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Success Principles

Have you ever wanted make a significant change in your life or your business – perhaps even set goals to achieve that change – but found yourself weeks or months later, not having moved forward? Motivational guru, Anthony Robbins, says there are a variety of reasons why we don't follow through on what we say we are going to do, and inevitably, it boils down to mindset. "Eighty percent of success in anything is psychology," says Robbins, "and only 20 percent is mechanics. Most people know enough to get the job done, but they're not doing it because their psychology is not in sync with their goals." In order to create success at the highest level, and change that is lasting and sustainable, Robbins suggests adopting these five principles.

No tolerance for excuses - raising your standards

Robbins says "Changes do not last long term until they become a part of our identity, until we literally begin to see them as the standard we live by." Everyone has a list of "should's". "I really should get more exercise. I should watch less TV. I should try to spend more time with my family and less time at work." Should's rarely lead to change. They are not powerful enough. If it's really important to you, those should's need to become "must's". It means no tolerance for excuses in your own life. I must get more exercise means that a daily exercise routine becomes your standard for living, even on cold, dark, rainy mornings when it's easier to stay in bed. Take a look at your long list of should's and commit only to the ones you feel strongly about. Then, give yourself no mercy when it comes to excuses, and create a new standard of living that incorporates those things.

No tolerance for doubts - changing your limiting beliefs

A commitment to a "must" is a great start, but sometimes it's not enough to move you forward. Your goal may be clear, but you find yourself shrinking back, failing to act, or even finding ways to sabotage yourself. These behaviours are often rooted in fears and doubts, and Robbins suggests that getting rid of limiting beliefs is critical to finding success. Limiting beliefs often come from inner conflicts. "You may have a burning desire to experience financial abundance," says Robbins, "but you also have a conflicting

belief that fears being judged for having wealth." Those conflicting beliefs may feel like trying to drive your car with the brakes on. Take a look at that list of "must's". Then ask yourself whether you have any conflicting beliefs that may put the brakes on your progress. Either you'll find the goal you've set isn't worth the sacrifice, or, you'll identify the things that restrict forward movement and change those beliefs to coincide with your goals. A changed belief to the wealth example might be, "I'm not responsible for what others think about me. I am responsible for living my life with integrity, regardless of how much money I have."

No tolerance for wasted efforts - using strategies that work

Wherever you see a successful person, you'll see someone who has been observant, and smart. Whatever your goal, chances are someone has already figured out how to get where you want to go. Stop trying to re-invent the wheel, and follow the paths others have forged to create the results you want. Watch what successful people do. Look for the patterns and strategies that have created success for others. Avoid the trap of thinking that says, "I have to find a new way." You have to find your way, but you'll get there faster if you use the wisdom of those who are already where you want to go.

No tolerance for apathy - intensifying your emotions

When faced with challenges, we all have the choice to give in, give up, or rise above. Robbins uses multiple Tour de France winner, Lance Armstrong, as an example of someone who was faced with a challenge and used it to motivate himself toward greater achievement. When he was diagnosed with cancer, he could easily have given up his sports career and let go of his dreams. Instead, he intensified his emotions and used this difficult experience to heighten his desire to achieve those dreams. Robbins says of Armstrong, "He turned the most traumatic moment in his life into a launching pad for some of his greatest victories. He chose to intensify his emotions and find a way to conquer, not be defeated by what life offered him."



No tolerance for selfishness - giving more than you expect to receive

All of us use the time, energy and resources we've been given in life to accomplish certain things. At the end of the day, what will really matter is what we have invested in the lives of others. Having goals, dreams, and desires, is important to create success, but if those goals, dreams and desires have only yourself in mind as the benefactor, it will be an empty life indeed. We can succeed, but what we really want, is to matter. And to matter, we have to be willing to give – even when we don't get anything in return. These five principles will guide you toward the success that you wish to achieve in your life and your business.

