



Minorities & Success

Spring 2013

Business Direct Marketing

**US Still Behind in World
Education Rankings**

**6 Things To Never
Say At Work**

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3711 Lomita Blvd. Suite 196, Torrance CA 90505

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Business Direct Marketing - Top 10 Must Do's For a Successful Program

By Rick Flores

Let's face it. Companies spend a big portion of their budgets on print and online advertising. And, we all know that we still get a bunch of "junk" mail. Why? Because it works. While inventing new ways to market your business can sometimes pay off, let's make sure we do not drop the ball and overlook the ground rules for direct marketing.

Small business owners can effectively use direct marketing to grow their business and build relationships with their current and prospective clients. But, a poorly executed direct marketing program will hurt you where it counts! Here are a few tips to give you a great shot at putting together a successful direct marketing campaign.

1. Have a clear vision of what you want to achieve.

Create a marketing plan. Set goals for your direct marketing effort and put it in writing. Share it with key employees and have clear-cut objectives that reflect your marketing research and intuition.

2. Get "personal" with your target audience.

Sending a marketing letter to "The Manager" is the best way to get your message ignored and thrown directly into the garbage or virtual trash. Get personal by using and creating marketing databases that have detailed information on the businesses you are trying to reach. Do not be afraid to use this

information in your message. This conveys to the recipient that you have done your homework and have a value offering that relates to their business.

3. Test before rolling out your promotion.

You have done your research, crafted the look and content of your sales message, and prepared your database. That is a lot of work done to get to that point but do not waste your time and efforts by sending your message out to your list without testing it first. Take a smaller nth name test from your database to see the response to your message. Get a feel for turnaround times, inquiries and general receptiveness to your offer. If you like the reaction,

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roll it out. If not, change something and test again until you get an acceptable response.

4. Include a “call to action” in your message.

Putting your address or phone number is not enough. Stay away from creating open-ended offerings. Reinforce your compelling sales message by telling the recipient of your marketing letter exactly what to do and when.

5. Consider a multiple step direct marketing strategy.

With the investment of time and money, it is easy to understand why small business marketers want to make the sale on the first pass of a marketing effort. The ability to do that will depend on your product or service offerings. But, two-step direct

marketing has some valuable upsides. It allows you to collect a larger pool of potential customers and build a relationship with this market. In many instances, it provides an opportunity to increase the unit sale and introduce additional products and services.

6. Be a Copycat.

Do not resist what is working in your market. Understand what your competitors are doing to get business. Pay special attention to what the market leaders are doing and what promotions are repeated. Other companies have done their market research and testing and, sometimes, you can benefit from their investment by implementing a similar strategy.

7. Follow up with a vengeance.

Do not let your direct marketing effort fizzle on the back end. Just like in

sales, the weakest link is usually in the follow-up.

8. Perceptions are important.

We all want to work with quality people. We all want to deal with quality companies. Make sure your message does not make claims you cannot back up or seems deceptive in any way.

9. Niche out your products and services.

Packaging a product or service for a particular group can sell more of your business offerings than if you tried to sell to a general market. If you are a specialized business already, look for sub-markets to sell to. It is more work for sure but, you may find a gold mine. Following tip #2, people respond positively to messages that they can relate to.

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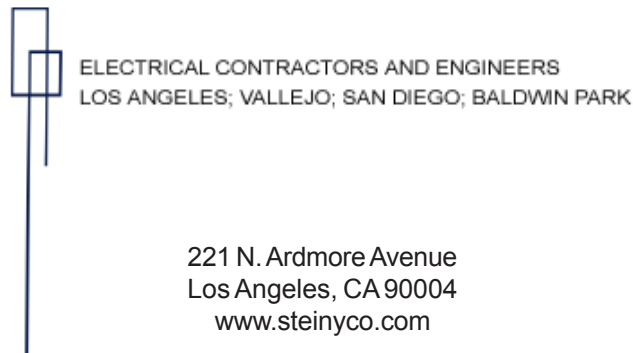


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10. Make sure you analyze your results.

You can easily tell if a direct marketing effort was successful in generating sales. But, be sure you note the qualities of both the positive and negative responses because you can miss valuable sales and marketing information if you do not. Things such as response times, geographical disbursement, respondent job titles, inquiries that turn into sales, and actual client feedback, can help you roll out a more effective direct marketing campaign next time around.

Okay, here is one more bonus tip for you. Make your sales message compelling. Be creative and use your instincts. Remember, every sentence you put on your marketing piece should have a purpose. Leave out extraneous information and be clear with your sales message. Now, go ahead and use these tips, along with your business savvy, to form a successful direct marketing program.

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Women's Health Highlights:

Cardiovascular Disease

Heart disease is the number one killer of women in the United States. More than one-third of all deaths among U.S. women are due to heart disease, which usually occurs about 10 years later in life in women than in men. Heart disease mortality differs substantially among women of different races.

Women with atherosclerosis and high cholesterol receive less intense cholesterol management than men.

The researchers examined cholesterol management of 243 primary care patients from one academic medical center. The patients had coronary heart disease, cerebrovascular disease, or peripheral vascular disease and high (over 130 mg/dl)

low-density (bad) cholesterol. Cholesterol management by either medication adjustments or LDL monitoring occurred at 31.2 percent of women's visits and 38.5 percent of men's visits. Women were 23 percent less likely than men to have their cholesterol managed.

Persell, Maviglia, Bates, and Ayanian, *J Gen Intern Med* 20:123-30, 2005 (AHRQ grant T32 HS00020)

Existing heart disease is undiagnosed in half of women who have a first heart attack.

