

Chapter 1

The Success Formula

In This Chapter

- ▶ Discovering the elements of the success formula: attitude, skills, philosophy, objectives, and character
 - ▶ Finding out about success in your personal, family, business, physical, mental, spiritual, and financial lives
 - ▶ Putting the success formula to work for you
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What is success? The answer depends on who's responding to the question. There are as many definitions of success as there are people. With that idea in mind, I want to do a little generalizing and then talk about my formula for accomplishing this elusive thing called success.

Success involves every facet of life: your relationships with others, your ability to make it in the business world, the health that you need to preserve, and the happiness that you enjoy. It also involves a security that goes well beyond financial security; I'm talking about the security of knowing that you have the love, trust, and support not only of family but of friends and associates as well.



Don't misunderstand me: Success *does* include a degree of financial prosperity. (Money isn't the most important thing in life, but it's reasonably close to oxygen on the "gotta have it" scale.) To be candid, I like the things that money can buy: houses, cars, clothes, vacations, and so on. I don't need to be super-rich, but I do have a great need not to be poor; I've been there and done that. I remember the days of buying gasoline 50 cents at a time, falling desperately behind in my rent, and losing a car because I couldn't pay for it.

In addition to the financial prosperity that I just mentioned, success to me means success at home, success in my profession, and success with my friends and associates. It also means peace of mind, which is part of the spiritual aspect of life (covered extensively in Chapter 12) that I enjoy through my faith.

The question is, what can you do to achieve this balanced success that involves your personal, family, and business lives as well as your physical, mental, and spiritual well-being, with a recognition of the need for financial prosperity? The formula that I outline in the following section is a great place to start.

Finding the Formula for Success

Over the years, I have developed a formula that has helped me achieve what I consider to be success. Throughout *Success For Dummies*, I refer to various parts of this formula, which begins with the right mental attitude and includes adding the right skills and the right philosophy, finding direction, and building on a foundation of character.

Developing the right mental attitude

Your journey toward success will flow more smoothly if you ride the “right” attitude all the way to the top. “I think I can” beats “I can’t” every time. A can-do outlook on life helps you to achieve goals in record time and make friends and lifelong business associates along the way. Everyone enjoys being around someone who is a solution-finder and who looks for the good instead of the bad in everything.



Here are some important points about attitude to keep in mind:

- ✔ You need to have the right attitude toward your family, friends, and associates. An attitude of acceptance, forgiveness, love, kindness, respect, and consideration goes a long way in any relationship, including those with family members, friends, and business associates.
- ✔ You need to have an accepting, open-minded attitude toward your personal growth and education. The world changes constantly; as they say, “Change is inevitable — except from a vending machine.” Unless you change with it, you’re destined for mediocrity at best.

If you don’t stay abreast of the knowledge brought about by modern technology, the trends in the marketplace, and the discoveries in the field of health improvement, you will be left far behind or, at best, will experience only a portion of the progress that you’re capable of experiencing. Having the desire to stay familiar with these changes and being open-minded about them ensures your continued success well into later life. (Some people are so narrow-minded that they can look through a keyhole with both eyes at the same time. Others are so cynical that they still think somebody pushed Humpty-Dumpty.)

- ✔ You need to have a positive yet cautiously realistic attitude toward your own abilities and yourself. Knowing your capabilities and being realistic about your possibilities are starting places for success. For example, your chances of being a rocket scientist are slim if you flunked fifth grade math twice, so spending several years in college taking every course you need to be a rocket scientist but avoiding the math classes until the last semester is the same as planning to fail. Unrealistic expectations are the seedbed of depression. If you gained 20 pounds over the last three years, believing that you can lose all 20 pounds in three or four weeks is setting yourself up for a letdown. That goal just isn't realistic.

You should, however, be far more positive than negative. You can undermine your success just as easily by setting your sights too low. If you set out to lose one pound a month, for example, the slow pace will eventually cause you to lose hope, interest, and enthusiasm. That's one of the reasons I believe that counselors and mentors are an important part of the mix that makes the success formula work. The most popular and successful weight-loss programs combine sensible eating, exercise, and the help of mentors or counselors. Everyone needs help in setting realistic goals, especially in areas where they have previously suffered setbacks. Then they need encouragement and motivation to hang in there until they reach those goals. (I cover mentors more extensively in Chapter 2.)