Choose today to raise your standards and stop making excuses; to change the beliefs that hold you back; to be smart and learn the paths to success from others; to face life's challenges with intensity and determination to overcome; and to lead a life that matters by giving more than you receive.

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10 Homepreneur Trends for 2010

Steve King is a partner at Emergent Research, a Senior Research Fellow at the Society for New Communications Research and a member of the Small Business Trends Expert panel. In this article, he writes about home-based business trends for 2010. While his research references the US economy and studies done in that market, Statistics Canada shows that the information is not all that different in Canada. [Click here](#) to read some Canadian statistics, or visit the [Canada Business](#) website. The information supporting the trends predicted by Mr. King in this article is likely conservative, as the American economy as been slower in recovering from the downturn than Canada, however the trends are still worth considering. As you'll quickly notice, they are already unfolding as part of our Canadian business culture in 2010.

The rise of the homepreneur is a long-term trend that will continue to accelerate over the next decade. Fueled by technology and enabled by low costs, businesses of all kinds are finding there is no place like home. With a troubled but recovering economy as the backdrop, here is our list of the Top 10 Homepreneur Trends for 2010.

Economic Trends

1. **The Job-Challenged Economy:** Despite clear signs of economic recovery, job growth and traditional employment options will be limited in 2010. Employers will continue to be concerned about the economy, focused on costs and timid about hiring. Because of high unemployment and the lack of jobs, many will turn to self-employment and home-based businesses in 2010.
2. **Bootstrapping:** Bootstrapping was one of the most popular business terms in 2009, and 2010 will see continued small business focus on cost containment and cash flow. The obvious cost advantages of being home-based is leading to more small businesses – including employer businesses and high-tech start-ups – choosing to be home-based.
3. **The Home-Based Artisan:** Most think of home businesses as knowledge, commercial or office businesses. But a new do-it-yourself movement of crafters, digital tinkerers, green advocates and other "Makers" are using their garages, basements and backyards as their factories. These new artisans are combining digital technology and tools with traditional methods to create innovative products, processes and business models.



Technology Trends

1. **Cloud Computing:** Cloud computing has been on our top small business trends list for several years, and its importance for home businesses continues to grow. Cloud-based IT services: (1) provide access to advanced computing capabilities on a variable cost basis; (2) reduce the need

for IT infrastructure and support; (3) enable mobile computing, provide back-up and security services; and (4) improve collaboration with employees and customers. Simply put, the Cloud is a key driver of the shift towards home businesses.

2. **Mobile Computing:** Most home businesses are mobile with customers, suppliers, partners and employees located elsewhere. The growth of mobile computing provides home-based businesses with the tools needed to operate and manage a distributed business. 2010 will see more home businesses take advantage of smartphones, netbooks, location-based Internet services and other mobile services.
3. **Social Computing:** No trends list for 2010 would be complete without mentioning the growing importance of social computing. Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, blogs and other tools for collaborating with others and sharing information are changing business and society. Because social computing systems are generally cheap and easy to use, home businesses can effectively leverage these tools to amplify their business impact.
4. **Analytics:** Sophisticated yet easy-to-use tools are allowing home businesses to move beyond "gut level" decision making to data and information-based management. Online marketing tools in particular allow home businesses to develop sophisticated marketing programs once only available to large corporations. Analytical tools, often available through the Cloud, allow home businesses to successfully compete in a growing range of industries.

Social and Demographic Trends.

1. **The New Local Movement:** New localism is a trend that has been in place for years. Driven by changing demographics, technology, rising energy prices and concerns about the environment, Americans are increasingly focusing on their families, friends and communities. Home businesses tap into this trend in two ways. Home businesses allow greater community focus for the owner, and benefit from market opportunities created by locally-oriented customers.
2. **Boomers:** Aging baby boomers are flocking to home-based businesses. Flexibility, interest in pursuing a new career or passion, and the opportunity for improved work/life balance all contribute to the growing boomer interest in home businesses. In some cases financial flexibility provide boomers with the ability to start a home business. For others, financial need drives the decision.
3. **Work/life Balance:** Interest in work/life balance is growing across almost all demographic segments. The Great Recession has increased the interest in work/life balance as more people focus on non-economic life issues. Surveys and other research show women, boomers and Gen Y in particular stress the importance of finding balance. Homepreneurs often cite work/life balance as one of the key benefits of home businesses. As this news spreads, so does the interest in home-based businesses.