Many women who suffer a first heart attack have cardiac risk factors—such as high blood pressure, obesity, and diabetes—that have not been treated and represent missed opportunities to

prevent heart problems in women. The researchers reviewed medical records of 150 women in one Minnesota county who suffered a heart attack between 1996 and 2001. Over the 10 years preceding their first heart attack, the women made a total of 8,732 outpatient visits and had 457 hospitalizations, but only 52 percent of the women had been diagnosed with heart disease. About 80 percent of women with high blood pressure were treated with antihypertensive medications, but only 28 percent of women were prescribed drug therapy for high cholesterol or lipid levels.

Yawn, Wollan, Jacobsen, et al., *J Women's Health* 13(10):1087-100, 2004 (AHRQ grant HS10239).

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Younger women with heart failure have worse quality of life than men and older women.

Shortness of breath, fatigue, and emotional problems caused by heart failure lead to reduced quality of life, which negatively affects younger women with heart failure more than elderly women or men of any age. However, women younger than 65 in this study had more improvement in fatigue over time than older women and more improvement in emotional symptoms over time than men age 65 or older.

Hou, Chui, Eckert, et al., *Am J Crit Care* 13(2):153-61, 2004 (AHRQ grant HS09822).

Treatment of high cholesterol in women should be based on all risk factors for heart disease.

For women who don't have cardiovascular disease, use of cholesterol-lowering drugs to

treat high cholesterol does not affect rates of death due to coronary heart disease (CHD) or total death rates. In women with known cardiovascular disease (CVD), lipid-lowering therapy can reduce CHD-related death, nonfatal heart attack, and use of coronary bypass or angioplasty, but it does not affect total mortality.

Walsh and Pignone, *JAMA* 291(18):2243-52, 2004 (contract 290-97-0013).

Women and men with cardiovascular disease and high cholesterol may receive different levels of treatment.

This study found that among people with CVD, men have their cholesterol measured more often, are treated more aggressively (e.g., with statins), and have lower levels of so-called "bad" cholesterol or LDL-C than women.

Kim, Hofer, and Kerr, J., *Gen Intern Med* 18:854-63, 2003 (AHRQ grant HS11540).

Diabetes increases a woman's risk of death from coronary heart disease.

These researchers found that compared with women who had neither diabetes nor CHD, women with only CHD had nearly double the risk of CHD-related death, while women with only diabetes had nearly four times the risk for CHD death. Those who had both CHD and diabetes were at greatest risk for CHD death. The researchers urge more aggressive treatment recommendations for women with diabetes.

Natarajan, Liao, Cao, et al., *Arch Intern Med* 163:1735-40, 2003 (AHRQ grant HS10871).

Researchers find male-female differences in receipt of

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recommended cardiovascular care.

These researchers evaluated differences between male and female patients in rates of receipt of recommended cardiovascular and diabetes care for enrollees in 10 commercial and 9 Medicare plans. In commercial plans, an average of 73.6 percent of men and 63.8 percent of women without a contraindication were prescribed a beta-blocker after a heart attack. Among the three plans with significant male-female differences, all favored men, ranging from an advantage of 23.4 to 40 percentage points.

Bird, Fremont, Wickstrom, et al., *Women's Health Issues* 13:150-7, 2003 (contract 290-00-0012).

Lack of research on women limits usefulness of studies on CHD.

Although CHD causes more than 250,000 deaths in women each year, much of the research in the last 20 years on CHD has either excluded women entirely or included only limited numbers of women. Two reviews focused on CHD in women were conducted recently by AHRQ's Evidence-based Practice Center (EPC) at the University of California, San Francisco/Stanford. They examined the usefulness of various lab tests and treatments for CHD in women, the role of exercise, and the effectiveness of behavioral changes in lowering CHD risk in women.

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Copies of the two reports, *Results of a Systematic Review of Research on Diagnosis and Treatment of Coronary Heart Disease in Women*, Evidence Report/Technology Assessment No. 80 (AHRQ Publication No. 03-E035 full report; 03-E034 summary) and *Diagnosis and Treatment of Coronary Heart Disease in Women: Systematic Reviews of Evidence on Selected Topics*, Evidence Report/Technology Assessment No. 81 (AHRQ Publication No. 03-E037, full report; 03-E036 summary) are available from AHRQ (contract 290-97-0013).*

Women with symptomatic heart failure benefit when treated with ACE inhibitors and have reduced mortality when treated with beta-blockers.

Researchers at AHRQ's Southern California EPC examined evidence on pharmacologic management of heart failure and found that treatment with ACE inhibitors was beneficial in women, but it did not reduce mortality in women with asymptomatic left ventricular systolic dysfunction. They also found that both women and men with symptomatic heart failure have reduced mortality when treated with beta-blockers.

Copies of Evidence Report/Technology Assessment No. 82, *Pharmacologic Management of Heart Failure and Left Ventricular Systolic Dysfunction: Effect in Female, Black, and Diabetic Patients, and Cost-Effectiveness* (AHRQ Publication No. 03-E044, summary and 03-E045, full report) are available from AHRQ (contract 290-97-0001).

Insurance status does not explain male-female differences in heart attack treatments and outcomes.