- ✔ You must have a sensible attitude toward positive thinking. I'm amused on some occasions and frustrated on others when I hear someone say that "Attitude is everything" or that "With positive thinking, you can do anything." Careful analysis forces you to realize that this idea is simply not true. For example, Reggie White, the All-Pro defensive end for the Green Bay Packers, is an upbeat, optimistic, enthusiastic, highly motivated positive thinker, but with him at 300 pounds, those assets would do him absolutely no good if he decided that he could change careers and make it as a jockey. He would almost have to carry the horse across the finish line, wouldn't he?



I, too, am a positive thinker, and I love the game of golf. But, being over 70 years old and carrying a 16 handicap, I'd be hard-pressed to make the PGA Tour (except maybe as an extra to entertain or inspire the other golfers), no matter how positive I get.

Another reason you must take a cautious approach — or even a skeptical approach, on occasion — is that blind optimism can make you a target for victimization. Some people take the concept of "being positive" out of context and try to apply it when it simply doesn't fit. If your car breaks down, for example, taking the positive approach and assuming that the individual who stops to help you has only good intentions is foolhardy in this day and age. To believe everything that everybody says and to think that everybody's motives are honest is taking naïveté to the absurd. Unfortunately, this world includes charlatans who see a person with a warm, positive, open attitude as an easier mark than a person who is cautious.



You need to understand that what the “right” attitude — positive thinking that’s tempered with a dose of realism — really does is permit you to use your own abilities. And those abilities are awesome! When you recognize, develop, and use what you have, positive thinking is enormously effective.

Adding the right skills

Your attitude is enormously important; it enables you to accomplish amazing things. But without the right skills, you’re limited in what you can do, regardless of your attitude. An enthusiastic salesperson with the right attitude can achieve a degree of success in selling a good product — sometimes even considerable success. But this individual can’t realize his or her full potential without being thoroughly trained in the product and understanding something about the people with whom he or she is dealing.

Salespeople must have good people skills and be able to answer the questions that prospective customers ask. Without those skills, they miss a high percentage of the sales that they should be making. If salespeople know that their prospects have the money to buy and that their product fills a specific need, but they miss sales because they can’t answer prospects’ questions, frustration, disappointment, and the obvious lack of income that results can ultimately put those salespeople out of business.

In a similar vein, many enthusiastic, highly motivated, upbeat people don’t have a clue how to operate today’s high-tech equipment. Others don’t know how to deal with people effectively in a changing world. As a result, they can have limited success, at best. Many people love the field of auto mechanics, for example. But if they don’t have the education or the intelligence to understand the computers that are used in today’s automobiles (which have more computer power than was available to astronauts on the first trip to the moon!), they can’t advance very far in this high-tech industry.



In short, without the skills to go with the right attitude, your success ceiling is predetermined, and it isn’t especially high. Remember, motivation always precedes education. The person with the right attitude and the right skills can become more successful than ever before because competition for good-paying, skilled jobs continues to decline.

Having the right philosophy

The third part of the success formula is to have the “Golden Rule” philosophy. I state it like this:

You can have everything in life you want if you will just help enough other people get what they want.



Education suffers due to lack of interest

Unfortunately, many of today's high school students are not really interested in developing the skills that they need to make the success formula work. The March 3, 1997, issue of *USA Today* reported a serious generation gap between what Baby Boomers were interested in and what young people today are interested in.

For example, 64 percent of Baby Boomers were interested in preparing for a career, compared to only 54 percent of students today. Doing well in school was important to 83 percent of Baby Boomers, but only 37 percent of students today find it important. An active

social life, however, was important to 60 percent of Baby Boomers, versus 80 percent of students today.

Unfortunately, these statistics indicate that as high-tech gets even higher-tech and interest in preparing for a career diminishes, businesses are going to encounter serious shortages of qualified people for rewarding jobs and careers. Statistics like these are one reason I continually share with audiences that the opportunity for success has never been greater than it is today. The need is great, but many people are not preparing to meet that need.

I hasten to add that this philosophy isn't a feel-good theory; it's a highly practical approach to your overall success. Life is not a series of isolated chambers; directly and indirectly, all aspects of life — personal, business, and so on — are interwoven. Your physical, mental, and spiritual lives are connected, and all these areas impact the financial aspects of your life.

Over the years, I've identified that everybody, regardless of where they live and what they do, wants the following eight things in life:

- ✓ To be happy
- ✓ To be healthy
- ✓ To be at least reasonably prosperous
- ✓ To be secure
- ✓ To have friends
- ✓ To have peace of mind
- ✓ To have good family relationships
- ✓ To have hope



A study reported in *USA Today* identified something interesting about employees in the workplace. Employers were asked, "What do you think your employees want most?" The employers responded that #1 was good

wages, #2 was job security, and #3 was the chance for promotion. However, in those same locations, the employees rated good wages as #7, promotion as #12, and job security as #13.

