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3711 Lomita Blvd. Suite 196, Torrance CA 90505

Email: info@mbsp.org

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How To Be The Best of The Best - Maximizing The Aggregate Value Of Your Organization

By: Oleg S Cheremnykh

What Does It Mean - To Be The Best of the Best?

In practical terms, being the best of the best means operating at maximum possible performance - as close to maximum corporate potential as possible. In other words, to fully utilize aggregate resources available to your company - financial, material, human, information/knowledge, etc.

However, study after study of corporate performance clearly demonstrate that business entities (and other organizations, for that matter) operate at 10-15% of their maximum possible performance (if that). And I am afraid, this is the case with your company, too. Therefore, even if your company makes a **quantum leap** even to 50% efficiency, it will automatically join the 'best of the best' club.

Hence, in order to make your company the best of the best, you need to find answers to these key questions:

1. How efficient is my company now compared to its maximum possible performance?
2. What changes do I need to make to make this quantum leap in its performance?
3. How to make these changes?

To answer the first question, you will need to conduct what is called a comprehensive corporate analysis or a comprehensive corporate audit/analysis (CCA). CCA will give you a detailed and well-structured description of the current ('AS IS') situation with your corporate performance.

To answer the second question, you will need to describe in detail the

desired ('TO BE') situation with your corporate performance. Using essentially the same tools and techniques that you use to conduct a CBA - only this time you will describe ('visualize') the desired situation in your company.

To answer the third question, you will need to develop and implement financial and operational plans for getting from the current ('AS IS') to the desired ('TO BE') situation with your corporate performance. In other words, to make the quantum in your corporate productivity and to make your company the best of the best.

This transition from the current ('AS IS') to the desired ('TO BE') situation is called strategic corporate reengineering (SCR) as it will most likely require a significant restructuring of your company and its operations. It is a serious

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undertaking, but it is worth it as being the best of best maximizes not only the operational performance of your company but also its revenues, profits, cash flows and overall financial and aggregate value.

Need for the Right 'Road Map'

Comprehensive business audit is not a novel idea. Neither is strategic corporate reengineering. Both have been around for decades. So were the CCA and SCR projects. Some of them were successful, some (if not most) not so successful (or downright unsuccessful) and few (if any) were truly comprehensive and resulted in a quantum leap in a long-term corporate performance.

A few exceptions typically dealt with 'crisis management' (in other words, had a singular objective of saving the

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company in question from immediate and certain bankruptcy). This is definitely not your situation, otherwise you need to read a different article - on emergency turnaround management.

The key reason why most of CCA and/or SCR projects were neither comprehensive nor very successful (in terms of maximizing the corporate performance) is that they did not have the right blueprint ('road map').

This blueprint must include (1) the right (natural) fundamental management objective and (2) the right (natural) overall corporate management paradigm.

The Natural Fundamental Management Objective

The fundamental objective of managing *any* organization is maximization of the aggregate value of the organization in question (financial + functional + emotional + spiritual) for all of its stakeholders - business owners, NGO sponsors, personnel, clients/customers, suppliers, partners, etc.

In order to achieve harmony between the organization in question and its environment, one must also maximize the aggregate value of each stakeholder to the organizations.

To prove that this is, indeed, the natural management objective, we will answer three key corporate management questions:

- Why does an entrepreneur start a business?
- Why does an entrepreneur start any other organization?
- Why does an employee go to work for an organization?
- Why does a stakeholder interact with the organization?

Why Does an Entrepreneur Start a Business?

First, to make as much money as possible - in other words, to create the maximum amount of financial value. Second, to create an organization which will provide its clients/ with functionally useful products - in other words, to create the maximum amount of functional value. Third, to maximize his/her emotional pleasure from both the process and the result - in other words, to create the maximum amount of emotional value. And, finally, to implement in his/her company his/her fundamental values, beliefs and principles - in other words, to create the maximum amount of spiritual value (which some consider a component of an emotional value).

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Why Does an Entrepreneur Start any Other Organization?

Other categories of organizations - government, NGO, academic, etc. - are started for exactly the same reasons; the only difference being that these organizations do not have owners and 'the first among the equals' component of and aggregate value is usually functional rather than financial.

Why Does an Employee Go to Work for an Organization?

First, to earn as much money as possible - in other words, to create the maximum amount of financial value. Second, 'to be the best one can be' in his/her profession by providing his/her internal and/or external customers with useful products and/or services - in other words, to create the maximum amount of functional value. Third, to maximize his/her emotional pleasure from both the process and the result -

in other words, to create the maximum amount of emotional value. And, finally, to implement in his/her on-the-job activities his/her fundamental values, beliefs and principles - in other words, to create the maximum amount of spiritual value.

Why Does a Stakeholder Interact With the Organization?

To satisfy his/her/its aggregate needs and desires - financial, functional, emotional and spiritual - to the maximum possible extent. In other words, to obtain from these interactions/relationships the maximum possible aggregate value.

Therefore, the stakeholders of a company in question are interested in building and maintaining relationships with the company in question only to the extent that this organization is capable of satisfying their aggregate needs (create aggregate value for them). And the higher is the amount of

financial value created by the organization for its stakeholders, the more interested are they in building and maintaining relationships with the company in question.

Hence, maximization of aggregate value for all of its stakeholders is, indeed, the truly fundamental organization management objective best corresponding to objective reality, facts, logic and common sense.

Key Statements of a Natural Management Methodology

1. Every owner/manager/employee *must* transform his/her organization into a *happy one*.
2. A 'happy organization' is the one that maximizes its *aggregate value* (financial, functional and emotional) for *all* of its key stakeholders (owners/

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- sponsors, clients, employees, partners, etc.)
3. To maximize its aggregate value (AV), every organization must operate at highest possible efficiency measured by *optimal* values of *all* of its key performance indicators (KPI)
 4. To maximize corporate efficiency and optimize KPI values, *every* manager and employee *must* make and execute the best possible decisions
 5. To make and execute the best possible decisions, one *must* have rapid and convenient access to *all* necessary internal and external *knowledge* (valuable information)
 6. Therefore, to maximize corporate efficiency, it is vital to (a) build a comprehensive *corporate knowledge base* (CKB) and (b) to equip every manager and employee with an individual 'corporate cockpit' - a customized 'window' into the CKB, provided on a 'need-to-know' basis
 7. Our world is fundamentally object-oriented; therefore, CKB, 'corporate cockpit' and the whole corporate management system *must* be constructed around a *comprehensive* system of external and internal *corporate objects* - owners/ sponsors; SBU/departments; clients, employees, suppliers, partners, etc.
 8. Every object *must* be monitored and managed through a customized Aggregate Efficiency Scorecard (AES)
 9. Each AES must include references to object manager; *dynamic* description and analysis of KPI values (historic, benchmark, planned and actual), Aggregate Efficiency Index (AEI) for the object in question, financial and operational plans for AEI maximization (KPI value optimization) and internal and external links to *all* knowledge necessary for monitoring and managing the object
 10. *Every* employee and manager must maximize not only efficiency of every object in

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his/her responsibility area, but also its *synergy* with all other corporate objects (which requires effective and efficient teamwork and cooperation)

11. Every corporate manager and employee must be motivated and evaluated according to actual values of AEI and KPI of objects in his/her 'responsibility areas'

12. Practically every organization operates at a very low efficiency (10-15% of its true potential), wasting enormous amounts of time, money and other highly valuable resources

13. Therefore, practically every organization must undertake - and successfully complete! - *comprehensive business audit* (CBA) and *strategic corporate reengineering* (SCR) to maximize organizational efficiency and its aggregate value

14. To achieve these objectives, CBA must be conducted as follows:

- Identify all key corporate objects (KCO)
- Identify missing and excessive KCO

- Develop and fill AES for each KCO, building initial corporate knowledge base (AS IS)

- Determine and analyze KPI and AEI values for each KCO and for the whole *system* of corporate objects

- Develop financial and operational plans for maximizing efficiencies of each KCO and of the whole *system* of corporate objects

15. To achieve these objectives, SCR must be conducted as follows:

- Develop and build a comprehensive optimal/desired *system* of key corporate objects (TO BE)

- Develop and fill AES for each KCO, building a comprehensive desired corporate knowledge base (TO BE)

- Develop and deploy a system of individual customized 'corporate

cockpits' for each corporate manager and employee (individual 'windows' into a comprehensive CKB)

General Guidelines for Conducting a Comprehensive Corporate Analysis

To conduct the most effective and efficient comprehensive corporate analysis (CCA), one must follow a number of basic guidelines (the details of CCA will be discussed in detail in further articles).

Although different organizations and organization systems superficially look very different, they have enough common principles to develop a common basic *key organization management diagram* which with slight changes can be successfully used for describing and managing practically *any* organization.

The first common element for any organization is the structured system of its *key stakeholders* which aggregate needs (financial, functional, emotional and spiritual) must be satisfied by the organization in question. As the *raison d'être* for each and every organization is

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satisfaction of aggregate needs of its stakeholders.

All organizations are influenced by a complex system of *key external factors* (KEF) which are completely outside the sphere of influence of the organization in question. Hence, describing, analyzing and engineering/reengineering of any organization starts with identification, structuring and analysis of the KEF that influence this organization.

