

How to Plan Your Way Into the Top 20% Club of Service Professionals

Bill Gates has a plan, why don't you? Bill Gates is moving away from direct involvement in the operations of Microsoft to spend more time on the other things in life that he values. The most successful people don't get where they are going without a plan and neither will you. Frequently professional service providers don't think of themselves as independent business owners, but you are. The sooner you realize that you are an independent business owner and begin to conduct your business as a business the sooner you will begin to make progress toward the top.

Having goals is not the same thing as having a plan. Many of you have short and long term goals, but goals themselves are not an overall plan for your future. They are an element of your plan. Frequently your goals are vague and not very motivating, and as a consequence you don't achieve them. A plan is a bigger picture view of your future. Well defined goals move you closer to the attainment of that future.

Are you focused on your career goals at the expense of the other aspects of your life? When you place all your emphasis on just one aspect of

your life you get out of balance and decrease your overall likelihood for success. You feel overworked, stressed out, and cheated. When you are working that hard you expect to see super results, but they just don't seem to fall in line like you expect that they will. You are looking at life through a magnifying glass and fail to notice the world around you and the opportunities that exist right under your very nose.

Without a clear vision you're like Alice in Wonderland and any path will do. Alice didn't know where she was going so it didn't matter which path she chose. You know that if you want to travel to a specific destination that you will get there faster and with less problems if you use a road map or GPS system than if you just hop in the car and start driving. Yet everyday you hop in your car and start driving and you don't even know where you want to go. That's because for the most part you don't think in any detail much beyond today, this week, this month, or perhaps this year.

The first step to a better future is to create it through planning. Many of you have never put together a strategic plan for

your business let alone for your life. You have to know what you are working toward in order to identify the critical success factors that must be accomplished to have your ideal future become a reality. These are the key areas of accomplishment that are both necessary and sufficient for the accomplishment of your vision of your ideal future. From the identification of these critical success factors you are then able to break these areas down into specific goals and action steps that you must take to have this ideal future become a reality.

Balance is necessary for fulfillment, but balance isn't the same for everyone. Having balance between your personal life and your professional life will enable you to lead a more fulfilling and pleasurable life. People who have balance in their lives tend to be more successful in business as well. Realize that balance is relative and determine what balance means to you. For example, I like coffee but a perfect cup of coffee for me isn't made up of $\frac{1}{3}$ coffee + $\frac{1}{3}$ sugar + $\frac{1}{3}$ cream. How you portion out your life will be unique to you and should be based on your values and purpose.

There is a chasm as large as the Grand Canyon between goal setting and goal getting. Which

side of the canyon are you on? Do you set a lot of goals and get very few? Well if that is you it is time to cross the Colorado River over to the goal getting side. First, realize that goal getting is not an academic exercise or something you do to please someone else. Make your goals as specific as possible so there is no doubt in your mind where you are in your progress toward the accomplishment of the goal. Identify the true driver for why this goal is important to you so that you will be self-motivated to work toward its accomplishment in spite of having to do things you don't want or like to do.

"I've tried planning before and it just took up a lot of time that I don't have and I didn't really see the benefit", you say. That's part of your list of excuses for not planning. You think you don't have time to plan, but if you did a better job of planning you would use your time better and have more time. More than likely when you did this planning it was really for something pretty short term and when that was done so were you with the planning process. You haven't made the connection in your mind yet, if you do a good job of planning your future for the long haul you will be able to take charge of your life rather than allowing life to happen to you. You may

also feel a little uncertain or uncomfortable about doing something like this because you have never done it before. Well everything in your life was a first at some point and that hasn't stopped you from getting where you are today! So take the plunge and experience the difference a little planning can make in your life!

Effective planning can help you to join the elite group of the most successful people who enjoy both personal and professional success. Start today with a little dreaming about what your life would look like if you were able to live your vision of the ideal future. Take those dreams a little closer to reality by creating a vision for your future. Make your vision long-term and then ask yourself what you can do in the next year to move yourself closer to that vision. This becomes your mission. Break that mission all

the way down into the action steps that you will need to take to achieve your mission. Be specific, be realistic, hold yourself accountable, make sure it's what you truly want, schedule the action steps in your planning system, and monitor your progress. The river is rough for the unprepared so make your plans to cross the river over to the goal getting side where dreams turn into reality through your conviction and purpose that comes from well laid plans.

Cheryl Clausen has 20+ years experience helping people like you. Cheryl has coached well over one hundred individuals and helped them with achievements they did not think possible. If you would like to learn more about how Cheryl can help you grow your business please call her. She will be happy to discuss your situation on the phone at no charge. Call 402-926-1134 or visit the Measured Success Inc. website at www.measuredsuccessinc.com