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## Quick Success Strategies For Executives

The shift from individual high performer to leader/manager of a high-performing team is one of the hardest shifts of most people's careers. The difficulty stems from the behavioral and emotional components required of high-functioning leaders. It not only involves the development of a new set of complex behavioral skills, but also setting aside a large number of skills that they have come to rely on as core to their success as individual achievers.

The 3 most critical executive competencies are self-awareness, breadth of relevant experience and being open to new concepts and approaches to improve.

2 out of 5 new CEOs fail in their first 18 months on the job, according to the Harvard Business Review. Main reasons for the failure was not lack of competence, knowledge or experience but rather ego and a leadership style that did not build relationships or create alignment.

82% of newly appointed leaders also fail because they fail to build partnerships with subordinates and peers.

### **The follow are quick success strategies for executives who want to adapt and improve:**

- Look at the big picture. See the possibilities as well as the potential problems and sketch out a vision. You've got to think "big things" while you're doing small things, so that all the small things go in the right direction," says Alvin Toffler.
- Try on other perspectives. Seeing things from the other person's point of view is the secret to successfully working with clients, building relationships and helping those who are not as fortunate.
- If you wait until you feel like doing something, you may never accomplish it. In John C Maxwell's book *Failing Forward*, he states that you can act your way into feeling long before you can feel your way into action. Successful people think things through and then follow through.
- Manage your negative self talk: if you're going to make up a story in your mind about a possible outcome (or worry), at least make up a good story.

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- Set aside time for strategic thinking. Successful people see investing time for strategic thinking as the insurance against wasted effort and time. Make plans daily, weekly, monthly and quarterly. Find a key person to check in with to keep you on track. This could be an assistant or a colleague.
- Create your own personal board of directors. Once you are clear on your most important values, enroll someone who is an expert in that value to be on your personal board of directors to champion you to success.
- Be a lifelong learner. Each day, cue yourself to look for something that will be an opportunity to learn and improve. Listening can teach you a lot more than talking. Ask provocative questions to enlarge your understanding and become a big picture thinker.
- Discipline yourself to practice your priorities. Many people do the hard things first, the easy things first or the urgent things first. Focus on the activities that are in line with your top 5 areas of focus for the year - 3 business objectives and 2 personal objectives.
- Set aside at least a half day to plan out the next 30-40 days. Target what you want to accomplish and block out time to plan, think, work and meet people.
- Don't look at your email until after 10:00 am. Focus on your top priorities first. Look at your optimum time of day when you perform at your best, and apply the most important priorities to be done in that time.
- Organize your priorities, and then input them into your calendar to activate. The likelihood of you completing the task more than doubles.
- Make time to both connect (investing in relationships) and think (focus on strategies in line with the big picture). Performance specialists have proven we operate at an optimum if we take a break every 90-120 minutes. This is a great time to walk slowly through your organization and connect with people. You will have a better understanding of how staff work, ways to add value to them and what motivates them.
- Be strategic about problem solving. Challenge all your assumptions. Collect all the information and explore all the perspectives, even after you think you have identified the issue. Ask yourself, what else could be the real issue? If you jump to conclusions, you may end up solving the wrong problem.

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- Make important decisions in a timely manner. Decisions affecting people need to be thought through carefully; however, procrastinating on a decision will have an impact on morale and affect performance of those involved.
- Look for possibilities in every situation. Even poorly run organizations may sometimes do well with one aspect we can learn from, i.e., how they merchandised two items together or their unique way of acknowledging a visitor.
- Set aside some time to dream big. Make your plans as fantastic as you like, Henry Curtis advises, because twenty-five years from now, they will seem mediocre. Make your plans ten times as great as you first planned, and twenty-five years from now, you will wonder why you did not make them fifty times as great. What are your secret goals and dreams? What is one small step towards that goal? Watch your energy and level of engagement soar.