According to this study of more than 327,000 men and women who had a heart attack between 1994 and 1997,

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women received fewer cardiac treatments and procedures and had worse outcomes than men, but insurance status did not explain the disparities. Regardless of insurance status, women generally were less likely than men to receive aspirin, beta-blockers, intravenous heparin, or nitrate therapies within the first 24 hours of hospital admission. Also, women were much less likely than men to undergo coronary angiography, angioplasty, or coronary bypass surgery, and they were significantly more likely than men to die in the hospital.

Canto, Rogers, Chandra, et al., *Arch Int Med* 162:587-93, 2002 (AHRQ grant HS08843).

Women have a higher prevalence of white-coat hypertension than men.

Researchers at AHRQ's Johns Hopkins EPC examined the

available evidence on the utility of blood pressure (BP) monitoring outside of the clinic setting. Although there was some support for the use of ambulatory BP monitoring, in general, the evidence was insufficient to compare clinic BP monitoring with BP monitoring elsewhere. Evidence on BP monitoring among population subgroups was rarely stratified by race or sex. The only notable subgroup finding was a higher prevalence of white-coat hypertension in women. However, the evidence was insufficient to determine whether the risks associated with white-coat hypertension are sufficiently low to consider withholding drug therapy in this large subgroup of hypertensive patients.

Copies of Evidence Report/ Technology Assessment No. 63, *Utility of Blood Pressure Monitoring Outside of the Clinic Setting* (AHRQ Publication No. 03-E003, summary and 03-E004, full

report) are available from AHRQ (contract 290-97-0006).*

Age and sex are significant predictors of death after heart attack.

In an editorial accompanying study findings on male and female mortality rates after heart attack, this researcher notes that the interaction of age and sex remains a significant predictor of heart attack-related death, even after adjustment for demographic factors, clinical characteristics, and inpatient cardiac care. The study reported an 11 percent 2-year mortality rate for women before age 60 (vs. 7 percent for men) and a lower mortality rate for women after age 79 (46 vs. 51 percent for men).

Ayanian, *Ann Intern Med* 134(3):239-41, 2001 (AHRQ grant HS09718).

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Creating Positive Energy Into Your Workplace

By: *Glenis Gassmann*

Most employees are never asked their opinion...

And the result of this is, that there are Billions of inspirational ideas unheard on a daily basis.

What makes this more profound is that some of those ideas could have been “**just that one good thing**” that takes the business from one level to the next in a quicker amount of time.

More often than not it is the people looking into a business or on the outside of management decisions that spot that elusive “tweak”. Why is it that still the majority of business owners do NOT create the environment that supports this?

Creating positive energy in the workplace comes from effective communication on a regular basis and that includes “Asking employees’ opinion”. You do this

with your customers with feedback surveys... why not your TEAM?

Many managers are guilty of not communicating with their TEAM, and if they do their message is so poorly communicated it’s lost. Great Managers continually work on refining their communication skills and reap the results from this, one of which is a committed TEAM that shoulders much of the workload creating a POSITIVE ENERGY that multiplies each day.

I have put together 7 keys to effective communication for you to create positive energy in your TEAM and BUSINESS

1. **Thinking ahead** - before starting the communication process, know the intention of the communication and what you want to achieve.
2. **Understand the Individual** - This will avoid personality clashes and allow you to work towards areas that are vulnerable.
3. **Be at their level of understanding** - A communication is not a communication unless it is at the understanding of the other party. Use practical everyday words, and not jargon, if you want it heard.
4. **Check Body Language and tone** - Body language and tone makes up 97% of communication... 7% is words. Check in and adjust yours on a regular basis throughout the communication.

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5. **Right time** - Your message will be wasted if it is delivered at the wrong time
6. **Accept Feedback** - Use questions that require a positive response to ensure your message is being heard.
7. **Recap and Call to Action** - At the end of the message, recap the communication with compelling facts and suggested action steps moving forwards.

A Business's most valuable capital is **"Human Capital"** and success is wholly dependent on a **POSITIVE TEAM**. Positive Energy occurs when Managers and TEAM communicate effectively about a shared vision or goal.

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US Still Behind in

World Education Rankings

By Emily Sismour

A global study that tests and compares 15-year old students' science, math and reading literacy in developed and developing countries confirms that the United States is still falling behind. The evaluative study entitled Program for International Student Assessment, was first administered in 2000 and was performed again in 2003, 2006 and most recently, in 2009.

In a year that has seen constant scrutiny of the United States'

education system and persistent discussion regarding the need for education reform; the results of the study serve only to exacerbate concern. And, while the U.S. has made "modest gains" in science and math, U.S. students still shrink in comparison to their 15-year old counterparts around the world.

U.S. Secretary of Education, Arne Duncan, called the results of the study "an absolute wake-up call to America" and urged administrators and lawmakers to deal with "the brutal

truth" and "get much more serious about investing in education." With U.S. students ranking 15th in reading skills, 17th in science and 25th (statistically significantly below the average) in math, Duncan and citizens nationwide have cause for concern. The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development which proctors the standardized test, found that countries with the highest-scoring students included: China, Canada, Korea, Singapore and Japan.

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The U.S. has reason to worry. Despite the very modest gains that were made, U.S. students have continued to score significantly lower than students in a number of other nations since the test's implementation in 2000. In fact, U.S. students are barely ranking above the OECD average in reading and science, and fall well below the average score in math- the most noteworthy problem area. Because of this, tackling under-achievement in the U.S. education sector should be a top priority. Not only does under-achievement affect students; the broader reach of under-achievement affects the national economy, global marketplace and larger society as a whole.


country to country? What helps set one nation apart from the other so divisively? Primarily, countries that have continually performed well on the Program for International Student Assessment place an extremely high value on education and learning. Report the authors of the study "universal high expectations are not a mantra but a reality and students who start to fall behind are identified quickly, their problem is promptly and accurately diagnosed and the appropriate course of actions is quickly taken." Additionally, top-performing countries work hard to train and retain the best teachers, often recruiting the top 5-10% of graduates into the teaching profession.