The fundamental internal component of any organization is a system of fundamental principles, values and beliefs explicitly or implicitly implemented (embodied) in the organization in question. In order to maximize the efficiency and performance of the organization, this system must be (a) comprehensive; (b) logically consistent and (c) matching facts, logic, common sense and objective reality.

The next important common element of the description of *any* organization

is the structured description of its history. Which must contain *facts* (including dynamics of its attributes and key performance indicators - KPI), *analysis, conclusions* and *comments*.

Another important common element of the description of *any* organization is its *mission* - a sufficiently detailed description of its unique way of maximizing its aggregate value for its stakeholders.

The first step in implementing the mission of an organization is development of its *vision* - a structured general description of how this organization must look and behave in order to execute its mission in the most effective and efficient way.

To turn the vision of the organization into reality, one needs a corporate strategy - a structured description of practical methods for implementing the vision of organization and satisfying the aggregate needs of its stakeholders.

To implement its chosen strategy, the organization must develop and implement a system of *products and services* consumption of which will satisfy the aggregate needs of corporate clients/consumers

and thus will provide them with an aggregate value.

Development and provision of corporate products and/or services requires development and implementation of the corresponding *plans, organizational processes* and corporate *projects*, each of them including *objectives, jobs/activities* for achieving these objectives and resources required to perform these activities.

For the successful implementation of plans, processes and projects, an organization must develop and implement the most appropriate *organization structure*. This structure is typically hierarchical and includes organizational and functional *units* (divisions, departments, etc.) and individual employees which can form cross-functional (“horizontal”) workgroups, committees, etc.

It is quite obvious that stable functioning of an organizational system requires development and enforcement of efficient (i.e. comprehensive, consistent and logical) *organizational code of conduct* and the *organizational (corporate) culture*.

It was proven above that the fundamental objective of managing any organization is maximization of the aggregate value of the

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organization in question (financial + functional + emotional + spiritual) for all of its stakeholders - business owners, NGO sponsors, personnel, clients/customers, suppliers, partners, etc. And in order to achieve harmony between the organization in question and its environment, one must also maximize the aggregate value of each stakeholder to the organizations.

Which requires the optimal structuring and management of relationships with corporate stakeholders (Stakeholders' Relationship Management - SRM). The corresponding SRM technologies are an important component of the AVM methodology and are the further development of well-known CRM technologies (Client Relationships Management) technologies.

To achieve this fundamental objective, one must develop and optimize the system of corporate Key Performance Indicators (KPI). For the most effective and efficient KPI management for each corporate object, AVM methodology contains the corresponding tool - Aggregate Efficiency Scorecard (AES).

Each AES contains information about the manager of the corporate object in question; historic, benchmark, planned and actual KPI values; their analysis and the corresponding conclusions; financial and operational plans for optimizing KPI values as well as links to all internal and external knowledge needed for the most effective and efficient KPI management (including standard queries for relational databases and data mining systems).

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Employee Motivation - The 5 Factors That Drive Performance

By: JP Maroney

Employee motivation is a mystery for many managers. But, it doesn't have to be. Instead, understanding how motivation impacts employee performance, and understanding how to use motivation to improve performance can be reduced to five master keys. Organizations desiring to improve employee motivation need a system in place that consistently rewards employee achievements. I'm always surprised how few organizations have such a system.

However, not all employees respond to the same motivations. Each person has his or her own likes and dislikes, passions, interests and desires. The

role of the successful manager is to learn how to identify what motivates each employee, and learn how to leverage those motives to simultaneously fulfill the goals of the organization, as well as the goals of each employee.

The five key employee motivation factors include: satisfaction, appreciation, recognition, inspiration and compensation.

1. Employee Motivation By Building Satisfaction

In their book "The Service Profit

Chain," James Heskett, W. Earl Sasser, and Leonard Schlesinger make a compelling case that regardless your business, the only way to generate sustained profits is to build a work environment that attracts, focuses, and keeps talented employees. In other words, they have to be motivated to show up, get committed and perform at a level of excellence.

Employee motivation as it relates to employees satisfaction is vitally important. And, it goes way beyond just a "happier workforce." Why?

Because there is an undeniable link

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between satisfied, motivated employees, and satisfied customers. In other words, focus on creating satisfied employees, focus on employee motivation, and those motivated, satisfied employees will take care of your customers.

2. Employee Motivation Through Genuine Appreciation

At times, managers unknowingly sabotage employee motivation by failing to recognize the positive behaviors and achievements of their employees. As a result, employees don't know whether or not they are doing a good job.

I recently had an employee of an organization tell me, "The only time we ever hear anything from management is when we do something wrong!"

Fortunately, savvy managers can improve employee motivation by rewarding employees with personal attention. This can include a pat on the back, a hand-written note, or a quick comment in the hall.

When showing appreciation, be specific. Instead of just saying, "We

really are grateful for the good job you do around here," the approach might be, "I really appreciate how you handled the Franklin Industries account last week when we had to get their rush order out late Friday afternoon. Your effort really made a difference."

By being specific, the employer comes across as much more sincere, and the employee realizes their actions are truly being watched. And, a highly level of employee motivation is the natural result.

3. Employee Motivation Through Recognition

Many people will do for recognition what they will not do for money. And, this is the manager's secret weapon for employee motivation. Some people are motivated by the opportunity to get their name on the wall, receive a trophy at an annual banquet, or see their name in the company newsletter. It gives them an "emotional

payoff" for their actions.

Look for ways to increase employee motivation by recognizing excellence in the workplace. Ring a bell every time an individual or team hits the production target. Put up posters with the photographs of team members who have had the most days without accidents. Give out awards for attendance records. Just do something. It is so inexpensive, yet highly effective in your efforts of employee motivation.

4. Employee Motivation Through Inspiration

Inspiration comes from leadership. This form of employee motivation includes the company's mission, purpose and goals. People want to be part of an organization that is going somewhere, that stands for something, and that provides a

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meaningful service to the marketplace.

If you want to lead an inspired, mission-guided organization, follow these steps and watch employee motivation improve dramatically.

Have a clear mission - in other words, know where you are going.

Be excited and passionate about your mission. After all, if you don't get excited, they won't either.

Be able to communicate the mission, it's value to the marketplace. In other words, why it's worthwhile.

Make sure everyone in the organization understands and can communicate the mission.

Be sure employees understand how they fit into the process of fulfilling the organization's mission.

Make the connection between the

mission and the individual values and goals of your employees.

Keep your mission in front of everyone in the organization.

5. Employee Motivation Through Compensation

Some employees are motivated by money. In fact, most are motivated by money; at least for their basic needs. Employee motivation through compensation can come in the form of raises, performance bonuses, commissions, profit sharing, or any number of "extra benefits" like, automobiles, vacations, or other tangible items purchased and used as rewards.

I noticed an interesting program in a hotel where I recently stayed. They have a sophisticated system for rewarding employees based on

customer feedback. Throughout the hotel, they have placed customer feedback forms and boxes for depositing the forms. When customers comment on the performance of a hotel employee, the employee accumulates points that can be used to purchase rewards like trips, gifts, and other incentives.

Taking Action On Employee Motivation

Whatever the chosen method, it is important to have a system in place that builds employee motivation. Not every person is motivated by the same factor, or combination of factors. Offering all five - satisfaction, appreciation, recognition, inspiration and compensation insures that the organization has something to contribute to the motivation of each employee.

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Time Management Benefits-

How To Reap The Payoffs of An Effective Time Management Program

By: Eddy K. Elgin

In the modern world today, many people are busy pursuing many things in their lives, thus the need of an effective time management is never been so crucial than now.

Payoffs Of An Effective Time Management Program

Whether you are working for people or yourself, you need to have an effective and easy to follow time

management program. In fact, there are many payoffs or benefits of a time management program, and definitely not restrict to just being your work done more effectively and productively.

To start with, you may stop from being reactive in your work or life and begin to work towards your goals.

People who are able to follow up on their goals that they set for themselves are more likely to be successful in their lives. Studies have

shown that those who make an effort to plan their time properly tend to achieve more in life both, emotionally and financially.

When they stop wasting time they are able to manage their resources better in order to give priority to those areas in their lives life that really need them.

You may have heard of the saying, "profits are lost equals to time are lost". I believe you may certainly agree with me to a certain extent.

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If you have your own a business, this is undoubtedly true for you. Managing your time better will help you to achieve massive improvements in your performances at the office (and hopefully those will correspond to furthering your career).

Of course, besides from your financial reasons the other benefits or payoffs of time management of course apply to your private life.

With proper effective time management, you can have more time to be with your family. You can be the work at home mom and benefit from your superior time management skills.

It may sound too good to be true or grand, you can really control your destiny through simple time management principles or strategies. In addition, you will also be able to see all your goals realized - what other skill or industry can promise you that?

In fact, the true benefit or payoff of a time management program is the happiness it brings into your lifestyle. And the payoffs just don't stop at this level; they are also more

visible in your business sales turnover and in your career.