How can you use this information to grow or improve your business in the second half of this year?

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Reward Excellent Failures - Punish Mediocre Successes

*I have a small book on my bookshelf by Tom Peters called **Talent: Develop It, Sell it, Be It**. It's a bit irreverent and edgy, and certainly challenges the status quo, so I often turn to it when I'm looking for interesting ideas. As I was flipping through it the other day looking for material for a workshop, I came across this statement boldly emblazoned on a black page with white text: **Reward Excellent Failures! Punish Mediocre Successes**. The author credited this statement to an Australian business executive, Phil Daniels, who said these words at a business conference in Sydney, which Peters was attending. He said it forever changed the way he looked at life and did business. Why? "Because," says Peters, "nothing succeeds like failure." It took me a few minutes to try to wrap my head around this. In many ways, it is counter culture. At worst, we sort of put up with failures as part of life. At best, we hope we'll learn from them.*

Consider the benefits of failure in Darren Roberts' article, 10 Excellent Ways How Failure Can Be More Beneficial To You Than Success:

1. **It encourages lateral thinking** – failure helps us to look for other possible ways to resolve the challenges we're facing.
2. **It gives us experience** - if we had succeeded immediately without tasting the disappointment of failure, then it's possible that we may not have not been so open in looking for other possibilities.
3. **It builds character** – we can choose to throw in the towel or we can learn from the experience, gain confidence, and become the person we wish to be.
4. **It encourages the strong and discourages the weak** - if your determination, will, desire and hunger to succeed are as big as you think, then to fail along the way is simply taking a lengthy detour to where you want to be.
5. **It makes you honest with yourself** – sometimes success hides the truth; it's when we fail that we often take a hard look at who we are, what we've done, and how we can get better.
6. **It makes you more thick-skinned** - becoming thick-skinned is really a by-product of character building; it shows the development of the individual and reflects the change in attitude that brings about the best in us because we are more concerned about growing than protecting our feelings.
7. **Success too soon can give false confidence** - generally speaking those who have had problems, learned from them and solved them, have gained confidence based on real experience. Succeeding too quickly may actually blind one's potential.
8. **It encourages improvement & planning** - it asks the question – OK, now what? Failure will ALWAYS push you in the direction of success if you use it as the stepping stone for goal achievement.
9. **It reveals your weaknesses** – this is only helpful if you determine that you will use that knowledge to work on those weaknesses, until they are strengths.
10. **Success is the attitude, failure is the lever** - a successful attitude leverages failure so that it does not absorb and destroy your spirit. It understands that failure means your desired outcome is one step closer.



It's clear that an excellent failure has great value. Peters says, "No truly WOW project ever comes into being without a willingness to court excellent failures." This is probably true. So the question to ask first

is, do you want to have a WOW business? One that rises above the rest and clearly stands out? Most of us would probably say, yes. The question that follows is, do you create an environment where excellent failures are rewarded? Not just tolerated. Not just "learned from". But truly celebrated?

That is perhaps less difficult than the second part of this equation – punish mediocre success. Really? Even a mediocre success is a success isn't it? According to Peters, mediocrity should never be rewarded. Ever. If you want to truly be a WOW kind of company that is. Here is another thought by well-known business coach and author, Jack Welch: "Nobody who worked for me ever got in trouble for swinging for the fences and missing. What people got in trouble for was spending two years on a project that – even if it succeeded – wasn't going to make the world wobble on its axis."