What the employees said that they wanted was #1 interesting work, #2 appreciation for work done, and #3 a feeling of being in on things. You can pretty well sum up those responses by saying that employees wanted to be treated as equals, or at least as fellow human beings.

Here's an interesting fact: The U.S. Department of Labor says that 46 percent of the employees who voluntarily quit their jobs do so because they don't feel appreciated. In addition, I read the research of a consultant who said that 93 percent of the employees he queried told him that when they completed a difficult task under special assignment from an employer, the employer never said anything to them about it — no “good job” or “thank you for your effort” — nothing. That's unfortunate because the cheapest and most effective motivation in the marketplace is simple but sincere recognition for extra effort.

Now, if the employer provided a climate where the work was interesting, expressed appreciation for the work done, and helped employees feel as if they were in on things, doesn't it make sense that the employer would have happier, healthier, more secure workers? This atmosphere would affect the employees' relationships at home and at work and give them hope that their futures will be even better than their past. Put these things together and you have more productive workers. And employers pay more productive workers more money, which makes those employees more prosperous.

At this point, you may be thinking, “But what about the employer?” Well, research indicates that employers want loyal, productive employees and a growing, profitable business. By providing their employees with what they want, employers get exactly what they want: loyal, productive employees and a growing, profitable business.

Finding your direction

You can have the right attitude, the right skills, and the Golden Rule philosophy, but if you don't have a game plan for life, you will ultimately become a “wandering generality.” You must have a planned direction if you're going to utilize your attitude, ability, training, and philosophy to the fullest.

No one attempts to build even a doghouse without a plan, nor does anyone attempt a vacation without some sort of plan — even if it's as simple as “We're going to drive to the Grand Canyon.” Yet most people never learn how to develop a plan of action for their lives. As a result, most people spend years in occupations or professions that they chose at someone else's suggestion, or because others were doing it, or because it was easy or available, or perhaps because they had “nothing else to do.”



A classic example of the Golden Rule philosophy

A classic example of how the “get what you want by helping others get what they want” approach works is the results that a major automaker got when it came out with a new design. This design necessitated the construction of new plants and the retooling of existing ones. Before making these changes, management asked the employees who would actually be building the new vehicles whether they had any ideas for making the assembly lines more effective. The workers had dozens of marvelous ideas. After all, the person turning the wrench knows more about the way it really works on the assembly line than the engineers who designed the wrench.

First, the employees explained that when they had to go down the steps into the pit to work on the underside of a car, they sometimes slipped and fell, injuring themselves. Why not raise the assembly line so that they could simply walk underneath the car to work on it?

Second, they suggested that the assembly line be tilted in their direction so that they wouldn't have to do so much bending over. Leaning over to work on the assembly line put undue hardship and stress on workers' backs.

The results were truly spectacular. Medical expenses decreased dramatically. Productivity escalated. Quality of work improved substantially. The workers had been treated properly — they were “let in on things,” they were listened to, and their suggestions were followed. Management was delighted with the results, and stockholders were ecstatic.

These good results came about because management gave the employees something that they not only wanted but also badly needed. Giving employees what they need isn't “coddling”; doing so is simply meeting management's responsibility and creating a win/win situation.

The following sections talk a little about forming your game plan for life. You can find much more information about setting goals in Part IV of this book.

Knowing where you want to go

As I report in my book *Over the Top*, research conducted by David Jensen of UCLA proves that people with a goals program earn more than twice as much money as those without goals. In addition, they are also happier and healthier and get along better with the folks at home. I'm of the very strong opinion (not based on scientific research, but from years of observation) that these people also have more friends, more peace of mind, more security, and more hope for the future. These factors contribute to a longer and more rewarding life — I've never met a depressed individual who had specific, long-range goals and a plan of action to reach them.

For example, most golfers want to lower their score, but they never specifically set lowering their score as a goal or develop a plan of action for doing so. Regularly, I hear people say that they would like to have more friends, but they don't make it a specific goal, nor do they develop a plan of action for making friends. Others want a new home but haven't specifically set that new home as a goal or developed a plan of action to make it happen. People may fail to plan because they've never been taught to do so, or they may not even have heard of goal-setting.