Well, a good time management plan or program can show you more good benefits than just helping you to establish a to-do list and a schedule for each day of each month.

Take action now is the most right thing to do if you want you goals realized.

What is The Biggest Benefit or Payoff Of An Effective Time Management

The ability to help you figure out where is your time wasted. That's one of the reason why the benefit is so great.

This fact, which combined with how time management also teaches you about priorities, is a

powerful combination for changing your life into what you want it to be.

When we mention about priorities, understand that there are things in your life you should not avoid. These are the events you have to take care of. Then there are events in life that you can get away that can be taken care of another day.

Having said that, this goes on the less important list of things needing to be done. This process - finding out what you are doing to waste your time and focusing on priorities - is the real benefit or payoff of time management program.

You can really take advantage of the payoffs of time management if you were to follow the effective techniques and plan accordingly. You will find that as you get better at your plan, you will be faster at accomplishing those tasks.

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The basic fact to effective time management is that you have to be very disciplined in following your plan and program. You have to stick with your plan that you have create for yourself.

If, following your plan seems daunting, then it may be too unrealistic (or you may not be trying hard enough). The fact that you have to set realistic goals to reap the true benefits or payoffs of time management.

Even though, you may now realise that true benefit or payoff of time management, all words no actions is simply does not make your goals come true.

Take action now is the most right thing to do if you want you goals realized.

Without an effective and proper time management system, there will not be much goal-oriented lifestyle to hope for.

Understanding the fact of a good time management program that are easy to follow and implement and now allowing you to side-track is really allowing you to enjoy your life once again. So, please do not wait any longer before giving another excuse to realize your goals again.

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A Career Nursing Is it the Right Choice for You?

By: Jonathan Duarte

Looking for information on a career in nursing? No better place to start than right here!

Less than a decade ago, people who were enrolling in nursing school were being told that they were crazy. They were told that the job was brutal, and that there simply were no jobs out there for nurses straight out of the Registered Nurse training programs.

Well, flash forward to the end of the first decade of the new century. Prognosticators who study the healthcare industry have been predicting for a while that the situation with regards to the availability of jobs for nurses was going to change- and boy, has it! Health care providers such as hospitals and nursing homes are waking up to the realization that as

people leave nursing positions, it's becoming very hard to fill those positions with new, qualified nurses. This has led to extreme competition for qualified nurses, and not only on a local (national) but worldwide scale.

The benefit of the shortage, to nurses, will be an improved future work environment, as employers try to better conditions in order to attract quality candidates. However, in the short-term, it's putting a lot of strain on everyone and may actually exacerbate the frustrations nurses may have, which may cause them to not only leave their jobs but also discourage others from becoming nurses.

In order to ensure that the current crisis in nursing does not continue much further into the future, the two areas of retention and recruitment

need to be addressed. This article will take a look at some of the topics that come up among nurses when it comes to addressing these issues.

Making sure that nurses are happy within their current career in nursing so that they stay in the profession is vital to stabilize the crisis. With anywhere from 25-40% of nurses are expected to retire over the next ten years, ensuring that younger members of the work force stay at their jobs is more important than ever.

The general public is coming to the realization that nurses play just as important a role in the healthcare system as doctors and other medical professionals do, and the industry is starting to realize it, as well. Many nurses complain that they are not accorded the level of respect they deserve, as nursing is seen as less of

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a “profession” and more of a “job”. Physicians are often guilty of this, making nurses feel as if they are simply there to mechanically carry out the doctor’s orders, and nothing more. As the system loses more and more nurses, it will become more and more important to grant those remaining the appropriate level of respect.

A benefit of the current nursing shortage (if you can consider it a benefit) is that non-nurses are finally starting to realize how rigorous the training and testing processes for becoming an RN are. It takes just as long to become a nurse as it does to earn a B. A., B.S., or any other undergraduate degree!

Another oft-cited concern of professional nurses is that the conditions in their places of work are very poor. In this case, work conditions do not apply to the many different situations a nurse will have to put up with from patients during a course of a day; rather, they concern areas of the job that are directly informed by management policy, such as hours of work, nurse to patient ratio, the use of support staff, and the condition of equipment.

A standard nurse’s schedule includes a combination of both day and night shifts. Clearly, it’s impossible to run a medical facility without nurses, so it isn’t as if the night shift can just be eliminated. However, some suggestions for parity include paying extra for nurses that work the night shift, or adding a third “swing shift” to the rotation so that the night shift is not as long as the day shift is.

Continued increases in the budget of the United States government in the area of health care are tagged to help resolve, among other things, the concerns of nurses both with support staff and with equipment. The job of a nurse

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involves quite a lot of lifting, so it is incredibly important if any nurses are going to make it through to retirement while still holding on to jobs in nursing that the equipment available in the hospital eases their burden in this area. Many nurses find that they are also doing duties that are traditionally thought of as the responsibilities of receptionists and orderlies, and in order for nurses to attend to their nursing duties, sooner or later facilities will have to streamline funds so that these support levels are taken care of by staff other than nurses.

In the short term, the nurse to patient ratio will continue to be the biggest problem concerning both nurses and patients. The nursing shortage means that most facilities cannot fill vacant positions needed in order to bring the ratio down to a level that nurses are comfortable with.

However, by properly addressing the issue, there is hope that this situation can be resolved.

Recruitment of nurses is the second vital area in the future of nursing. This area will see a marked attempt to train more nurses as well as efforts by all facilities to offer enticing deals to attract nurses to positions within them. Those that do not or cannot offer sufficiently attractive enticements will find that they do not have the nursing staff necessary to run their facilities.

One of the biggest concerns is that the output of nurses from universities and colleges does not match the number of nurses that are leaving. In addition, many graduating nurses are not going to work in traditional areas such as hospitals, instead choosing the lower levels of stress and the higher levels of pay available at other facilities, such as jails and nursing homes.

In order to improve the patient to nurse ratio that is such a common complaint among nurses, it is vital to increase the number of students coming out of nursing schools across the country. Universities and colleges need to have the funding available to create these spaces. In addition, facilities and governments will have to offer programs such as student loan forgiveness programs in order to attract potential students to the profession.

The last decade has seen a massive growth in secondary industries targeted towards nurses. These industries include nursing agencies and travel nursing programs which hire their own nurses and then contract them out to facilities in need. These nurses are generally higher paid than their counterparts in the facilities they are contracted out to. In addition, they get to change their

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place of work frequently, often with all travel expenses paid. Facilities are going to need to take a look at this practice and determine if they are willing to offer the kind of wages and benefits that these nurses are receiving if they ever hope to have a stable work force.

As far as the nursing profession goes, the long term future is bright. The current shortage allows a graduating nurse to virtually write his or her own ticket. In addition, the shortage is expected to grow worse, which has pushed the concerns of nurses into the public spotlight. In order to alleviate the shortage, governments and facilities will have no choice but to meet the concerns of nurses in order to keep them at their jobs.

Alternatively, the future of the nursing profession may lie within nursing agencies. Unless facilities and governments realize that the concerns of nurses need to be met at the ground level, new and established nurses alike will continue to gravitate towards the pay and flexibility that these agencies offer.

I hope you've found this discussion useful, and it's obvious that a career in nursing is something that needs to be thought about pretty seriously. Good luck!

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Tips for Finding a Good Long Term Care Facility

By: Seth Molton

What is an ideal long term care facility? Various answers cropped up from the aged who, after all, make up a big percentage of the recipients of caring services in the USA and elsewhere for that matter.

Most men and women in their retirement years still prefer to be cared for by their children right in the comforts of their homes. However true, there are some individuals accustomed to their independence and would rather be

under the care of nursing institutions or retirement communities.

Living with your children and opting for the services of a nursing home or an assisted living facility have its advantages, but you shouldn't discount the fact that each also has its downside.

For instance, home care will ensure you're well taken care of because your kids or other relatives will be present 24/7 to assist you in all areas of

activities of daily living (ADL), such as eating, bathing, using the toilet, dressing up, and performing house chores among others. Unfortunately, you cannot count on them to administer medications especially if you have a serious health condition because they are not trained professionally on the medical or nursing field.

Those who can afford to pay a professional would prefer home health care and, thus, hire a licensed

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nurse or medical practitioner to look after them, and attend to their medical needs. However helpful this is to a patient, studies done on long term care show that the government will not shoulder the expenses of caring services performed in one's home except if the reason behind it is medical.

Meanwhile, patients with low to no income are an exception in the eyes of the government. So even if the reason for their home care is nonmedical, the government will definitely consider paying the home care services that were provided to them.

Cost of Long Term Care

Your budget for long term care will depend on your choice or type of long term care facility. If you will opt

for home care or home health care, you will not spend as much as you would in a nursing home or assisted living facilities.

Besides your budget, however, your health condition is also an important factor to consider when choosing a caring facility. At home, your medical equipment is probably limited to the basic such as a sphygmomanometer, thermometer, weighing scale, and perhaps a nebulizer. Unfortunately, these are not enough to address very serious conditions like heart diseases, cancer, respiratory problems, and many others that require complete medical facilities.

