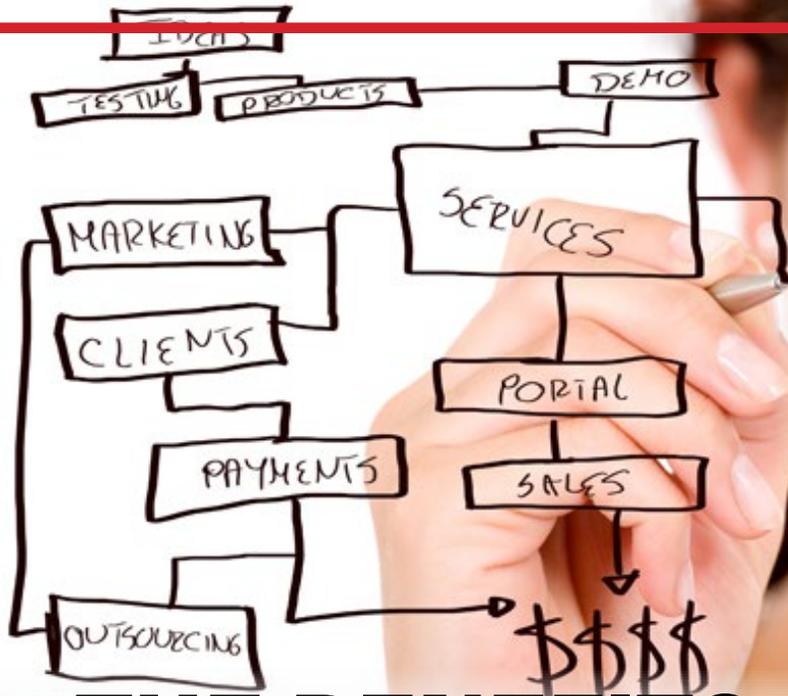
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THE BENEFITS OF FOLLOWING A BUSINESS PLAN

BY ANN N. GATTY, PH.D.

Building a successful company starts with creating a business plan. It is essential that any new business venture create a roadmap to give you direction and a set of procedures that tell you how you are going to get there. In other words, **plan your work and then work your plan.**

How do I describe exactly what a business plan is? In its simplest form, a business plan is a guide—a roadmap for your business that outlines goals and details how you plan to achieve those goals. Business plans don't have to be long formal documents, unless you are using it as a fund-raising tool. Otherwise, the business plan should be written to provide a systematic way of moving the organization forward to achieve your goals.

In my consulting practice, I have designed the **Business Sphere of Excellence®** to help my clients construct a useable business plan. It addresses the major functions of any business— vision,

marketing, sales, operations, product development, and financial planning. Each function identifies goals. From there we add a few bullet points to match strategy, create operating procedures, assign tasks and identify basic financial projections needed to safeguard positive cash flow.

There are three major ways that a business plan can contribute to the successful growth of your business.

1. In order to design or update a business plan, you start by reviewing and analyzing all aspects of the business before making future plans. You check how your business has done so far. Did it meet your expectations? If not, why not? And, in what areas did the business exceed expectations?
2. A business plan therefore can drive the future development of the business when you establish benchmarks for each of the 6 business functions. When making plans for

the year ahead, how will you modify, eliminate or add goals in each of these functions to meet your long term vision?

3. A well-crafted business plan helps you, the business leader, attract talent and bolster your company's human capital. People like working with other people who have a clear vision, well established purpose, and defined strategies to make positive things happen. People like to be part of a successful venture.

So, a clearly designed business plan can be a great asset to any leader. It keeps you disciplined to follow your well-crafted strategies and to focus on hitting the benchmarks for each of the six business functions. I always feel less stressed when there is a clear action plan for me to follow. Then, I use the plan to make informed decisions along the way.

Do you need help getting started with an updated business plan? Call me and let's set up a free laser coaching conversation. Call 855-284-4448. I'll help you jumpstart the process.

Dr. Ann is an expert at building businesses to work brilliantly. She helps her clients create workable strategic business plans and success initiatives, while improving their workplace processes. She is frequently featured in the media and writes for AllBusiness.com and WomenOnBusiness.com. Her interactive speaking engagements assist participants in discovering new-found talents and skills they can immediately apply in the workplace. To see how Dr. Ann can help you to improve your business, visit www.StrategicPeopleSolutions.com.



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SEVEN STRATEGIES FOR CONQUERING CONFLICT AT WORK

BY BETH CALDWELL

Do you avoid difficult situations because you just hate being involved in conflict? I know how you feel. The problem is that those tricky situations or difficult people don't disappear just because you avoid them. I've never seen a tense situation or a toxic employee get better over time, have you?

