

Seven Strategies for Inflating Your Success



When I ask people to describe characteristics of successful people, they often identify characteristics that they associate with others but not themselves. This never ceases to amaze me.

In a recent Red Ladder survey, respondents indicated that the top two drivers for success were 1) having a strategic vision (87.5%) and 2) having written goals (50.0%). Further, 62.5% indicated that their definition of success was "work that is both challenging and rewarding." Interestingly, no one indicated that their definition of success was "being financially secure."

We all have the capacity to be successful. The question is, how successful do you want to be? Here are some key characteristics exhibited by successful people. Most successful people:

1. **Have clearly identified their core values/ mission/ vision.** These comprise the compass by which key life decisions are made. If a mariner didn't have a compass, how successful do you think she would be navigating the world's oceans? You need a compass too.
2. **Create a personal definition of success.** This is not what society defines as success. Your personal definition of success becomes your map and it goes hand-in-hand with your core values/ mission/ vision. If you don't define success, how will you know when you achieve it?
3. **Have clearly defined, written goals.** According to a Yale Study, 3% of the graduating class of 1953 identified goals and 20 years later, those who had written down their goals appeared happier and more content. Further, the same 3% that had written down their goals had achieved more wealth than the remaining 97% of their classmates put together! Need I say more?
4. **Develop competency in negotiation.** During interviews with successful women in business, negotiation was cited as the most critical factor in getting what was wanted both personally and professionally. Successful people understand that negotiation is not only about getting what you want, but getting what you deserve. If you can't or won't negotiate the results and outcomes you want for yourself, then who will?
5. **Embrace risk-taking.** People who are comfortable taking risks typically experience increased autonomy, heightened self-esteem, a more positive attitude toward life and an increased sense of personal power. Most successful people I speak to, see and seize opportunity. They recognize that taking risks typically involves personal growth. Those with an aversion to risk often link risk with failure. What is failure? Simply a judgment about events. So, instead, view risk as a learning opportunity. Remember, no risk, no reward!

6. **Engage in continuous learning.** One successful man I spoke to indicated that, "continuous learning is key if you want to get ahead in life." Does that mean formal education? It might, but for most, it simply means staying current in their field or maintaining expertise in an area of passion. And if your field of expertise also happens to be your area of passion, then you are really onto something!
7. **Think big.** Successful people aren't afraid to think big. During a recent seminar, I asked participants to write down one goal they would like to accomplish and to think big. One woman shared with the group that she was a professional speaker and that her goal was to replace Oprah Winfrey when she retires in 2008. I followed up with her recently and discovered that she is currently in discussions with a local broadcast company is being considered for an afternoon TV program. That's the power of thinking big.

Woody Allen once said "**eighty percent of success is showing up.**" To inflate your success, it's the other twenty percent that is most critical, that is, hard work combined with the desire to succeed. If you do nothing else, carve out time to craft a strategic vision for yourself, write down your goals and remember, think big!

Regina Barr is a business consultant and speaker with a special passion for helping women achieve leadership success. Regina helps companies develop strategies to attract, develop and retain women leaders. Her consulting firm, Red Ladder, Inc., also helps organizations and their leaders develop their full potential through strategic project management and coaching. For more information visit www.RedLadder.com or www.RedLadder.blogs.com.

Copyright 2005 Regina Barr, Red Ladder, Inc.