Apart from the fact that licensed nurses and therapists are employed by

nursing homes and assisted living quarters, these places are equipped with the necessary medical facilities to constantly monitor the progress or deterioration of your health condition.

In 2010, it was recorded that a nursing home in America roughly cost \$200 a day. That made an annual cost of \$73,000, which a retiree had to fork over from his savings account. Investing in a pension plan could have saved him a chunk of his hard earned money.


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Best Cities for Technology Jobs - 7 High-Tech Cities

By: Michelle Taylor

If you want to relocate to a tech-savvy city—a city that offers great prospects for technology talent—then you'll love the seven cities listed below. Each of the 7 cities below have above-average brainpower (smart populations), great technology infrastructure, and a growing technology job sector.

1. Seattle, WA

- Forty seven percent of Seattle's population holds a bachelor's degree

or higher, making Seattle the "brainiest" city in the U.S. Seattle is well-known for its technology infrastructure (wireless city), and growing tech industry. Microsoft and Nintendo are both located in Redmond, just outside of Seattle. Notable technology companies located within (or nearby) Seattle include Real Networks, Tmobile, Amazon, Clearwire, Infopop, Zillow.com, and Expedia.com. Just like San Jose and San Francisco, Seattle seems to attract many internet startups.

2. Austin, TX

- Like Seattle, more than 40% of Austin's population holds a bachelor's degree. This is one of the highest percentages in the nation. Austin is the state capital and attracts talent from The University of Texas at Austin and Texas A&M University (Texas A&M is located in neighboring College Station). The weather is warm and sunny in Austin, and Texas has no state income tax. Notable technology/engineering companies

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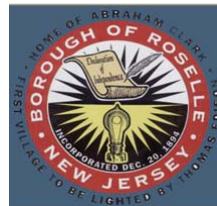


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headquartered in Austin include Dell Computers, National Instruments, and Austin Semiconductors.

3. San Francisco Bay Area, CA

- San Francisco has always attracted people with intellectual and technology talent. Forty-five percent of San Francisco's residents hold bachelor's degrees, second only to Seattle, and The City by the Bay ranks third for its concentration of graduate and professional degrees. The infamous dot-com era began in San Francisco, and to this day, many internet and software companies are headquartered in the Bay Area. Notable companies include: BitTorrent, Craigslist, Blogspot, Digg, Google, Linden Lab (Second Life), Salesforce.com, Typepad, Technorati, Cnet, SBC Communications, and Sega.

4. Raleigh-Durham, NC

- Raleigh-Durham, also known as "The Triangle," attracts some the brightest minds due to its proximity to 3 major universities (Duke University, NC State, UNC-Chapel Hill), and Research Triangle Park—a well-known biotech, business and research center. 44% of Raleigh residents age 25 and older hold bachelor's degrees. Notable companies in the Triangle area include: Cisco, IBM, Lenovo, SAS, Progress Energy, NetApp, and RBC Centura.

5. Atlanta, GA

- Atlanta is rapidly becoming one of the fastest growing metropolitan cities in the Southeast and is a virtual hotbed for technology workers. Forty-two percent of Atlanta residents hold a bachelor's degree or higher, and Atlanta is home to Georgia Tech and Georgia State. Notable companies headquartered in Atlanta include: AT&T, CNN, Cox Communications, Lucent Technologies, Data General, Hewlett-Packard, Earthlink, Home Depot, Delta Airlines, Lockheed Martin (in Marietta), Siemens, SunTrust Bank, Equifax, and Web.com.

6. Colorado Springs, CO

- Colorado can be described as a small-scale Seattle—a rapidly growing technology center that is attracting highly educated workers. Colorado Springs is known for its aerospace research and military installations including the North American Air Defense Command (NORAD), Fort Peterson Air Force Base, and The U.S. Air Force Academy. This mountain city has the lowest percentage of high

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school dropouts. (It is one of just two places with a dropout rate below 10 percent.) Notable companies in Colorado Springs include: Hewlett-Packard and 17 other major electronics companies which combined employ over 10,000 people. Other companies with a presence in the city include Oracle, T. Rowe Price, Progressive Insurance, and Amtel.

7. Washington, D.C.

- It's no surprise that Washington D.C. has a strong technology industry since the city is home to the federal government, world-renown research institutes, lobbying firms, and one of the highest concentrations of law offices. More than one-fifth of D.C. residents have graduate or professional degrees, and notable companies in D.C. include: XM Satellite Radio, Carlyle Group, CSPAN, Lincoln Group, Allbritton Communications Company, and Blue State Digital.

Are these the only options for top technology cities? Of course not - here are some other top technology cities and [top "smart" cities](#) Explore your options, and see which city is the right fit for you.

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Cultural Diversity

By: Damien Perrotin,
originally published by *The View from Brittany* | MAR 4, 2013

Modern societies like cultural diversity, preferably when it is far away, reasonably photogenic and does not inconvenience them politically. They also like to marginalize minority cultures and transform them either into folkloric caricatures or into assimilated ghosts of their former selves. During the last two centuries, modern civilization has absorbed most of Earth's cultural diversity and is currently quite busy assimilating or destroying the rest while multiplying the subcultures in its midst. It is a typical case of replacing geographical cultural diversity by internal heterogeneity. It had to be expected from societies which had, until recently, accumulated an embarrassing surplus of cheap energy, but that is still a bad idea, and one which will become really problematic as our energetic surplus dries up.



Contrary to what many people think we aren't a fangless, clawless maladapted ape which only its intelligence saved from extinction. We are superb long distance runners and walkers. We are very good at throwing things at mobile

targets – for instances sharpened sticks at antelopes. We have a very good cooling system which makes us very heat-tolerant and a remarkable eyesight which makes us highly

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effective predators in an open or semi-open environment.

We are tropical savanna animals, at home in steppes and prairies provided there are at least a few trees in them but ill at ease in dense forests, where a predator can strike without warning. It is not by chance that we wrestled the world from our competitors at a time when most of Eurasia was covered by cold steppes. The outcome would have been very different in a warmer, wetter climate.

It is obvious, however, that we don't all live in tropical savannas. In fact, a significant part of the human population lives in ecosystems totally unsuited for our species such as swamps (where our cooling system kind of underperform) or tundras (remember, we are *tropical* animals). We have to some extent adapted our bodies to those new environments but this remains

limited. People living in cold climates are lighter-skinned, not fur-covered.

In fact, humanity has a very low genetic diversity, to the point it could become a problem should a really nasty bug arise, and the diversity which matters (for instance the prevalence of haemochromatosis in north-western Europe) is most of the time totally unrelated to today's ethnic and cultural realities.

During most of our history, we have adapted to new environments, or to changes in our environment, by developing new technologies or social devices. Thus, when the climate changed 12,000 years ago and the herds which kept our paleolithic ancestors fed and clothed retreated northward, the tribes of Western Europe adopted the bow, a weaker but more accurate weapon than the spear-thrower, to hunt in the dense forests which soon came to cover Europe. Their cousins in the middle-east

gathered around fields of wild cereals, changing their social structure to adapt to their new situation.

This is by now way a foolproof process. The native population of Kangaroo Island, or, more recently, the Greenland Vikings failed to adapt to a changing environment and went extinct, as did the first inhabitants of Palau.

Developing and maintaining a technology or a set of customs is costly and in small populations even basic technologies can be lost. The natives of Sentinel Island, for instance, no longer know how to make fire and the Mesolithic tribes of Western Europe quickly discarded the spear-thrower when reindeer were replaced by more elusive deer and roes.

Indeed, human groups tend to discard technologies they no longer

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need. After the late bronze age collapse, for instance, the highly organized Mycennian kingdoms were destroyed and replaced by a collection of independent villages too poor and too small to need a bureaucracy. The royal scribes became peasants and writing was forgotten in a mere generation.

The result has been a specialization of human groups, a trend reinforced by linguistic and cultural drift – inevitable in a low-tech environment – but also by our tendency, as social animals, to build our collective identity around cultural markers. Of course mergers, more or less voluntary, happen as does cultural diffusion but even a cursory look at a linguistic map of pre-industrial Europe or of pre-contact America will show that their effects have been temporary at best.

A wave of newcomers could unify culturally a large areas, as the Indo-Europeans did in Europe, the Bantus

in Africa and the Pama–Nyungan in Australia, but they will soon fall to the combined forces of specialization and cultural fragmentation.

The advent of cheap and plentiful energy changed the rules of the game, however. Long distance conquest and tribute extraction are probably as old as empires, and in no way a Western specialty. Imposing one’s culture in an ecosystem to which it was not suited was quite another matter. European invaders could conquer the precolombian American states, which, by definition, were located in areas suited to agriculture. They could colonize the eastern seaboard which has roughly the same climate as Western Europe. Permanently occupying the rain forests, the deserts or the pampa was far more problematic. Those areas remained under effective Indian control until very late in the game. It was even worst (or better, depending from your point of view) in

Africa where diseases played against us.