And, while social divisions and social background seem to play a permanent role in quality of education and access to resources and finances in the United States, this is not the case in successful countries (like China and Canada) where traditionally underprivileged students are found to, despite circumstance, perform extremely well.

The results of the most recent Program for International Student Assessment study confirms, once again, that the U.S. education system still has a significant amount of work to do in terms of reform and improving U.S. student's world education rankings.

So, what are the differentiating factors in student achievement from

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IT Schools Prepare Their Students For A Changing Workplace

By: Emily Sismour

In today's tech-driven world where digital devices, computers and their networks are just as important to some people as they are to eating and drinking, the graduates of IT schools will always find themselves in a great place. These graduates have the know-how to create, operate and protect these devices down to the smallest level. It is the IT schools that continue to provide an education that is useful and definitely applicable in today's modern world.

What do they learn?

There are plenty of degree areas that students can choose from at nearly all of the IT schools, whether online or traditionally taught.

Computer Software Engineering
Computer Programming IT Security
Technical Support IT and Computer
Network Management

These are only a few of the subjects taught. There are a range of more

design-centered degree programs that allow the student's creative side to show through.

How do they learn?

Students in these classes have a mix of theory and hands-on workshops. Much of the classes are taught by industry professionals. This gives each IT school student the

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opportunity to not only learn by textbook, but also learn from seeing things done first-hand. Oftentimes, they work in state of the art computer labs.

Most schools require the student to do what is commonly called an “externship”. This is when the student will take a semester and actually work in an IT company, not just for the credit but also as a paid employee. In this way, the student learns to be accountable not only to the school, but also to the employer. Many times this leads to job opportunities later down the line.

Where do graduates find work after school?

In today’s need for technology, finding a job after IT school can be relatively easy if the graduate is tenacious and can look beyond the common places.

IT firms Businesses with computer networks Schools, Colleges and Universities Hospitals and other healthcare facilities IT consulting firms Technology companies for laptops, mobile phones and other devices Tech support centers for different companies Freelance

There are a myriad of other places that IT school graduates can work; it is a matter of finding the niche that they like and tailoring their work and school experience to meet the needs of the job.

IT schools are always updating their curriculum to adequately prepare their students for the realities of modern-day technology and the business climate. Most IT schools, both online and traditional, have a student service that helps the student to find and prepare for a job.

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6 Things To Never Say At Work

By: Beth Braccio Hering

Don't tarnish your reputation by making whiny, haughty or untrue statements. Remember, silence can be golden — especially if it prevents you from uttering one of these potentially career-damaging phrases:

1. "I can't take on any more work. I'm completely overwhelmed already."

Run your fingers through your hair and let out a big sigh during this

lament and colleagues will either nominate you for an Academy Award or provide the number of a good therapist. Professionals work on solving problems, not creating drama.

"Yes, the recession and corporate downsizing has meant fewer people doing more work; however, employers want employees who can manage their workloads and communicate when they have reached their maximum capacity," says Lisa Quast, CEO of Seattle-based Career Woman Inc. and

author of "Your Career, Your Way!" "A much better comment is, 'Let's look at my project list and see where we can work this in. It might mean moving something else out to a later date.'"

2. "Joe is an idiot."

Yes, maybe he is — and he may be your boss someday. Don't say something you'll later regret. Even if he doesn't find out, bad-mouthing a

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co-worker can make listeners wonder what you say about them when they aren't around.

"Never throw your colleagues under the bus or talk about them behind their back," says career coach Roy Cohen, author of "The Wall Street Professional's Survival Guide." "Colleagues who trust and admire you will be your best support system to promote your reputation as desirable and valuable. When they don't feel that you are transparent in your intentions, your disruptive actions will raise doubts about your ability to be both a team player and a team motivator. Both are essential assets for effective leadership."

3. "That's not fair!"

Brad Karsh, president of Chicago-based JB Training Solutions and co-

author of the upcoming book "Manager 3.0: A Millennial's Guide to Rewriting the Rules of Management," notes that this statement is frequently uttered by younger workers. "It may sound harsh, but in the working world, fair does not always mean equal. It can be difficult to understand that at work it's not always fair up and down, but it's also not fair across. For example, a company may hire 100 entry-level employees on the same day. Are they all going to get promoted or receive raises on the same day? No. They may work different hours a week, at different locations and for different types of people. It will never be fair in your career, so get over it."

4. "That's not how we did it at my old company."

Make such a comment and

colleagues may wonder why you ever left the other employer. As Quast notes, "No one likes an arrogant know-it-all who thinks they're better than others or who believes their previous company did things better." Skip the comparisons and focus instead on articulating your ideas clearly and respectfully.

5. "I'll have it on your desk by 3 p.m." (when you know you won't)

Your boss and colleagues have deadlines, too. When you fail to deliver, it affects others. On those rare occasions when you can't fulfill a promise, have the decency to give a heads-up. Deadlines may be changeable or perhaps other workers can shift focus to help out.

"(Don't) tell people — whether they

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are colleagues, vendors, clients and customers or management — what you think they want to hear instead of the truth,” Cohen says. “For example, if you knowingly provide a client with incorrect information about a delivery date and you fail to honor that deadline, you risk tarnishing both your credibility and the reputation of your company. The potential impact may be enormous as customers abandon you for a more reliable provider.”