So perhaps it really is less about punishing one thing, than wildly rewarding the other. By virtue of this process, mediocre failures will simply not get noticed. That's punishment enough for many people. Striving for excellence, for better, for WOW, means people will jump off cliffs, dive into the deep, or take paths into unknown woods. They may end up bruised, dirty, scratched, and worse for the wear, compared to their safer, mediocre counterparts who look neat and tidy, but who has learned the greater lessons? Who has travelled a more interesting path, and who has more to contribute to the success of your business. Food for thought.

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When It's Time to Fire a Customer

Termination Strategies for Getting Rid of Toxic Clients

If you've been in business, you've had them - those clients who appear to be more trouble than their potential profit to your company. Always complaining, never happy, destructive, sometimes even abusive, and always toxic. Your staff hates dealing with them, and every time you see their number on call display, you let it go to the machine. They are demanding, demeaning, unappreciative, and miserable. So much so that you wonder why they keep coming back if they're so unhappy. And yet, they do. While it's obviously in a business's best interest to retain clients whenever possible, it's also a smart business strategy to realize when a client or customer is actually costing you money – or worse, costing you staff – and to consider "firing" that client.

The first step is recognizing if that relationship needs to end. Some of the things that may lead you to that conclusion:

- The client doesn't respect or appreciate your work and verbally puts down your company or your staff
- The client makes excessive or unrealistic demands on your company and your staff
- Expectations about what they are willing to pay for your product or service are not realistic - they want work done cheaply and under unrealistic deadlines
- They pay their bills slowly, or sometimes not at all ?
- They are always pushing you to the limit, taking advantage at every turn
- They verbally abuse your staff and infuse a toxic, negative atmosphere whenever they engage with you
- They intimidate and challenge, and send your staff into fits of rage or tearful outbursts

Just like giving notice to a problem employee, if you've got a client that is causing havoc in your business, it's best to put them on notice rather than simply dropping them. This requires having a difficult conversation, in private. Outline what the issues are. They may be completely unaware of how their behaviour has impacted your business. Be specific about the things need to see changed, and ask for their cooperation. "It's simply not acceptable for you to yell at my staff when you are unhappy. We treat each other with respect, and we expect our clients to do the same." Be sure to document these efforts so you can refer to them later, if necessary. If things don't improve, schedule another meeting, reiterate your expectations, and advise the client that if things don't improve, you may have to terminate the relationship.

If your attempts to improve the relationship don't work, it may be time to move on and focus on more profitable clients or prospective clients. Of course, this may depend on the cash value of that client to your business. If they are a very large customer, you may need to put strategies into place to mitigate that loss.

First, calculate what you stand to lose in gross revenue, and decide if your business can handle the financial hit (remember, sometimes there's more to the picture than just the finances; what impact will it have on morale and your business culture and is it worth the potential loss?). If you can't survive such a hit, you may need to put up with the current problem client until you can replace that client's gross revenues with one or more new clients.



Once you're in a position to let the client go, ask for a meeting with the client. Refer back to any previous meeting(s) you may have had and calmly and professionally, explain the situation, and review your efforts to correct the problems. Advise the client that you no longer wish to do business with them. Have a plan in place to make the transition as smooth as possible (perhaps refer them to someone else who may be able to serve them better). If the client has been difficult enough to bring you to this point, you can expect a hostile reaction to this conversation. Remain professional and calm throughout the process, no matter how badly the client behaves, but be firm in your decision.

Also have a plan in place (and prepare your staff) for how to deal with the client if they keep coming back and disregard your effort to terminate the relationship. One would hope that legal efforts, such as a restraining order, would not be necessary, but it could be an option. Most people will not get to that point – they'll take the hint and go elsewhere, happy to discredit you to others. This is also something you need to be prepared for, and train your staff in how to handle those kinds of comments from others. Remain professional in your responses. For example, "It just wasn't a good fit for us to do business together." Be careful how you speak about that person to others. Being brutally honest about how miserable they were might make you feel better in the moment, but it can backfire on you, so the less information you give the better. It holds you in higher esteem, and makes it look as if you took the high road.