Fossil fuels, however, enabled us to fit the environment to our culture rather than the other way around. This is not an uncommon occurrence in nature and something very similar happens every time we flood a meadow with manure. This sudden glut of nutrients favors fast-growing weedy species which will soon smother out more efficient but less profligate plants, leaving very verdant but quite monotonous grass meadows. A similar process has been happening all over the world since the beginning of the industrial age, causing growth-oriented variants of European and East-Asian cultures to spread to areas where, in normal times, they could not have thrived. It also has caused the rise of a global meta-culture characterized by a common faith in progress.

The other, more specialized cultures, survive only in margins and should

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industrialism have proved sustainable, they would have had to choose between dying out and becoming a mere variant of the the global culture.

We know, however, that industrialism is not sustainable. Earth's innards holds only so much recoverable fossil fuels and we have already extracted the best part of it. Production of crude oil has plateaued and it is only a matter of time before other fossil fuels follow suit. Ultimately our civilization will be left with only what wind sun and water can provide. While this does not mean that all our technologies will become unsustainable, our current strategy of adapting our environment to ourselves clearly will.

Add to this that the environment itself is likely to drastically change thanks to our deplorable habit of dumping truckloads of CO2 into the atmosphere, and it becomes quite obvious that cultural diversity will come back with a vengeance. Western – and East-Asian culture will have to retreat from areas unsuited to their preferred lifestyle, or change so much in the process that it will amount to the same. The poster child for this will probably be American desert cities such as Phoenix or Las Vegas, but northern China or the Southern Spain are prime candidates for such an evolution too. Whoever will inhabit those areas two centuries from now will have to adopt the same lifestyle as preindustrial desert tribes.

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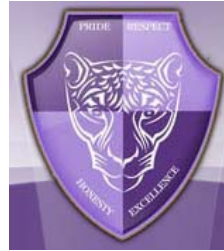


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The problem is that those who have kept the technologies, both social and material, needed to thrive in ecosystem hostile to European or East-Asian style agriculture are likely to be early casualties. Even when they still form viable cultural units, they are too specialized to survive intact the effect of global warming. Besides, they are militarily extremely weak and would be destroyed without the protection of modern nation states – even the Sentinelese, who have made a habit of shooting down everybody sailing too close to their island will be soon overrun when Indian policemen will stop protecting them.

This means that we will have to rebuild a cultural diversity anew by acquiring skills and social habits adapted to ecosystems which do not yet exist at the exact moment the few people who still master those skills are on the verge of cultural extinction. Moreover, those people won't profit in any way from our collapse for the world we will left will be different enough that , to survive, they will have to completely reconfigure their culture. The Inuits, for instance, may still exist two centuries from now, especially in Greenland, but they will be more likely to raise cattle than to hunt seals, they will have horses, not sled dogs and the place of snow and

ice in their culture will have been seriously reduced.

Even so, rebuilding cultural diversity is by no mean an impossible task. As a species we are very good at borrowing technologies and cultural features from our neighbors and calling them our own. Here in Brittany we eat a very typical buckwheat pancake called “galette”, yet buckwheat is a Chinese, which was never cultivated in Western Europe before the XIVth century.

In fact, the internal diversity of our own society, doomed as it is, can be an asset in that matter. While I fail to

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see the point of most of our subcultures, their sheer number means that there always will be someone to document or perpetuate the technological and societal skills of some half-forgotten tribe. Whether it will be enough, however, is quite another matter as it means preserving a knowledge which will be quite irrelevant to our everyday life until quite late in the game. This implies a serious amount of geekery and self-marginalization and definitely won't get you money or influence.

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Educational reform movements and how these reforms influence the classroom.

By: Steve Bross

Considering my age, and I guess I was in the first phase of technology, I have seen its effects from industry to education. When I was in advertising my graduating class was the first wave to start really using computers in the design process. A lot of older designers were like fish out of water and either took the opportunity to learn the software and adjust or they tended to slowly disappear from the game. This same faze is now happening in education and I can see some of the older teaches begin to choose from the older ideas and the new. I do not see how at this point we could ever go back to just textbooks and pencils. Today's education needs to move even fast to keep with the way today's students are receiving their information. Best of luck to all of us.

Trends in Educational Reform:

Technology is a such a dominant force in today's world, that it is no hard to understand the effects it is having on our educational system. The need for technology is not only a benefit for students with disabilities, but also allows the information taught in schools to be presented the same way they are receiving information from the internet and video games...digitally. The state and local levels have committed themselves to changing the way schools operate with a variety changes in curriculum, administration and student/parent communications. The fact that I am a new teacher and need to find information faster than ever, the internet is always the first place I will go to start a research project. Everyone involved with educational system can see what needs to be done, the only problem is the cost for the upgrades in curriculum and equipment.

When Did the Current Wave of Education Reform Begin?

In the early 1980's the powers that be felt the economy was directly effected by the overall scores from students in the united states compared to other countries, the public education system quickly fell under the microscope. The educational reform in the 1980's was generated from several sources not just the challenges of the federal government. In 1983 the famous article titled "Nation at Risk" was written about how we are becoming a country of mediocrity that threatens the future of our nation. The article made strong points about how we are falling behind in commerce, industry, science and technological innovations.

In response to the "Nation at Risk" came the first wave of educational



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reform. One of the most dramatic changes in this first wave of reform was in the area of standardized tests. During this first wave many states began legislation of merit pay systems designed to reward teacher for excellence. Despite the original focus of the first wave movements for educational reforms research now shows that neither standardization nor merit pay led to effective student learning.

Some of the greatest complaints in the American educational system and policies were that they were guided by a top down approach. Some of the more popular theories of this time included:

- Constructivism
- Multiple intelligence theories
- Site based management
- Teacher professionalism
- Charter Schools
- Educational Management Organizations
- School Choice and Home Schooling

Each of these was designed to bring school reform into being accountable for educational outcomes. One of the most notable examples of systemic reform came from the federal government in the form of "Goals 2000" which mandated such things as pre-schooling and increasing national graduation rates by 90%. Further on came President George Bush's national education agenda in the form of "No Child Left Behind" which gave broad range to

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educational initiatives and goals.

How Does Educational Reform Relate to Computers & Informational Technology?

Computers and computer technologies are changing the way teachers communicate with their administration and with other teachers not only in the same school but also across the globe. Also, in our class alone we are able to purchase software that allows the students to learn math, science and other applications at their own pace. The use of video tutorials and learning activities allows the information to be processed in different ways. The visual learner has so many options in today's education.

Computers in the Classroom – Real Examples:

One example of computers in the classroom comes from Computer as a Learning Partner. Directed by Dr. Marcia Linn of Berkeley's Graduate School of Education attempts to forge a conceptual understanding of science through the use of computer-assisted instruction. CLP focuses on the software tools that are designed to help students construct an understanding of science. In this case CLP software has become a powerful instructional tool and is supported by a web homepage dedicated to Computers, Teachers and Peers as Science Learning Partners.

At Rosewood Elementary School, fifth graders are exploring science, history and world events over the internet. KIDS '95, a free international networking service sponsored by the group known as KIDLINK which allows various networking activities. KIDLINK has united more than 37,000 children between the ages of 10 and 15 from over 71 nations. One of KIDLINK's most popular activities, children and their teachers are united in topical discussions known as Internet Relay Chats (IRC's). This

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type of technology allows students to talk to student all over the world at any time of the day. This is just an amazing thing for students to be aware of and use to grow the education levels.

Some people will argue that one of the best ways to get young students to learn is to fool them into learning. At Northwestern University's Institute for the Learning Sciences (ILS), researchers are designing games and multimedia tools that engage students and teach them skills that can be put them to good use in other forms of media and research.

Community for Learning:

The Community for Learning (CFL) website was created by the Temple University Department of Education that is dedicated to "building diversity" through:

- School
- Expectations
- Responsibility
- Diversity
- Community
- Home
- Resilience

Within this website there are a number of links that further develop an understanding and the responsibilities of the CFL in the learning community. CFL is a school reform program that

draws over 20 years of research on what makes schools work. The role of CFL is to assist the schools by accomplishing its' goals through providing professional development and technical assistance to all individuals involved in a child's learning environment.

The CFL provides a research based approach to school wide reform through suggested restructuring such as:

- Developing a school plan based upon the resources in the school
- Initiating a data based staff development program

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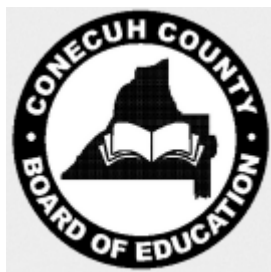
Russell County School District



506 14th Street Phenix City, AL 36867-5131 www.russellcountyschools.org

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- Providing an individually tailored professional development program
- Technical assistance for CFL implementation
- Creating a school wide structure to join regular teachers with specialists and administrators to meet the needs of diverse students
- Along with a few examples, testimonials and specific examples the site can help jump start any school to the implementation of technology in your school.

Conclusion:

Having the ability to include technology in the classroom is such a key part for aspects of the education process. From the teachers point of view the information provided on the internet is endless. In almost any case if a student could use some help in a specific subject matter there is a web site out there for him/her. In my program of study (Visual Communications) I will so often give the students a list of web sites to look at for tips and tricks and even just to get an idea of art styles. A normal lesson packet for me will contain a power point presentation, self paced video tutorials, a learning packet and research topics to look up on the web. This pretty much gives every student the opportunity to learn in whatever style may work for them. Our school has gone under a 22 million dollar renovation and technology is a huge part of this process. I can't wait to see what advancements there are over the next 5 years...

