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475 N. Martingale Road, Suite 600
Schaumburg, IL 60173
phone: 847.706.3500
fax: 847.706.3599

World Wide Web: www.soa.org

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David C. Miller, FSA, MSCC

The Stepping Stone Editor
Miller & Associates Business
Growth Strategies
6 Goldenrod Court
Newtown, PA 18940
phone: 215.968.2483
fax: 215.968.4319
e-mail: Dave@BusinessGrowthNow.com

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cbaznik@soa.org

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smartz@soa.org

Meg Weber, Director, Section Services
mweber@soa.org

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From the Editor

Five Secrets to Success

by David C. Miller

Whether it's attaining success in getting that promotion, masterfully leading your organization or acquiring clients, I've found there are five factors that will all but guarantee your success.

I work with these five areas when I coach professionals to help them attain their most inspiring outcomes. In this article, I want to give you an overview of each area and **encourage you to assess how you're doing in each area** with respect to the outcome your working on achieving.

Here are Five Secrets to Success:

Secret #1: Get Clear on Your Outcome

Before you do anything else, you must get crystal clear about the destination you want to get to. What **exactly** does success look like for you? You need to be able to describe it specifically and in measurable terms for it to be effective, otherwise you'll never be sure if you've achieved it or not.

You will more likely achieve the success you want if your outcome is truly inspiring to you. If your goal isn't exciting and scary, you're shooting too low. Goals that resonate with us are the ones that will pull us toward them.

Rate yourself on a scale of one to 10:

How clear, specific and inspiring is your desired outcome?

Secret #2: Implement a Winning Strategy

You need to put together a comprehensive game plan to achieve your success. You want to design a strategy (or set of strategies) that will get you to your outcome in the fastest and easiest way.

The key thing to remember here is that there are far more ways to reach a desired goal than most of us realize. We typically limit ourselves to one or two options, when **in reality there are hundreds of avenues** available to us.

Another important key here is to **release any perfectionist** tendencies we may have. Much of your strategy will be devised as you take action and, in most cases, testing will be required (this is certainly true of marketing strategies). Perfectionism will stop you from taking action and achieving your goal. Ask your-



David C. Miller, FSA, MSCC, is a professional business coach who works with actuaries, consultants and sales professionals who are struggling to attract enough clients. He conducts seminars and one-on-one coaching in business development, influence, leadership, team building and communication effectiveness.

He can be reached at dave@BusinessGrowthNow.com or 215.968.2483. For tips, tools and strategies about how to grow your business, go to www.BusinessGrowthNow.com.

self, "What are three steps I can take that will move me toward this goal?"

Rate Yourself: ***To what extent have you defined your game plan and started taking action?***

Secret #3: Upgrade Your Skills

Razor-sharp skills are critical for achieving success. Even the best strategy won't work if your skills are inadequate. The first step here is to **identify the top eight to 10 skills, strengths or qualities you will need to bring forth to succeed.**

For example, if your outcome is to acquire consulting engagements, you might identify skills like prospecting, articulating your marketing message, performing a needs assessment, closing, handling objections, etc.

If your outcome is to more effectively lead your division, you might focus on skills like modeling the way, inspiring vision, coaching, taking risks, empathy, fostering collaboration, recognizing contributions, etc.

Once you've identified these, rate yourself on a scale of one to 10 and take note of areas to focus on to improve your effectiveness.

Rate Yourself: ***On your current skill level with respect to the eight to 10 competencies you identified.***

Secret #4: Optimizing Your Environment

This may be one of the most overlooked areas for achieving success. If you are in an unsupportive environment (for example, you have a boss that is determined to see you fail), achieving success will be much harder and more painful.

Environment involves such things as:

- Physical environment (your physical space, office, organization, etc.)
- Technology (laptop, pda, contact management tools, etc.)
- Time management

- People (coaches, mentors, support staff, team members, advocates, etc.)

Your environment can leverage your productivity level or it can drag it down.

Rate Yourself: ***How supportive is your environment?***

Secret #5: Mastering Your Psychology

Many professionals know what to do, but fewer actually commit and follow through by taking action. This is almost always due to having a psychology (*i.e.*, mind-set, belief system or attitude) that does not fully support what they are trying to accomplish.

It's common for emotions like fear and self-doubt to sabotage success. Having a resourceful psychology is 80 percent of the battle in business.

Managing that "inner critic" can be the most effective thing you can do to achieve the success you want.

Rate Yourself: ***How effective am I at managing my mind-set?***

Now that the scores are in, let me ask you a question:

What would happen if you could improve your scores by two or three points? For most people, it will make a significant difference.

Now you know the areas to focus on to achieve your success. Take the necessary steps toward your most inspiring outcome every day and you will achieve it before you know it.