Difficult situations are an opportunity for growth. Still I remember one very frustrating time in my business when I said aloud, "Do I really need any more personal growth this year?" That situation was frustrating, but it reinforced something I've realized again and again — avoiding conflict makes the situation much worse. The truth is smart leaders deal with difficult situations, which takes courage.

Avoiding conflict is costly and results in loss of profits, productivity, creativity and quality staff. It also increases frustration, resentment and absenteeism. Here are seven strategies to help you resist the urge to avoid conflict:

1. **Assess the situation without emotion.** If you know you're going to become upset take the time to calm yourself first. It's important to be centered and nonemotional before you address conflict.
2. **Reassure everyone involved.** Begin difficult conversations by stating your intention. "It's

important that we come up with solutions to restructure in order to meet deadlines without layoffs or overtime."

3. **Determine an acceptable outcome before your meeting.** When you determine the appropriate outcome, write it down. This keeps everyone on track.
4. **Set a time limit.** Workplace drama wastes time.
5. **Remain consistent.** If conquering conflict is a new habit, it may take time for the team to adjust.
6. **Recognize the warning signs of conflict.** With practice and awareness, you'll begin to recognize early warning signs of drama and conflict in time to take preventative measures.
7. **Build your conflict confidence.** Increased productivity, a boost in profits and a pleasant environment will make you more confident about addressing problems immediately.

It's important to realize and understand that almost any workplace and relationship is going to experience conflict. Understand and accept that, as a leader, conflict management is a part of your leadership role. Remember that you are a conflict role model. When faced with difficult situations, don't delay. By facing tough issues, you're establishing a setting for growth and the opportunity for your company to thrive.



If you want to learn more about how to be an authentic and effective leader, visit PittsburghProfessionalWomen.org and click on "Leadership Academy for Women", and watch my video series for more tips to help you be a smart and influential leader.



Referred to by her clients as "The Provocative Leader", **Beth Caldwell** brings a refreshing style to leadership and innovation. She works with companies who need help to confront conflict, deal with drama, and make important decisions. Beth is best known as the founder of **Pittsburgh Professional Women** and **Leadership Academy for Women**. Her books include *I Wish I'd Known THAT! Secrets to Success in Business*, *Inspired Entrepreneurs*, *EMPOWER*, *INSPIRE* and *Smart Leadership: 12 Strategies to Help You Shift from Ineffective Boss to Brilliant Leader*.



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TRAP AND 3 STEPS TO SET YOU FREE

BY JACK KLEMEYER

Many times great people set off to start their own business. They are really proficient at something or they just know they can do “whatever” better than it is now being done. Both of these are good, valid reasons to go into business for yourself, but there is a trap they, and you, don’t know about. For example, let’s say that you are an excellent cook.

The one thing you have to remember is that the day you start your business is the day you cease to be the excellent cook. You become much more of a manager and much less the cook. That is where the trap comes into play for us all.

All too often we do not create a business we enjoy and reap the rewards. We create a job for ourselves and in many cases it is a terrible job. We work way too

many hours for the pay; we do not (because we tell ourselves we cannot) take vacation or time off; it seems we slave away 24 hours a day, 7 days a week and 365 days a year.

We have become hostage to the job we did not realize we created. We are stressed, angry and frustrated over many things. We do not bring on employees because, you know, they cannot do it (whatever it is) as well as we do.

If any of this sounds familiar there is hope and a way out. As the late Jim Rohn said, “*For things to change for you, you have to change.*” That is the really, really tough part. **Change.** It does not sound hard, but it can just seem insurmountable and because of that, many do not know how to accomplish the change necessary.

Here are three things you can do right now to begin to make that change:

1. Set a goal for how you would like your business to be.
2. Create an organizational chart for your business.... (I realize your name will most likely be in every slot on the chart, but do it.)
3. Write down the frustrations of your business that really drive you crazy.

The goals you set will become your roadmap to freedom so they need to be well thought out and something that will stretch you. It is best to get a friend, someone from outside your business, to review these goals.



The organizational chart will be to remind you that you need to bring on others that are good at what they do and fit with your values.

The easy way to get this list of frustrations is to begin to notice those things you complain about the most regarding your business. If you are really brave, ask your partner, spouse

or anyone else you are in a relationship with to help you notice. The list of frustrations will be used to motivate you to keep moving, keep changing toward your goal of how you see your "new" business.

Contact me if you'd like some assistance working through these three steps towards making the change you desire.

