

The importance of a professional development strategic plan

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Regardless of whether you are in business for yourself, or simply work for a living, having a strategic plan covering your professional development is essential to your long term success or employability. Failure to plan is truly as we've heard "planning to fail!"

A good plan incorporates several basic components:

- A clear definition of the ultimate objective in mind. **Conceive it complete!**
- A good solid foundation build on understanding what is required to make it happen by **doing your homework.**
- And an **ACTION** plan with specific goals and objectives tied to specific timelines and checkpoints to make revisions along the way.

How do you define your idea or ultimate objective as it relates to your business or career? A little free flow idea generation or 'dreaming' works. Ask yourself - some '**what if?**' questions to unlock your creativity and help **unlock your business potential.**

What if I could do anything without fear of failure? I'd: _____

If I had enough money to ensure my basic living for a year I'd: _____

If I discovered I had talent, could learn the skills I need to: _____

I'd: _____

The answers to these types of questions will give you a glimpse into what you'd really like to do.

After you've defined your ultimate desire, then what? Well, now it's time to start doing your homework and finding out exactly what is needed to make it happen or prepare you to act

Then comes the fun part - setting specific action plans in place to accomplish goals and objectives that will lead you to your ultimate desire. The key here, is to ensure that your goals are clear and specific; and they can be broken down into even more specific objectives.

An action plan is only as good as its implementation and accountability. This means setting specific time lines for starting and completion of each step. It also means having several built in checkpoints to allow you to monitor your progress and make any fine tuning adjustments or course corrections to the plan.

Very much like sailing in that you start from where you are, chart a course to a destination, and then sail towards you goal while checking your progress and making course corrections enroute.

If you are serious about "Unlocking your Business Potential," taking time to do some thinking about what you want to accomplish. when and why is essential. Success doesn't come by accident - it requires strategic planning followed by implementation on your ACTION plan.

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