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The 7 Secrets of Success

By: Alex Cleanthous

Have you ever wondered why two people, who have started with all the same advantages and disadvantages, which seem similar in almost every way, can end up in different places? Have you ever wondered why two people, who have started with all the same advantages and disadvantages, which seem similar in almost every way, can end up in different places?

Have you ever wondered how somebody can start with all the disadvantages in life, yet achieve success that surpasses those who start with all the advantages? Have you ever wondered how somebody

can start with all the disadvantages in life, yet achieve success that surpasses those who start with all the advantages?

Have you ever wondered how somebody can start with nothing, yet build a multi-million dollar fortune in just a few years?

The main difference between those who achieve greatness in their lives, to those who only achieve mediocrity is the psychology of success.

Here are the 7 traits of a psychology of success.

1. POSITIVE THINKING

You've heard the saying that to think positive is to see the glass as half full, and to think negative is to see the glass as half empty? Well, positive thinking is taking the 'glass half full' mentality and applying it to every part of your life.

Successful people are optimists. Successful people always find the positive from any situation, problem or issue that lies in their path to success. Successful people always believe that whatever it is that is happening in their life is happening for a purpose.

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More importantly, by thinking positive you're able to learn much, much more from everything that happens to you, good or bad. It's often said that you learn the most from your problems, temporary failures and issues that you face, not from the successes. But you can only get the learning you need by thinking positive and finding the benefit from the situation, learning what you can do to avoid it in the future, and continuing on your path to success.

2. SOLUTION ORIENTATION

Everybody has problems in their life. Everyone has issues they need to overcome to achieve success. The difference between successful people and unsuccessful people is how they handle the problems in their life.

Unsuccessful people have the 'poor me' mentality. Unsuccessful people believe that things are happening to them, that they have no control over what is happening. Even worse, they

complain about the problems in their life: complaining is the single, most obvious sign of an unsuccessful person.

Successful people, on the other hand, have a solution oriented mentality. Successful people believe that there is a solution to the problems that they are currently facing. Successful people believe that there is always another way to overcome any issue.

More importantly, successful people act rather than complain. Successful people never complain, they always look for a solution to overcome the problem that they're facing, regardless of how dire the situation seems.

3. THINKING BIG

Successful people think big. Unsuccessful people think small. Successful people have a goal for a better life. Unsuccessful people don't have any goals at all. Successful people know that they are destined for a better life.

Unsuccessful people accept their life as it is.

Thinking big is an essential trait of successful people. Thinking big is when you

see in your mind's eye a goal that is bigger than you are. Thinking big is having a dream and working at making that dream come true. Thinking big is when you visualize what your life would be like if it were perfect in every respect, then taking action on making it happen.

The best example I can think of when it comes to thinking big is that of Bill Gates. Before he started Microsoft he had a vision, of what he would like to achieve in his life... that every business and every household should have a computer. He followed his dream and has created a life that, in the beginning, was just a dream.

4. AMBITION

Ambition is a strong desire to succeed. Ambition is when you put in great effort to achieve something important in your life. Ambition is when you are so excited about achieving your goal that moving towards your goal is like been sucked into a tornado.

Successful people are ambitious. Unsuccessful people are not. Successful people are eager to reach their goals. Unsuccessful people have no goals to be eager about. Successful people don't just sit of the sideline and wait for things to happen to them, they take action

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every day because they are eager to make things happen. Successful people have such a strong desire to make things happen that nothing can stop them.

5. SENSE OF URGENCY

Time is the most valuable and the most limited resource in the world. Successful people know this, unsuccessful people don't. Successful people move at a very fast pace. Unsuccessful people don't. Successful people want to make things happen today. Unsuccessful people keep putting things off until tomorrow... the problem is that tomorrow never comes.

Moving with a sense of urgency means not wasting time on the mundane. Moving with a sense of urgency means trying to squeeze more into a day. Moving with a sense of urgency means moving faster every day. Moving with a

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sense of urgency means working late into the evening to get stuff done today. Moving with a sense of urgency means getting those tasks that have the greatest impact on your results done today.

Think about it... the steps required to make \$1,000,000 are the same whether you take one year or ten. Successful people know this and they want to achieve their goals in the shortest possible time. Another thing to think about is that the chances of you achieving a goal drastically diminish with time. This means that you have a greater chance of earning \$1,000,000 in one year, rather than in ten.

6. RESULTS FOCUSED

Successful people are satisfied by pleasing results. Unsuccessful people are satisfied by pleasing actions. Successful people are focused on the result they achieve.

Unsuccessful people are focused on how they do the task.

Being results focused means setting goals and objectives, and doing everything in your power to achieve them. Being results focused means only being satisfied with results. Being results focused means not wasting time. Being results focused means taking action on the most important tasks and getting them done.

You've heard about the 80/20 rule? This simply means that 20% of your activities are responsible for 80% of your results, and 80% of your activities are responsible for 20% of your results. Being results focused means knowing what the 20% of tasks contribute 80% of the results and working single mindedly on those tasks until they are completed.

7. PERSISTENCE

Persistence is the single most important characteristic of successful people.

Persistence is what makes all the other characteristics fall into place.

Successful people never give up. Unsuccessful people quit. Successful people know there will be setbacks and temporary failures but keep moving forward despite of them. Unsuccessful people can't handle the setbacks and temporary failures and quit.

Persistence is never giving up. Persistence is never quitting. Persistence is when you know your goal, what you want to achieve in life, and deciding to never give up on achieving that goal. Persistence is deciding to either achieve your goal, or die trying.

Persistence in when you keep moving forward on your goal even when things seem their darkest. And with persistence, you will achieve anything you want to achieve in life... within reason.

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Living Small Doesn't Serve You or the World

By: Keith Renninson

I received a special gift from a friend a few years ago. It was a framed speech delivered by Nelson Mandela at his Inauguration in 1994. I've learned since that Mary Ann Williamson originally wrote it, but evidently Mandela like the piece so well he used it too. As with other unique sayings, I have it displayed in prominently my home where I can read it often. I would like to quote the entire speech because it is a wonderful expression of a life philosophy.

“Our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate.

Our deepest fear is that we are powerful beyond measure.

It is our light, not our darkness that most frightens us.

We ask ourselves, who am I to be brilliant, gorgeous, talented and fabulous?

Actually, who are you not to be?

You are a child of God; your playing small doesn't serve the world.

There's nothing enlightened about shrinking so other people won't feel insecure around you.

We are born to make manifest the glory of God that is within us.

It's not just in some of us; it's in everyone.

And as we let our own light shine, we unconsciously give other people permission to do the same.

As we are liberated from our own fear, our presence automatically liberates

others.”

As I have read this quotation over and over in years past, one phrase seems to stand out for me: “Your are a child of God, your playing small doesn't serve the world. There's nothing enlightened about shrinking so other's won't feel insecure around you.”

Many people keep themselves small on purpose. I can look back on my life and see times when I did this; it never served me well. I acted this way, as the quote stipulates, so that others wouldn't feel insecure around me. But in the long run, I found it was me getting the short end of the stick, because I wasn't being true to my own ultimate goals.

To live a life without limits is more than most of us can imagine. And

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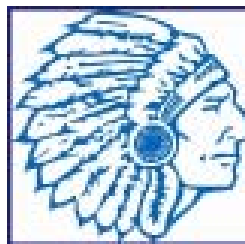


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frankly, it scares us to be “powerful beyond measure.” But, what would your life be like if you stepped out of the crowd and did it your way, to allow yourself to see your own true potential and reach for it without fear? So few of us do it, but we all dream about, don’t we?

The U. S. Army had the perfect advertising campaign slogan a few years ago: “Be All You Can Be.” Until recently, I don’t know if I truly understood this statement clearly. And if asked, I don’t think most people would say they do either.

To take a chance, to see if you can really make a mark and accomplish

something spectacular is out of the realm of possibility for a lot of people. I don’t know if it’s because we have so many choices in America that we never become the masters of something, or, if time passes, suddenly you’re older, mid-thirties say, and still searching for “what are you gonna be when you grow up?”

It is truly lamentable that we set so low of a standard for ourselves. Granted, there are those who have circumstances that don’t allow them to excel, but outside of those individuals how many us take up the challenge to be in some way “brilliant, gorgeous, talented and fabulous”?

We never know what we are capable of until we try. If you never give into the fear you might just find out.

When you look at the man giving this speech, Nelson Mandela, the words become even more enlightening. The triumphs of this man are legendary and admirable to say the least. But, his words speak to all people everywhere.

He lived the line: “And as we let our own light shine, we unconsciously give other people permission to do the same.” What a role model he has become. To live

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your convictions, to speak your mind and take a responsible stand for greatness is conceivable and he proved it.

Mediocrity has risen to new heights because there is no high standard to shoot for. Quality in the work place and in schools is at an all time low, because such low standards have become acceptable. Sorry, but to me that's unacceptable.