Grow Your Business™ Coaching founder Jack Klemeyer is recognized as a preeminent resource for business professionals. As a John Maxwell Certified coach, speaker, trainer and facilitator of Mastermind groups for business owners and professionals, his results-driven philosophy calls for action and accountability. He and his Grow Your Business™ team are dedicated to taking businesses and their owners to the next level. Jack can be reached at Jack@GYBCoaching.com or at 317-755-6963.

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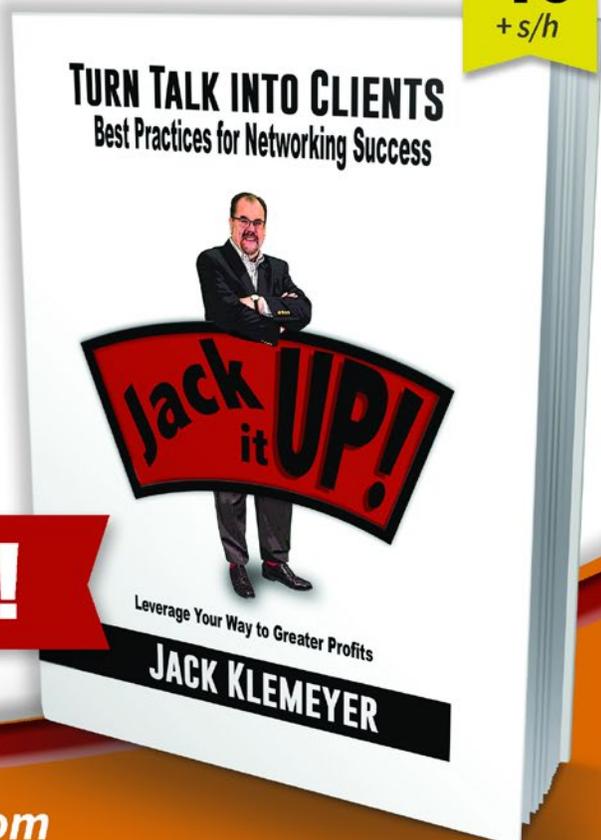
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THE ONE PAGE BUSINESS PLAN DEVELOPING ACTION PLANS

BY MEGAN PATTON



Over the last several months, we have been working our way through the development of a one page business plan. If you've been following along, you have been introduced to the Vision, the Mission, the Objectives and the Strategies. Hopefully, you have been able to work on developing each section.

The final step in creating your One Page Business Plan is the development of the Action Plans. The Action Plans will answer the question **"What is the work to be done this year?"** The Action Plan will be a definition of the specific actions or work to be done. This is not a to-do list - these are business building or infrastructure projects, which support the Strategies and Objectives.

It is important to assign names to these projects as well as a date by which the project will

be complete. One mistake that many people make with their Action Plans is that they try and put everything into the first quarter or have everything due by the end of the 4th quarter. A more realistic approach would be to spread out the work realistically. Really think about what can reasonably be done in which quarter, and pick a realistic date for the work to be done.

Action plans can be created by using a verb PLUS the project name PLUS a deadline. For example: Launch the Performance Management Initiative by March 31, 2016 (HR). Another example might be: Launch new product line at the 2016 Consumer Electronics Show (sales). In this example, the date is implied.

At this point, your One Page Business Plan is complete.

You should have a Vision statement, a Mission Statement, measurable Objectives and business building Strategies, all supported by Action Plans.

Great, now what?

It is important to actually USE your business plan. Keep it where you can easily reference it on a regular basis. Build time into your calendar for business plan review and alignment. At a bare minimum, the business plan should be revisited monthly to determine how the company is coming relative



to the measurable objectives, whether the strategies are being utilized and how the action plans are coming along. When multiple people in the same company are using One Page plans, the monthly alignment meeting is a critical step in ensuring company wide targets

are being met. As an added bonus, companies experience an increase in communication and accountability among their associates.

For more information on the One Page Business Plan,

check out my web site at www.odastrategy.com under Business Planning. I'd be happy to talk with you about getting YOUR business plan completed and ready to serve as your roadmap to focus and thrive!

Megan Patton is a business strategist who has been a management consultant, trainer and executive coach for most of her career. She spends her time working with individuals, companies and non-profits to help define and implement strategies that enable peak performance and growth.

Megan is also a licensed affiliate of The One Page Business Plan Company. Megan is a strong believer in lifelong learning, and continues to take classes on a variety of subjects.

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Megan Patton, Managing Partner

Helping small businesses focus and thrive.

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