6. “I’m bored.”

Nothing good ever comes from this statement.

Overworked colleague Mary will want to slug you, cubicle neighbor Jeff will think you’re a slacker, and your boss will question why he’s bothering to give you a paycheck this week.

“There’s always something you could be doing,” Karsh says. “Take the initiative to tackle new projects; don’t wait to be asked to do something. Be innovative and find new projects to work on to make your boss’s life easier. Figure out what is keeping your boss up at night, and solve that problem.”

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How Successful Students

Score that Top Grade

By: Preeti Narayan

Why is it that out of total students in class only few score top grades? Why others just taper down to average or even low grades? What is special about students who score high? What do they do exactly?

Well, successful students certainly study differently. But not so differently that you cannot do it yourself.

With few exceptions, all top-performing students follow a similar style of studying. We call this a “five-point approach.” Here is what they do:

1. Successful Students are ready for regular work

All most all successful students study regularly. Because they know that ‘what you give is what you

get.’ If you put in regular hours of studying, then you will learn more, you will get better grades. The idea of scoring high, without doing steady and consistent work is just a pipe dream.

Set aside some hours, each day or each week, for studying. This will help you to study regularly. And prevent piling up of study-assignments during exams.

2. Successful Students have Definite goals

“I will score A grade in English.” “I will get 94% in the next exam.”

These are definite goals. And all top-performing students have definite, specific goals. Having such goals give you a purpose to study better. They motivate you and drive you to study

more. Helps you to focus your energies and mind power efficiently.

Hence always have definite goals for studying. But make sure that you do not get carried away. Set realistic goals. The kind of goals which challenge you, but do not seem impossible or too difficult to achieve.

3. Successful Students take well-planned actions

Once you decide where you want to go, you need a road-map to find out how to reach that place. Well, this is common sense, you might say. Exactly. And this is where successful students differ from ordinary ones.

Once successful students set their goal, they sit and plan on how they

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are going to achieve their goal, what actions they are going to take. How much time they are going to spend on it.

For e.g. if the goal is to score A grade in English, what action is needed to achieve this score? Spend more time to study English lesson? Improve grammar? Improve writing skill?... In this way successful students question, analyze and make plans. And then they follow their plans faithfully.

Such planned efforts bring more results and more success. It also prevents wastage of time and energy because you know exactly what you need to do to get your goal.

4. Successful Students study without strain

Successful students study a lot. But they study without putting strain on themselves. Most students make the mistake of studying too hard or

studying continuously for long time. This creates mental tension and actually slows down learning and memory.

Studying should be done in a balanced manner. Try to give a gap between studying two subjects. Take a break for few minutes, after studying for 30 or 45 minutes. Relax, walk around your room or house, or drink some water and return back to studying. Such short breaks will refresh your brain and you will learn more.

Also, after taking your study-schedule or time-table into account, set aside some time for playing any sport or watching TV or just sitting out and gossiping with your friend.

5. Successful Students give it importance

While researching for our course, Success Mindware for students, we found that students who give

importance to studies perform better. They score more and have fewer study problems.

Studying is not something you do just because your parents asked you to do it. It's actually very important for you. Studying gives you knowledge and skills that will remain with you for the rest of your life. It gives you the ability to get a job and earn money. It gives you financial independence, stability in life, respectability...the list is endless.

And successful students recognize the value of studying well. Hence they give lot of importance to studying. And when you give importance to something, you naturally focus all your attention and energy on it.

As you can see from the above 'five-point approach,' *successful students* don't do anything extraordinary. They just do the right thing. And you are not different from them. You can also do it and achieve success in your studies.

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Hispanic Education Gap Is Narrowing

By: Emily Sismour

The release of a new study which details the narrowing of educational achievement gaps amongst Hispanic students coincides with the recently held Presidential summit on Hispanic Education Achievement. The study, released a day after President Obama signed an executive order to improve the education of Hispanic Americans, shows that the Hispanic education gap is, slowly but surely, beginning to even out.

The White House initiative, first implemented by President George

H.W. Bush in 1990 and continued by each president after, “is intended to address the so-called achievement gap, the fact that some ethnic groups lag behind others in graduating from high school and college.” And, with only 13% of Latinos holding a bachelor’s degree compared with 21% of African Americans and 39% of whites, there has been an obvious reason for concern.

However, the most recent study shows that at least one school is proactively doing its part. Western Oregon University recently reached a “49%

graduation rate for its Hispanic students,” and is just one example of a school that’s working towards closing the educational achievement gap.

In the study published by the Education Trust, a non-profit education group that works to promote student achievement, the difference between schools that successfully graduated large groups of Latinos and those that didn’t was found, largely, to be based on school leadership. The study also found that schools who

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don't invest solely on minority enrollment but focus more on minority students' successful completion of degree programs, are having the highest success rates.

Western Oregon University, the school cited in the study, heeded the president's call to graduate more students, especially Latino students. Because of administrative steps taken by the school, Western Oregon University was able to jump from a 36% Latino graduation rate in 2002 to its current 49%.

There were three major initiatives the university employed to reach out to its Latino students and to eventually

reach these statistics. The university pinpointed the Hispanic students "weaknesses and needs" in order to strengthen their advising system. Then, administrators looked at affordability issues. Because many of the minority students like the Hispanic American students were low-income, the administration decided to guarantee that their tuition would not increase in the four years it would take to earn a degree. Lastly, they changed their school policies to be less about access and more about success and graduation.