Don't agree to it anymore, liberate yourself from your fears and make your presence known. Show others how well something can be done, and find satisfaction in it. You will walk a little taller, you'll smile more

often because you took pride in what you've accomplished, and because of it, you will continue to grow.

"We are born to make manifest the glory of God that is within us. It's not just in some of us, it's in everyone." It's hard to read that line and not feel the down deep growling of desire to be what you are capable of; to fight the good fight and struggle to actually become one of those dreams you had as a child when everything seemed possible.

We hear "you can't do that" so much in our lifetimes that sadly, we come to believe it. Re-capture that lost

childhood incentive to be somebody and don't let go of it.

Life really is too short not to try at any age to accomplish a personal goal. Maybe it's just learning to play the piano, flyfishing, writing a book, photography, painting in watercolors, or being the best father or mother that you can be. You don't have to be a Nelson Mandela or a Mary Anne Williamson to effect change, just pick something small to start with and do it.

In the end, it's just one man's opinion, mine.

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How Minority Grants Help Boost The Economy

By: Kelly Hunter

Governments have the responsibility of providing certain amenities for their citizenry. The different citizens that are part of the population exist and the identity of these citizens may differ according to various characteristics. These characteristics include racial and geographical characteristics too. For people who belong to a smaller part of the population, they require the special care and benefits that a larger part of the population enjoys. Different minorities exist all over the world and in the United States alone there are a number of minorities which are classified into

various categories. Some certain types of minorities in the U.S are Hispanics, African Americans, Asian Americans and Native Americans too.

Minorities make up an essential part of the American population especially when these different minorities are classified as a single group. However the different minority categories may suffer from different disadvantages that may exist due to cultural, economic and a number of other reasons. Most of these minorities are immigrants into the United States find it hard to

integrate into American society due to their difficulties with language and other aspects of traditional American life. Regardless of these disadvantages these people are still part of the American population and deserve the benefits others enjoy.

One major benefit that minorities should and do benefit from is in the area of minority grants. Different minority grants are available are available to the different kinds of minorities in existence. Some of these grants cater to specific minority groups from a particular background while a few grants cater

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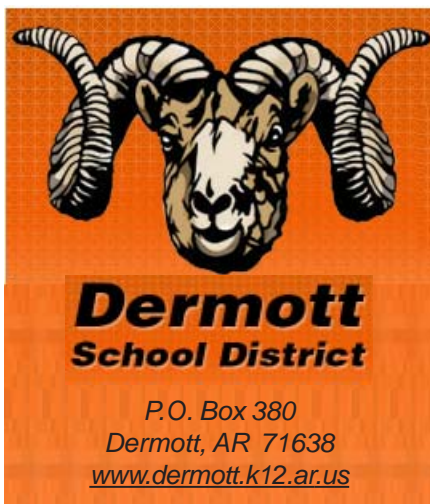
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to minorities in general.

If a grant caters towards a particular minority group it won't be that different from other minority grants. Grants may be for people of African American origin for instance and they will be meant for projects or schemes that will have benefits for members of the African American community as a whole. These government grants will make sure that people from such ethnic backgrounds get to feel and benefit from the sort of amenities offered to other people, for example people who form the majority part of the American population. In order to profit from grants which are specifically meant for particular minorities the person or people applying for such grants must satisfy some requirements, some of these requirements may be that they belong to the particular minority group through whose behalf they request this grant. The person in question must also have a right to remain in the country particularly if such persons are foreigners who want to benefit from such grants. Certain minority grants are not available to people who are not American citizens. You can visit <http://www.minority-grants-guide.com> for more information on minority grants.

Grants may solve different problems for different people. These different needs range from things that relate to housing, health or educational reasons. Grants may be for a whole lot of other purposes as well but the general consensus of the issues of grants for minorities is the fact that they are meant for the benefit and the improvement of the lives of these minorities wherever they may live in the country. Improving the lives of disadvantaged minority groups leads to more spending by these groups. Minority education grants for example help people in those groups gain better access to education. Better education usually leads to higher paying jobs and thus to higher tax income for the government. Increased spending from minorities and increased tax revenue for the government all help to boost the economy.

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How to Begin a Conversation

By: Bud Bilanich

Dynamic communication skills are an important key to career and life success. If you want to become a dynamic communicator, you need to master three basic, but very important, skills: conversation, writing, presenting.

Several years ago I read an eBook by Dennis Rivers, called “Cooperative Communication Skills for Success at Home and at Work.” I came across the eBook in my files the other day. Chapter 2 really

caught my attention. It is entitled “Explaining Your Conversational Intent and Inviting Consent.” Dennis makes some common sense, but seldom seen, points about conversation skills in it. In summary, he says, “Make sure that you tell the other person what type of conversation you want to have. Ask him or her if he or she is ready to have this type of conversation at that time.”

Check out some of what he has to say...

“In order to help your conversation partner cooperate with you and to reduce possible misunderstandings, start important conversations by inviting your conversation partner to join you in the specific kind of conversation you want to have. The more the conversation is going to mean to you, the more important it is for your conversation partner to understand the big picture. If you need to have a long, complex, or emotion-laden conversation with someone, it will make a big difference

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if you briefly explain your conversational intention first and then invite the consent of your intended conversation partner.

“Why explain? Some conversations require a lot more time, effort and involvement than others. If you want to have a conversation that will require a significant amount of effort from the other person, it will go better if that person understands what he or she is getting into and consents to participate. Of course, in giving up the varying amounts of coercion and surprise that are at

work when we just launch into whatever we want to talk about, we are more vulnerable to being turned down. But, when people agree to talk with us, they will be more present in the conversation and more able to either meet our needs or explain why they can't (and perhaps suggest alternatives we had not thought of). Many good communicators do this explaining intent/inviting consent without giving it any thought. They start important conversations by saying things such as: ‘Hi, Steve. I need to ask for your help on my project. Got a minute to talk about it?’

‘Maria, do you have a minute? Right now I’d like to talk to you about... Is that OK?’”

When we offer such combined explanations of intent and invitations-to-consent we can help our conversations along in four important ways:

First, we give our listeners a chance to consent to or decline the offer of a specific conversation. A person who has agreed to participate will participate more fully.

Second, we help our listeners to

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understand the “big picture,” the overall goal of the conversation-to-come. Many scholars in linguistics and communication studies now agree that understanding a person’s overall conversational intention is crucial for understanding that person’s message in words and gestures.

Third, we allow our listeners to get ready for what is coming, especially if the topic is emotionally charged. (If we surprise people by launching into emotional conversations, they may respond by avoiding further conversations with us or by being permanently on guard.)

And fourth, we help our listeners understand the role that we want them to play in the conversation: fellow problem solver, employee receiving instructions, giver of emotional support, and so on. These are very different roles to play. Our conversations will go better if we ask people to play only one conversational role at a time.

To be invited into a conversation is an act of respect. A consciously consenting participant is much more likely to pay attention and cooperate than someone who feels pushed into an undefined conversation by the force of another person’s talking.

It’s not universal, but to assume without asking that a person is available to talk may be interpreted by many people as lack of respect. When we begin a conversation by respecting the wishes of the other person, we start to generate some of the goodwill (trust that their wishes will be considered) needed for creative problem solving. I believe that the empathy we get will be more genuine and the agreements we reach will be more reliable if we give people a choice about talking with us.

The common sense point here is simple. Successful people are dynamic communicators. Dynamic communicators have mastered three basic communication skills: conversation, writing and presenting. Inviting people to participate in a conversation and getting their agreement before jumping in is an important, but often overlooked conversation skill. People who are invited to join a conversation, and choose to do so, are more likely to be better participants. If you want to become an excellent conversationalist, take a few minutes to explain why you want to have a conversation. Ask the other person if he or she has the time and is willing to participate in a conversation on that topic. Your conversations will be better and more productive if you follow this simple common sense advice.

Affirmations Help You Create the Successful Life and Career You Want and Deserve

By: *Bud Bilanich*

I have learned that self confidence is an upward spiral. Self confidence leads to professional success, which in turn leads to increased self confidence, which leads to higher levels of success, and so on.

You might be saying, “That’s great, but how do I become self confident if I’m new in my job or career and haven’t had a lot of success to bolster my self confidence?” There’s an old saying that applies here: “Fake it till you make it.” In other words, act as if you’re successful. This will help you succeed. Your success will help you build your self confidence.

How, do you “fake it, will you make it?” Begin with affirmations. If you’re in a new job, tell yourself something like, “I have the skills and desire to succeed in this job,” several times a day. If you repeat this to yourself often enough, you will begin to believe it. This will help

you perform at the level necessary in order to actually succeed in your job.

Affirmations are positive self talk. The idea behind affirmations is that when you think of the things to which you aspire, like becoming a success, and then tell yourself that you are a professional success, you will believe that you can become successful. More importantly, you will be more likely to do the work it takes to make that aspiration come true.

A couple of years ago, I wrote a book that used a star to depict this model. I urged readers to think of themselves as a star and to aspire to becoming a career and life star. I like the star metaphor. Daily, I repeat the following affirmation to myself: “I am a star.”