It's complicated. It's difficult. But you'll know when it's right. Do your best to resolve, but if you've decided you need to terminate the relationship, trust yourself, prepare yourself, and move forward with confidence that you are doing what's best for your business.

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Social Media for Business

Avoiding the Pitfalls of Riding the Wave

We hear so much about social media these days, and how important it is for your business to be riding this wave to stay on the edge of the new customer revolution. Having an online presence that includes social media is a great way to connect with your customers, but remember, everything you write or say online can be found . . . and held against you. The internet provides an impressive and expansive way to market your product or service. Incorporating social networking into your business's marketing plan is a good idea, and will likely pay off for your business, but as with any great idea, there are pitfalls. It's important to realize the potential impact of your online activity on your business. Here are some things to think about.

There is no separation between business and personal

Social networking sites are a great way to stay in touch with family and friends, but whatever you publish online, even on a personal site, is accessible by others. This includes people with whom you do business, and your competitors. Even if you have separate sites or accounts that seemingly split your business and personal online presence, anybody could easily access the information on your personal site prior to doing business with you. It is now common practice for HR departments to Google candidates' names to obtain additional information about them during the hiring process. So why wouldn't a potential business or customer do the same before entering into a relationship with you?

In addition, once information and photos have been posted on your personal site, you have no control over what other people do with that information. And, if other people post photos of you, there's even less control over what happens. Here's an example. This is a true story. It's a bit convoluted, but that's what social media does – it makes connections in all kinds of convoluted ways – so bear with me.

Gerry (not his real name) was the sales manager for a large commercial bank. He was great at his job – always professional and driven to represent the company well – but he had a bit of a wild side in his personal life. One of Gerry's friends posted photos of Gerry from a wild weekend away on his personal Facebook site. The photos showed Gerry in a very negative light, obviously inebriated and with a group of young women at the hotel where they were staying. The friend was not overly careful with his privacy settings, so his site was accessible to thousands of other people on his network. One of Gerry's largest clients, who was a friend of the friend who posted the photos, and who also happened to be a close friend of Gerry's wife, saw the photo while browsing Facebook, and immediately called Gerry's wife to express her dismay. As you can imagine, not only did this cause problems between Gerry and his wife, but the customer pulled her account from the bank, claiming that if Gerry was this careless and disrespectful in his personal life, she had no confidence in him to manage her business finances.



Right or wrong, people make judgments about what they see and read online, and their business decisions are based on those judgments.

Keep it professional

Lesley Spencer Pyle, home-based business specialist and author, recommends keeping anything you write on the web professional. "Someone wanting to do business with you doesn't want to witness you using vulgar language or discrediting another person or business on an online forum. Once it's out there, it's hard to take it back. Also, any pictures posted should be kept to those you'd feel comfortable sharing with anyone. Log-in names should also be kept professional; don't use names or terms that might hurt your image."

Also, make sure you understand the privacy settings on your personal sites, and have them set at the highest level. Many people, especially those not very familiar with social media tools, simply use the default settings because they don't know they can be changed. The higher your privacy settings, the more difficult it is for people to get to your information.

Use blogs cautiously

Blogs are a popular way to add frequent content to your site. It can drive traffic to your site and is a useful tool to inform your visitors of issues and trends. Make sure your blog represents your business in a way that respects your client demographic. Formal businesses, such as financial planners, would likely keep their content focused on business recommendations, financial advice, etc. A website geared toward children's items may find it appropriate to have a website that is more casual. "Sharing links on blogs is another popular way to increase website traffic, but caution should be taken regarding what websites you link to from your blog," says Pyle. "If they change their blog content and it ends up being something racy or provocative, you probably don't want to be associated with that type of activity."

There are so many social media forums out there, and it's important that before you engage in social media sites with your business, you understand how it works, and how people will access the information. Caution is the key. "Better safe than sorry" has never been more true than with social media. While utilizing social networking sites can be a fantastic way to create corporate culture and market your business, it's important to be smart about how you use them.

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