By implementing these three initiatives, Western Oregon University improved its Hispanic American

graduation rate by 13% in just 6 years. Western Oregon University is one of many ground schools trying to help improve Hispanic American graduation rates. [Online schools](#) are also popular among minority students who want to earn a degree and minority students have traditionally been well represented in online colleges and universities. Jennifer Engle, one of the authors of the study, noted that by placing an emphasis more on graduation than retention and ensuring that all students get increased access to services like advising, Hispanic students (at online or ground schools) are able to graduate at a much higher rate.

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Preparing For Success in Your Career Change

By: Kelli Smith

As you move through life, your needs, goals, and interests can change. If you've lost your spark for your current career, you may decide that it's time for a major change in occupation. While this can be a scary process, following these tips and guidelines can help you make a career change successfully and more easily.

Review Your Current Career

First off, you may want to decide if

it's your career or your job that needs changing. If you find that your company or industry holds promise, you may want to consider if there is another position within the company that would be more compatible with your job skills and interests. Don't be afraid to talk to your boss and to ask around in your company about other available positions. Employers have an investment in their employees, and an employee that expresses the need for growth and more responsibility can be considered an asset.

List Your Skills and Aptitudes

Take inventory of your strengths and weaknesses before making a change. Your list of attributes should consider not only what you think you do well, but also where you have received your accolades in and outside of work. Also, be honest with your list of "needs to improve."

Assess Your Interests

You should also write down what

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you enjoy doing in your spare time. Is there any way you can take a hobby and make a career out of it? If you find this process difficult, you can use career assessment tests online or at a college or university. These tests analyze your personality traits, skills, and interests. Some excellent assessment tests include the Meyers-Briggs (personality assessment), the Jackson Vocational Interest Survey (interests), and the Strength Finders Profile (skills and aptitude).

Finding Inspiration

Many successful career changers will tell you they took their passion and turned it into a career. A great book for putting your interests and dreams to work for you is *Wishcraft: How to Get What You Really Want* by Barbara Sher. This book will show you strategies for determining your interests and discovering your skills and strengths. It can also help you develop a game plan to achieve concrete results.

Analyze Your Income and Savings

Making a career change can mean a change in income, especially if you've decided that you need more education

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or training. Before moving forward, sit down and analyze the time and money needed to get a degree or certificate in your new career. You need to decide if you'll be able to continue your current job while attending school to fully determine your monetary situation.

Do Your Homework!

The US Bureau of Labor Statistics is an excellent way to learn about different careers and the income potential, expected growth, and training and educational requirements. Research your chosen field by going online, reading trade magazines and testimonials, and talking to those in and around the profession. Volunteer or take a temporary job in your new field of interest. Doing so will allow you the opportunity to decide whether or not your new career is a viable one for you.

Take Your Time

Remember, be honest in your assessments and take time to research carefully. Career changes are a big deal, and we want yours to be successful. Time spent now in preparing for your new career will lend to your success and enjoyment of it later.

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Become a Remarkable Creature: Take Personal Responsibility for Your Own Success

By: Bud Bilanich

Successful people are clear on their purpose in life — and they are committed to it. They take personal responsibility for creating the successful lives and careers that they want and deserve.

I'm always looking for ways to get my common sense message about career and life success across to my clients. That's why I was struck by a passage in Tracy Chevalier's new book, *Remarkable Creatures*. If you don't know Tracy Chevalier, you should. For my money she is one of the best novelists writing today. Her first book, *Girl With a Pearl Earring*, was a huge bestseller and made into a movie starring Scarlett Johansson.

In *Remarkable Creatures* she tells the story of two women fossil hunters in early 19th century England. Her protagonists are a middle aged spinster and a young

girl. Both are committed fossil hunters. Here is how Elizabeth Philpot, the spinster, describes committed fossil hunters...

"Hunters spend hour after hour, day after day, out in all weather, our faces sunburnt, our hair tangled by the wind, our eyes in a permanent squint, our nails ragged and our fingertips torn, our hands chapped. Our boots are trimmed with mud and stained with seawater. Our clothes are filthy by the end of the day. Often we find nothing, but we are patient and hardworking and not put off by coming back empty handed... Those serious about fossils know their search is never over. There will always be more specimens to discover and study, for, as with people, each fossil is unique. There can never be too many."

I love this passage. It describes — in wonderful prose — my thoughts and

beliefs on the importance of knowing your purpose in life and committing to it. "Often we find nothing, but we are patient and hardworking and not put off by coming back empty handed." That's exactly what I'm talking about when I tell my career success coaching clients. "Stuff happens. The stuff that happens, good or bad, isn't what's important. What is important is how you react to it." Be patient and hardworking. Don't be put off by a day in which you come back empty handed. Choose to believe that your hard work will pay off in the end. Commit to taking personal responsibility for living your life's purpose — whether it be fossil hunting, selling, building things, or helping others.

People who commit to taking personal responsibility for creating the successful lives and careers they want and deserve know that their

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personal quest is never over — there will always be more to do, more to accomplish.