One classic example of what happens when people learn the skills of goal-setting and aspire to do something about their goals involves a janitor at a hospital in Texas. He had been with the hospital for 21 years and had never owned a home. Perhaps he hadn't given the idea of buying a home much thought because he felt that he didn't have enough money. However, in my "Strategies For Success" training program, which the hospital provided, he discovered how to set goals. He didn't get a raise, but he did buy a house. My question to you is this: Do you think that today, because the hospital taught him how to set goals, he is a happier, more loyal, more productive employee? The answer is obvious, isn't it?

Another example is Tony Greiner. A superb golfer, Tony had been a PGA member for more than 15 years, but he had never made a hole-in-one. When he and I talked about goals, Tony realized that he had never seriously thought about setting such a goal for himself. But less than two months after setting a hole-in-one goal, bingo! He made one.

Expecting to get where you want to go

To accomplish any objective, you have to plan and prepare for it — then you have a legitimate reason to expect it to happen. Expectations play a major role in success in any field of endeavor.

A survey I read recently reported that one thing that was constantly on the minds of nearly two-thirds of people was good relationships with the people they love. A few years earlier, a study revealed that almost 100 percent of people felt that the most important thing in their lives was their relationships with their families. Yet when the group from the former survey was asked what they were doing to improve those relationships, what was their plan of action, most of them answered noncommittally, "Well, you know, we're just so busy. . . ." That answer doesn't make sense, but, unfortunately, that's reality for "wandering generalities." Reality also says that because they don't *plan* to have better relationships or take the time to *prepare* for better relationships, they don't *expect* to have better relationships.



I'm an avid golfer. I almost run a fever when I head for the golf course. When given an opportunity to play a top course, I don't sleep soundly the night before. Like me, most golf enthusiasts genuinely love the game. Ask typical

golfers, even those who shoot 100 (that's not great), whether they love the game, and their enthusiastic answer is yes. Ask them whether they'd like to improve their scoring, and 100 percent of them say yes. Yet I challenge you to go to a driving range or warm-up area on any golf course and watch the way they practice. Most of them hit the ball as far as they can, regardless of which club they're using. They do so despite the fact that two-thirds of golf strokes are taken within 60 yards of the hole; nearly half of those strokes are taken on (or almost on) the green with a putter. They take great pride in how far they can hit the ball, although every good golfer and teaching pro repeatedly tells them that the surest and fastest way to score better is to spend more time practicing the finesse or "touch" shots around the green and putting on the green. Sadly, these golfers honestly believe that they want to improve their scoring, yet the approach they take will never enable them to achieve that end.



If you really want to improve your golf score or your relationships, you must be honest with yourself and properly plan and prepare. Then, and only then, can you expect to achieve the desired results.

Success For Dummies is designed to inspire you to make the plans necessary to get the things you really want in life. After you make your plans, little things that would have previously stumped you won't get in the way. It's a proven fact: It's easier to get there when you know where you're going!

Keying in on character

You can have millions of dollars and not, by any stretch of the imagination, be considered successful by those who know you. The reason is simple: You can make millions of dollars without having character. Character is the fifth and final part of the success formula. Without it, the best attitude, the strongest skills, the most concrete philosophy, and the most worthwhile objectives mean nothing. Not a single one of the prior four parts of the success formula would matter. Drug dealers, smut peddlers, and con artists may accumulate considerable financial wealth and acquire the things that money can buy, but they are never truly successful because without character, they can acquire few, if any, of the things that money can't buy. Unfortunately, the same thing can be said about some businesspeople, politicians, athletes, attorneys, physicians, movie and TV stars, and so on.

People with integrity do the right thing. When you have integrity, you have nothing to fear because you have nothing to hide. In doing the right thing for the right reason — and again, I'm speaking of your personal, family, and business lives — you experience no guilt and no fear. With those two albatrosses of fear and guilt removed from your back, it's much easier to travel farther, faster, and higher.

Putting It All Together

Because so much of this book is built around relationships, I encourage you to examine the formula as a whole:

The right attitude, plus specific skills, plus the right philosophy and the right objectives, all built on a character base, enables you to have winning relationships with friends, family, associates, and members of the community at large.

I reference this formula numerous times throughout this book, so you may want to dog-ear this page. Reading the remainder of this book is the first step toward putting this simple success formula to work. Building a foundation of skills, devising a personal philosophy that you can live with and live by, determining your objectives, and sticking to your principles in every walk of your life all help you maintain an attitude that keeps you ready for the challenges that life is sure to throw your way.



A catcher in a baseball game would be hard-pressed to catch a fastball without his sturdy, form-fitting, shock-absorbing catcher's mitt. Similarly, life is a game of hardball. You hold in your hands a "mitt" that can help you "catch" all the finest things in life. Use it!