I’ve done a lot of working in making this affirmation a reality — redoing my website, developing better promotional materials, speaking, writing books, and blogging.

I’ve also done something a little unusual. A few years ago, right after my book was published, I went to the “Name a Star” website and named a star after myself. Now I can say “I am a star” and really believe it, because a star with my name really exists.

My named star is Catalog Number TYC 868-1011-1 in the constellation Leo. It has a Visual Magnitude indicator of 11.2. Right Ascension is 11h 58m 21s. Declination is 11degrees, 43,’18.”

I don’t have a clue what all of these things mean, except the constellation Leo, which I chose because my birthday is August 14. But I do know one thing. Bud Bilanich is a star!

How’s that for an affirmation?

Affirmations work. I have become a minor star in the career and life

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success world. You don't need to go to the lengths I did to make them work either. Just decide what you want, visualize yourself as having it, and tell yourself you have it. Then do whatever it takes to make your affirmation come true.

Affirmations alone, however, are not enough to guarantee your professional success. You have to do the work. Spend the time necessary to accomplish your goals. Volunteer for projects that will get you noticed. Become an expert on your company, its competitors, and your industry. In other words, bust your butt, and you will succeed.

The common sense point here is simple. Successful people are self confident. If you want to become self confident, you need to become an optimist, face your fears and act and hang around with self confident people. Your self confidence will improve as you build a successful life and career. The self confidence => success => self confidence cycle is an upward spiral. You have to enter the cycle somewhere. Most of us don't have a strong track record as we begin our careers, move into a new job, or start a business. Therefore, you have to "fake it till you make it" by "acting as if" you are a success. Find ways to bolster your self confidence until you have some real successes on which you can build. Affirmations are a great tool for helping you "fake it till you make it."

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The Secrets of Effective Time Management

By: *Jeremy A Gislason*

“It has been my observation that most people get ahead during the time that others waste time.” - Henry Ford

Managing your time, finding balance, and living a complete and joyous life in this day and age almost feels like an oxymoron. Today, more than ever before, we run from one task to another, often times combining tasks just to keep up. If you are running your own business, then the day-to-day tasks are difficult to manage and even more difficult to escape. You're likely

thinking about and managing your business 24/7. Coupled with the standard everyday tasks, it may seem like an impossible task to manage your time effectively.

The Effects of Poor Time Management

One of the biggest effects of poor time management is stress. Not the kind of stress that is easily recognizable, but a more pervasive and insidious type of stress. It sneaks in under the radar and

causes long-term damage to your health and your overall happiness. Chronic stress, stress that is the result of long term and pervasive stress, causes significant health problems.

0BAccording to WebMD, chronic stress can be the result of a host of irritating hassles or a long-term life condition, such as a difficult job situation. In people who have higher levels of chronic stress, the stress response lasts longer. Over time, chronic stress can have an effect on:

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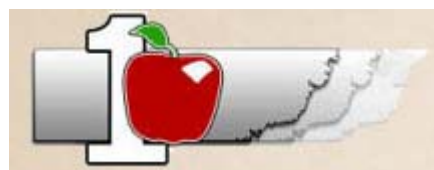


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- o The immune system.
- o Cardiovascular disease.
- o Muscle pain.
- o Stomach and intestinal problems.
- o Reproductive organs.
- o The lungs.
- o Skin problems.
- o It also causes mental coping issues to arise.

Each of these health issues add up and cause other issues like diabetes, obesity, heart attacks, chronic fatigue, insomnia and so on.

To put it mildly, chronic stress caused by poor time management can shorten your life and significantly detract from your overall quality of life. It's been estimated that as many as 90% of doctor's visits are for symptoms that are at least partially stress-related.

How Chronic Stress and Poor Time Management Affects Your Business and Your Life

With too many tasks on your plate, it's difficult to focus on any one and prioritizing often seems impossible when everything needs to get done. The result is a tremendous amount of wasted time, not achieving goals, and losing money.

o **Loss of control.** Poor time management means things will slip through the cracks. When this happens, unfortunately your customers often pay the price. This causes almost a vicious circle of you trying to appease dissatisfied customers, which then sets you back and adds even more tasks to your list, which again causes more things to slip through the cracks.

o **Burnout.** Presumably you started your business, or are starting a business, not only to make money but also to gain personal satisfaction and to spend your days doing something

you are interested in and maybe even passionate about. However, even the most desirable activities can become tiresome when you're doing them 80+ hours a week.

When you manage your time effectively, it gives you the power to set your business aside, for a day, for a week, or even for months, to live the life you want to live and to stay fresh. It's a great way to live and a great way to do business. Imagine your productivity, ingenuity, and enthusiasm if you wake up each and every day excited about the day and what you're going to accomplish.

o **No joy.** When you spend your days struggling to get it all done, you don't save time for yourself. You don't save time for hobbies, friends, family and fun. These are the most important things in life and to do without them is to do a great disservice to yourself - especially when it's not necessary. With a little organization and a few tried and

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true time management practices and tools, you can have your cake and eat it too. You can own and operate a successful business and have time to enjoy life.

What Happens When Entrepreneurs Don't Effectively Manage Their Time?

To be successful, it is important to be able to manage your time effectively. Time management means not allowing distractions. When you don't manage your time effectively:

o **Work suffers.** Lack of effective time management means hours and hours spent on tasks that are not important leaving only a little bit of time for the projects that really do affect your bottom line. Email or social networking is a prime example. It's too easy to spend an entire morning Twittering, updating your Facebook or linked in page or answering emails.

Lack of effective time management results also means trying to handle too many tasks at once. Multitasking may seem like a good idea, however tasks are accomplished much faster when they're dealt with one at a time. Juggle too much at once and a ball is bound to drop from time to time. Unfortunately, the ball you drop may be the most important one.

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o **Personal life suffers.** What do you do if something doesn't get accomplished during normal work hours? Do you work on it in the evenings or on weekends when you could be spending time with your friends and family? Does stress from your business overlap into your daily life making you easy to anger, too tired to socialize and generally unhappy?

Okay, we've talked about what poor time management can do to your health and your business, but what about what good time management can do for you?

Benefits of Time Management

Beyond the basic benefits that include getting more accomplished, satisfied customers, and more profits, not to mention more free time, there are a few benefits you may not have considered.

o **Peace of mind.** Imagine being able to wrap up your day at 5:00 or 4:00, or whenever you determine is the end of your business day, and feel a sense of calm. Not to have to worry about all that you didn't get done and what is waiting for you the next morning. Being able to effectively manage your time will result in an amazing peace of mind. You can start and end each day with a sense of purpose and peace of mind.

o **A sense of achievement and satisfaction.** There's tremendous joy in accomplishing goals and checking those important tasks off of your list. When you manage your time effectively, you'll be able to give yourself a pat on the back almost daily.

o **More energy.** Stress and multitasking are tremendous energy drains. When you manage your time effectively you'll get twice as much accomplished in half the time. You'll sleep better and you'll feel better in your work and personal life.

o **More fun.** Time management frees up time in your day for the important things in life. Not that owning your own business isn't important, it is, however so are hobbies, vacations, time with friends and family, laughter, exercise and the simple things that make life good.

o **A feeling of being in control over your life.** When you know what you're doing each day, you accomplish it, and when you have a plan where action is being taken every day, it gives you a tremendous sense of control. This control can and will expand into other areas of your life, too.

So how do you learn and implement better time management skills? Take a course, buy a book from an author you respect and admire, learn the skills and follow through - meaning don't just read the book or take the course and nod but actually put the steps into practice. Incorporate them into your life.

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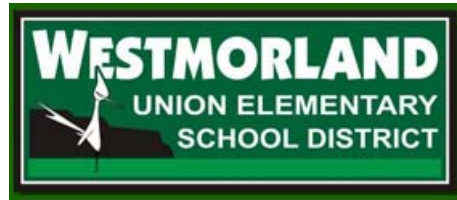


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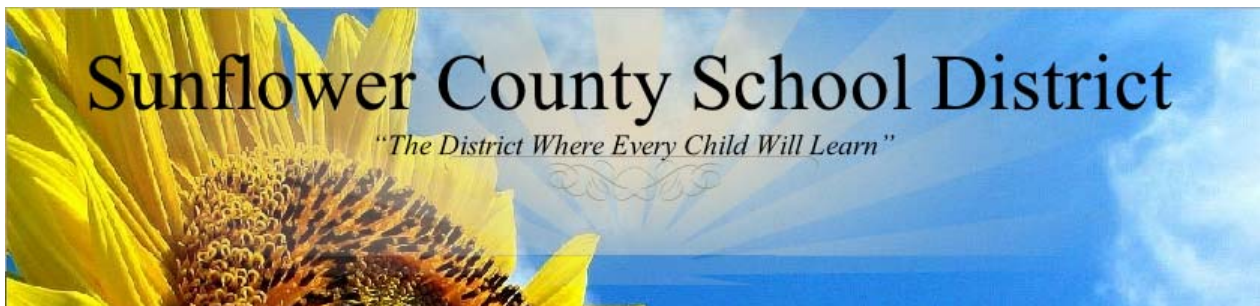
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