It's been almost 40 years since I first heard of Abraham Maslow's Hierarchy of Human Needs. If you're not familiar with it, Dr. Maslow suggested that all human beings have a series of needs that they strive to satisfy. He arranged these needs in a pyramid. According to his theory, safety is the first and most basic human need. It is at the bottom of the pyramid. We all strive to remain safe in an uncertain world — we all want to live another day. Security is next. Once we are reasonably sure that we will survive this moment and this day, our needs move to developing a sense of security, one in which we feel that our lives and quality of our lives will remain constant. Affiliation is next. Once we feel safe and secure, we search for meaningful relationships in our lives. Recognition is next. Once we feel safe, secure and valued by others, we crave

recognition—in the form of praise, promotions, more money. Self actualization is at the top of the pyramid. Dr. Maslow says that after our safety, security, affiliation and recognition needs are satisfied, we turn our attention to what he calls “self actualization,” a state of being all that we can be.

Dr. Maslow suggests that we human beings can never be completely self actualized because as soon as we reach one goal, we realize that there is almost something more that we can achieve. Once Bill Gates became one of the world's wealthiest men, he realized that he could be doing more to help others. So he created his foundation. Once I created and ran a successful consulting practice, I realized that I could do more to share my knowledge about career success with a wider audience. That's why I started blogging and podcasting.

And speaking through a spinster fossil hunter, Tracy Chevalier says, “There will always be more specimens

to discover and study, for, as with people, each fossil is unique. There can never be too many.” Indeed; there will always be more to do, more to accomplish — if only you clarify your life's purpose and them commit to taking personal responsibility for it.

The common sense point here is simple. Successful people are clear on their purpose and direction in life. They commit to taking personal responsibility for living their life purpose. If you want to achieve career success, you need to do the same. Clarify what you want from your life and career. Then commit to doing whatever it takes to get it. Set high goals. React positively to the setbacks, problems and negative people and events in your life. Keep at it. Don't let a day when you come back empty handed in your quest for career success get you down. Get up the next day with optimism in your heart and keep working toward the mighty purpose you've set for yourself.

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Obesity Rates Falling

By: Cameron Keady

Some U.S. cities are reporting their first declines in the rate of childhood obesity

For decades, childhood obesity rates have been on the rise. Now some U.S. cities, including Philadelphia, New York City and Los Angeles, are seeing progress in their fight against fat. Declining childhood obesity rates have also been reported in parts of Mississippi, the state with the highest obesity rate in the nation.

The first drops in the number of overweight children came in a September report by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. The foundation works to improve health for Americans. New York City showed a 5.5% drop in the number of overweight children from 2007 to 2011. Philadelphia showed a 4.7%

drop, and Los Angeles a 3% drop.

Making the Effort

From 1980 to 2000, the percentage of obese U.S. kids aged 6 to 19 tripled. About 9 million children were excessively overweight. Being overweight can lead to serious health problems, including heart disease, stroke, diabetes, cancer and high blood pressure. Type 2 diabetes, once considered an adult disease, has increased greatly in young people.

In 2011, the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) began a project to combat childhood obesity. The project's goal is to find ways to make healthy changes in a community's schools, food stores, parks and other places.

"Obese children are more likely to have asthma, depression, diabetes, and

other serious and costly health problems," said CDC Director Thomas R. Frieden in a statement. "This project will help figure out ways our children can grow up to lead long, healthy and productive lives."

Healthy Choices

The cities and states with declining childhood obesity rates have followed the CDC's suggestions. Philadelphia works with an organization called the Food Trust to connect schools with local farms and bring fresh vegetables to cafeterias. New York City has required chain restaurants to post calorie information on their menus. Mississippi created a program called "Fruits & Veggies: More Matters" to teach kids how to add healthy foods to their daily diets.

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Schools nationwide are doing their part. Fried food has disappeared from many cafeteria menus. Whole-wheat bread has replaced white bread. Drinks like water and low-fat milk have replaced sugary beverages, including fruit punch, sports drinks and soda. Many schools have banned junk food and require healthier snack options in vending machines.

Jim Marks of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, the group that issued the obesity report, thinks the message is clear. "Any community that makes these kind of changes over a few years will see their children get healthier," he told TIME's Alexandra Sifferlin. "They will see these improvements and, we hope, more over time."

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Engineering Continuing Education - What Is the Future of Engineering?

By: Joe Haun

With the current down turn in the economy many engineers have lost their jobs or worried that they maybe losing their job soon. Budget constraints both in the public and private sector are forcing to think about how secure the jobs really are. But as we all know this recession will not last forever. Sooner or later the promised recovery will begin. The question is what engineering will benefit from the renewed economy and which ones will not fair so well? There is no real crystal ball, but there are clear indicators that every engineer should be aware of and make preparations accordingly.

Engineers will need to continue their education to stay up with the latest technologies to offer their clients the best solutions. Most of the State Licensing Boards require

Professional Engineers to renew their professional licenses periodically with a minimum number of continuing education units. These units are usually Professional Development Hours (PDH) or Continuing Education Units (CEU). One PDH is equivalent to one hour of course education, and one CEU is equivalent to ten PDH or ten hours of course education. Some may find that their profession is not growing or trailing behind may need to change careers or strength their technical knowledge.

One of the best indicators of upcoming markets is to know what the baby boomer generation needs and wants. The baby boomers, the individuals born between 1945 and 1964, are now approaching retirement age. Many will be retiring and will require some medical and health

assistance. They will also want medication to appear young as long as possible. Obviously fields that support this industry will do very well. The most likely profession to benefit is Biomedical Engineers. They are necessary to improve new medical devices and equipment. In addition, new facilities will be required for the aging population. Independent Living Facilities and senior communities will rise in demand. This will definitely improve prospects for Civil and Mechanical Engineers.

Another field that will continue to have a high demand for engineers is the environmental fields, which includes new green products, renewable energy, water resources, and waste-water management. The United States will continue to encourage renewable energy

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including wind and solar power with government grants and other types of funding. These projects will generate numerous jobs for many different professions. As the population continues to expand a greater demand will be placed on housing and our water resources and waste-water management. These increased demands will increase jobs for Electrical, Mechanical, Civil and Environmental Engineers.

Due to the increasing population and aging facilities, the government will also need to expand and improve the country's infrastructure. Roads, bridges, dams, railways, airports, and utilities throughout the country will need greater attention. These improvements will also increase the demand for Civil Engineers.

According to the United States Bureau of Labor Statistics, "Occupational Outlook Handbook", 2010-11 Edition, over the next

decade, 2008 to 2018, the engineering field should grow by 11%. In 2008 engineers held 1.6 million jobs in the United States. A little more than 45% were employed by the three leading professions; Civil, Mechanical, and Industrial Engineering. As expected the three smallest engineering professions are highly specialized; Agricultural, Mining and Safety, and Marine and Naval Engineers.

Another surprise was that about 3 percent in 2008 were self-employed, many as consultants. This means that 97% of engineers are employed by the government or private firms.

One would think that most engineers are employed by the government, but according to the report about 12 percent in 2008 were employed by the Federal, State, and local governments, and about half of them were in the Federal Government, mainly in the U.S. Departments of Defense, Transportation, Agriculture, Interior,

and Energy, and in the National Aeronautics and Space Administration. Many engineers in State and local government agencies worked in highway and public works departments. Approximately 45% are employed in three professions; Civil, Mechanical, and Industrial Engineering.

Three leading employed professions

- Civil Engineers- 278,400
- Mechanical Engineers - 238,700
- Industrial Engineers - 214,800

Three lowest employed professions

- Agricultural Engineers 2,700
- Mining and Geological Engineers, including mining safety engineers 7,100

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- Marine Engineers and Naval Architects 8,500

The three engineering professions expecting the highest growth rate over the decade are Biomedical, Environmental, and Civil. These professions provide professional services in the industries which are expected to have the most significant growth. These fields include Health and Medical, Environmental Technologies, Infrastructure including transportation and utilities, and Water Resources and Waste Management. These industries also require the engineers to be local to provide the necessary services.

In addition to openings from job growth, many openings will be created by the need to replace current engineers who retire; transfer to management, sales, or other occupations; or leave engineering for other reasons.

The three slowest growing engineering professions are Chemical, Electrical and Electronics, and Computer Hardware engineers. These particular professions are receiving extreme competition from outside of the United States. Also note that these professions are not required for the most part to hold a Professional Engineering license. Companies are finding that engineers in other

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countries in electrical, computer, and chemical industries can provide the same service for a far lower salary or fee.

Three leading Job Growth rate professions

- Biomedical Engineers - 72%
- Environmental Engineers - 31%
- Civil Engineers - 24%

Three laggards in Job Growth rate

- Chemical Engineers - (-2)%
- Electrical and Electronics Engineers - 1%
- Computer Hardware Engineers - 4%

The three engineering professions with highest initial salary are in petroleum, chemical, and mining industries. Petroleum and Mining Engineers are expected to have a growth rate of 18% and 15% respectively over the decade, while Chemical Engineering is expected to decline by 2%.

The three engineering professions with the lowest starting salaries are Civil Biomedical, and Agricultural. Civil, Biomedical and Agricultural Engineers are expected to have a growth rate of 24%, 72% and 12% respectively over the decade.

Three leading Starting Median Salaries professions

- Petroleum Engineers - \$83,121
- Chemical Engineers - \$64,902
- Mining and Mineral Engineers - \$64,404

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Three laggards Starting Salaries

- Civil Engineers - \$52,048
- Biomedical Engineers - \$54,158
- Agricultural Engineers - \$54,352

So what is the lesson? The engineering professions that require a local engineer usually with a Professional Engineer license will remain in high demand; especially Civil Engineers. Engineering fields that can be replaced by foreign engineers and do not require a

Professional Engineering license will suffer. Engineers who have not kept current in their field may find themselves at a disadvantage when seeking promotions or during layoffs. The best way to stay current is through continuing education courses.

In this article we have discussed the future of engineering. Although for some the future looks bleak right now, the number of new engineering jobs is projected to grow. Many of the new industries will require engineers. The main way to ensure employment is to be aware of the demand for your

profession and to stay current with the latest engineering skills; technical, ethical, and managerial. Acquiring the necessary skills can be the difference between an employed and an unemployed engineer.

In this article Joe Haun, discusses the future of engineering and the need for engineering continuing education. To learn more about the business of engineering, and how to quickly receive your engineering CEU's and PDH's through online training, visit: Engineering Continuing Education, and download free online course manuals and documents.

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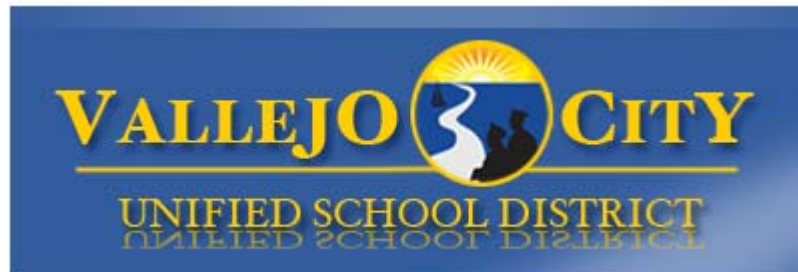


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